

to consider in conjunction with the report of the select committee. If so, he was inclined to support it, for no doubt Messrs. Stirling, Bros.' offer presented advantages they had never previously had. With all due respect to what had been said by the Attorney General, they had a straightforward business offer, and they ought to carefully consider it. If accepted, it would relieve the Government Printing Office of a great deal of work.

THE SPEAKER said there was one remark made by the hon. member for Greenough which he was bound to take exception to,—that the House had the appointment of all its officers.

MR. HENSMAN said he merely meant to say that, as the House had the power of appointing its own Speaker and its own Chairman of Committees, it had the same power as regards the appointment of an official reporter.

THE SPEAKER thought it was quite within the province of the House to decide as to the manner in which it wished the reporting done, and the remuneration to be paid.

MR. MARMION moved the adjournment of the debate.

Agreed to.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 27th July, 1887.

Public Health Act—Excess Bill, 1886 (amended): first reading—H.M.S. Liquor Bill: first reading—Life Policy Protection Bill: report of Select Committee—Message (No. 20): Replying to Addresses—Gratuity to Mrs. Ashton—Gratuity to Mrs. Smith—Receipts and Expenditure from Harbor, Jetty, and Light Dues—Supplementary Estimates, 1887: further consideration in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1886.

MR. SCOTT, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government intended to bring in any measure in lieu of the present Public Health Act?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) replied: The Government do not propose further legislation at present. The hon. member's question no doubt refers to the difficulty which has arisen in administering the existing Act in Perth. It is hoped, however, that this difficulty may shortly be overcome, and that it may be found that the Act can be worked in Perth as well as in Fremantle. The Perth Local Board of Health have resigned, but it is proposed to re-appoint the Board, and to constitute it in a manner which will probably obviate any collision with the Municipality, who have at heart the welfare of the city, and who are no doubt fully alive to the danger of delaying action in sanitary matters.

EXCESS BILL, 1886 (AMENDED).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser), in accordance with notice, moved the first reading of a bill to confirm the expenditure for the year 1886.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

H. M. S. LIQUOR BILL.

THE COMMISSIONER OF TITLES (Mr. J. C. H. James), in accordance with notice, moved the first reading of a bill to prevent the bringing of spirituous or fermented liquors on board Her Majesty's ships.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

LIFE POLICY PROTECTION BILL: REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. RANDELL moved that the report of the select committee appointed to consider the Life Policy Protection Bill be adopted; and that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to cause a bill, dealing generally with life assurance societies, to be introduced at the earliest possible date. It would be noticed by the report, the hon. member said, that the committee having carefully considered the bill, and having also read

over the Acts in existence in the other colonies dealing with life assurance societies, came to the conclusion that there was no great necessity for this fragment of a bill being introduced, and that it would be better to have a measure dealing generally with the question of life assurance, in accordance with the legislation that existed, he believed, in almost all the other colonies,—he was not quite sure whether it existed in New South Wales yet. It had struck him, and it had struck other members of the committee, that it was very desirable we should at once proceed to legislate in that direction. He might take it that the Government existed, amongst other things, for the protection of the interests of the general public; and as we had assurance societies coming amongst us and establishing themselves in our midst which he might describe as being at present foreign institutions—although their head offices were in the other colonies; and as there was nothing in our present laws to prevent any company, even a bogus company, coming here and endeavoring to do business amongst the inhabitants of the colony,—under the circumstances it seemed to the committee desirable that a general Act should be introduced for the purpose of protecting those who wished to insure their lives, so that they might at any rate be assured of the *bona fides* of the institution,—so far as it was within the power of the law to do so. In the other colonies these societies were required, by law, amongst other things, to keep registers, and to furnish returns annually to the Government showing their financial position; and, although such returns were made by some of the principal societies established in this colony, there was no law here compelling them to do so. The law in the other colonies also provided that these societies shall make certain deposits with the Government, and that sufficient investments shall be made within the colony where the society is carrying on its operations to assure that all claims falling due will be met. The hon. and learned member for Perth, some time ago, outside that House, stated his intention to bring in a bill dealing with married women's property, and he understood the hon. member to have expressed the opinion that the provisions of that

bill, as regards the protection of life policies, would have met all that was sought to be done by the bill introduced by the Government, and which had been referred to the committee whose report was now under consideration. But he thought that a very short reflection would show the hon. member that it would not. Though it would have protected life policies in certain instances, it did not give that general protection to the public which the committee thought was absolutely necessary. It was, perhaps, too late now to ask the Government to introduce a bill of this kind this session,—although there were examples to guide us in the Acts in force in the other colonies. But our circumstances might, perhaps, be somewhat different; and, as more knowledge had been gained by the experience of late years, in the working of these societies, since those Acts were framed, it might be found desirable to introduce some other sections into our local Act. If the House affirmed the motion for the adoption of the committee's report, it might be understood that the proposed Act would not be brought in until the next session of the Legislature, towards the end of the year. He thought the House would agree with him that it was not desirable to take up a measure of this kind hurriedly. He need not point out how necessary it was that the law should throw the ægis of its protection over persons who invested their earnings in assuring their lives, for the benefit of their families; he was sure that was a principle that would be accepted by the House. He should have mentioned that the bill introduced by the Government consisted of two clauses taken from the Act in existence in Tasmania, and which very much resembled the South Australian Act; and these provisions, protecting life policies in certain cases, differing but a little as they did in all the various colonies, should, he thought, be incorporated in our own bill. He begged to move the adoption of the report.

MR. MARMION thought it was very desirable indeed that legislation of this character should be added to our statute book; and he would suggest that the course to be adopted in framing the proposed measure should be something as follows: that the Government should

appoint a Commission, consisting partly of members of that House, and partly of others outside the House, competent to express an opinion on the subject, with the view of placing before the Government the gist of the principal provisions required to be enacted, showing the scope and tendency of the legislation that was desirable. He thought it would be preferable to adopt this course, calling in the assistance of experienced men—such as some of the directors or managers of the principal insurance societies established here—rather than that the whole onus of framing such a bill should be thrown upon the Attorney General, who was hardly likely to be able to grapple with all the multifarious wants of the community.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) thought it was rather hard that when an innocent little bill was brought forward by the Government to meet a certain definite purpose, and was drawn up to meet that certain definite purpose,—it was rather hard to have that bill handed over to the tender mercies of a select committee, and to have the objection suddenly made, "Why didn't you bring in something more than this? Let us have a grand, comprehensive measure dealing with the whole subject of life insurance in all its bearings." That was not his view of legislation. There was a particular object to be attained, and the Government sought to attain that object, which was this: that protection, up to a moderate sum, say £1,000, should be afforded to persons who insured their lives for the benefit of their wives and families, in the event of the bankruptcy of the husband. That was the sole object of the little bill introduced by the Government, and he had yet to learn that the bill would not have accomplished that object, which was admittedly a desirable object. He asked, with all humility, why the members of the select committee should have objected to a measure intended to carry out such a useful purpose, and well adapted to carry out that purpose, simply because it did not contain a number of other provisions, which may or may not have been advantageous? He was free to confess, he had but the very vaguest and most misty ideas, from the speeches he had listened to, what were those precise

things wanted in respect of life insurance. It was all very well to say: "Give us something general, give us something grand, give us something comprehensive, give us a roaming commission to go into the highways and by-ways of the insurance world, let us call in the directors, let us call in the managers of these societies, and see whether we cannot frame some really comprehensive measure." That seemed to him, with all due submission, somewhat ludicrous; and, when they had a useful little bill, dealing with a specific purpose, a bill that ought to have been put before the whole House, snubbed by a section of the House in this way, and prematurely crushed out of existence because it was not a great big bill, dealing with all sorts of things,—when they had that course pursued and such arguments prevailing, it did seem to him that they were likely to have some very curious legislation—very curious legislation, indeed. He would ask the committee whether the object of the bill would not have been attained by the bill? It was legislation directed to a point, and it was part of the policy of the Government; and he asked the committee in what respect it fell short of attaining its avowed object? He was not disputing—he did not pretend to know—whether there were any other matters connected with life insurance requiring legislation; if so, it was very strange that these matters had not suggested themselves to the committee and to that House before now. It appeared to him an absurdity that, because a bill introduced for a definite purpose did not also deal with life assurance generally (or some other idiotic phrase), the House should say, "We will not listen to your measure; it is not comprehensive enough." He had not yet heard a single clear statement as to what exact things were wanted; and, even suppose there were other things wanted, things which required alteration, why should they not be embodied in another bill? Was it fair, when the Government was honestly trying to do its duty, when it saw what it conceived an opportunity of doing good in a certain direction—was it fair that when they brought in a bill for that purpose, their bill should be snubbed by a committee, who could not dispute that

the object was a good object? Was it fair that a small committee of that House should say, "Your bill is useful enough, so far as it goes, and to serve a particular purpose; but we want you to give us something comprehensive, something dealing with everything connected with life insurance?" He was not going to argue now, whether as a matter of State policy it was desirable to legislate in the direction indicated, or how far it was expedient that the State should assume the responsibility of placing its *imprimatur* upon these societies, and guarantee not only their present soundness but also their future solvency. He should be rather loth, cautious conservative as he was, to guarantee to intending insurers the solvency of any society they might wish to entrust their money to. If there were evils connected with life insurance in this colony why had they not been thought of before; and why should this useful little measure—for it was acknowledged that the legislation proposed would be useful legislation—why should this useful legislation be snubbed by the committee, and set aside to make way for a more comprehensive, and, in all probability, more visionary scheme.

MR. HENSMAN said it was a treat to find the Government at last defending their measures with some little amount of energy. Hitherto, whenever they had encountered any opposition, they immediately collapsed; and it was quite refreshing to find that they were now prepared to stand by what they brought forward. The hon. and learned Attorney General said the bill brought in by the Government was a most useful measure. But, in order to be useful, it was necessary there should be some law in the colony under which life insurance companies came; and, as at the present moment, life insurance companies were not regulated by any law in force in this colony,—as they were in England, and in the other Australian colonies—a little bill like this, containing a couple of clauses taken out of a bill of one of the other colonies, was not a useful, but in his opinion, a very useless measure. He called it a fidgetty little bill, brought in, he supposed, to show that the Government had got its eye on certain things. If the bill had consisted of one or two clauses of the Married

Women's Property Act, brought in some time ago, but not carried, that bill would have provided the object in view; but, under this bill, there was nothing to prevent a husband, under his will, to bequeath his life policy to anyone. There was nothing whatever to protect the wife or the widow. It protected the policy; but not in favor of the survivors. It left it to chance whether the wife or the widow ever became the holder of the policy. He said again, he thought it was a very useless little bill as it stood, and a poor little bill—a little abortion of a bill, neither one thing nor the other.

MR. PARKER said he could not help thinking himself that the committee had adopted a wise course in making the recommendation which they did. The Attorney General had made a point of the fact that nothing had ever been said before about the necessity for legislation in this direction. The answer to that was, that they had been busy perhaps about other things which may have been of still more importance; but, as soon as the attention of members was directed to the measure of the Government, they saw at once that it fell short altogether of that which was necessary. They did not blame the Attorney General for not having introduced a comprehensive measure. Perhaps, if anything, they were to blame for not having done so before now. But the committee having inquired into the whole subject, and into the course of legislation in the other colonies, found that the two clauses of the present bill were mere adaptations from the Act of one of those colonies, dealing only with one aspect of the question; and they came to the conclusion that it was desirable in the interests of the public that a more comprehensive measure should be introduced. Under the circumstances, he thought the committee did well to recommend delay for two or three months, so as to admit of a comprehensive bill being brought in.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton): To do what?

MR. PARKER did not know that it was his province to enlighten the hon. and learned gentleman on the subject. He should imagine there were a great many things which required to be dealt with in such a bill. The hon. member Mr. Randell had pointed out the need for

legislation in several directions. He thought, for one thing, that the Insurance Companies should be required to publish quarterly returns in the same way as the Banks. He thought legislation also ought to be directed for the purpose of seeing that the companies kept in the colony sufficient funds to meet their liabilities. It must be borne in mind that these were all foreign corporations, and, for all there was to the contrary in the shape of legislation, they might trade here without any capital at all. He was prepared to go further than that, and to provide that all moneys levied on life insurance in the colony should be invested in the colony itself. He thought it was a great mistake for us to allow these societies to take their money out of the colony and invest it elsewhere. He knew that one society, the Australian Mutual, and also the Colonial Mutual did invest their funds here; in fact, they had an ocular demonstration of that in the magnificent building which one of them had already erected in Perth, and he believed that some of the other societies intended to follow suit. What he should like to see was an enactment passed under which all these companies should be bound to invest their local funds in the colony. Legislation, he believed, was also required in other directions, following the course adopted in the other colonies, regulating the management of these companies and their concerns. As he had already said, they did not blame the Government for bringing in their little bill; on the contrary, they were much obliged to the Government for directing their attention to the subject. But they all said that they thought the measure ought to be a more comprehensive one.

Mr. RANDELL said he quite understood the feeling of the Attorney General towards the little bill which he had introduced into the House. He could understand the hon. gentleman deprecating the somewhat unceremonious way in which the committee had put it away from them. He could understand the hon. gentleman's feelings being hurt because the committee did not appreciate the merits of his little bill. Every mother, he believed, considered her own offspring, however plain and even repulsive it might appear to others, the most beautiful child in the land; and possibly it was

with a feeling akin to this maternal feeling that the Attorney General regarded his own measure. At any rate, the committee did not think much of it. In fact they did not enter into the merits of the bill at all. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Hear, hear.] They thought that while they were about it they ought to legislate in a more comprehensive manner. The Attorney General said he did not know how far it was the province of the Government to throw the shelter of its protection over the public who wished to invest their money in these societies. He would point out to the hon. gentleman that the Government already acknowledged its obligations in that direction. It already protected the public against other institutions of a similar character. Joint Stock Companies and Friendly Societies, for instance, were made amenable to legislation, and were governed by the law of the land; and he thought there were equally important objects to be served by legislation in the direction here contemplated.

The resolution was then put and adopted.

MESSAGE (No. 20): REPLYING TO ADDRESSES.

THE SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:

"In reply to the Address of the Honorable the Legislative Council No. 4, of the 30th ultimo, the Governor has the honor to state that a Bill will be introduced into the Council for the purpose of enabling the Telegraph to be used in connection with the issue and return of Writs for the election of Members of your Honorable House.

"2. In reply to Addresses Nos. 8 and 13, of the 18th and 25th instant, the Governor has the honor to state that a sum of £300 has been placed at the disposal of the Newcastle and Northam Settlers' Association for gold prospecting in the Eastern District, and that a like sum has been placed at the disposal of the Government Resident and a committee of settlers at Roebourne for gold prospecting in the Northern District.

"3. Directions have been given for the preparation of the Returns asked for by Addresses Nos. 11 and 12, of the

"21st and 22nd instant, and the Returns will be laid on the Table of the Council in due course.

"Government House, Perth, 27th July, 1887."

GRATUITY TO MRS. ASHTON.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT, in accordance with notice, moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place a sum of £250, or one year's salary, on the Supplementary Estimates for 1887, as a gratuity to the widow of the late Edward Ashton. He thought it was only necessary for him to say very few words in support of this address, because he felt confident that in this instance every member would agree with him in his desire to extend this slight mark of sympathy towards the widow of a deserving public officer. In the other colonies, he believed, it was usual for the Government to continue the salary of a deceased public servant to his widow for twelve months after his death; and he should be glad if legislation to the same effect were introduced here. The late Mr. Ashton served the colony well and faithfully for many years, and died suddenly at a period of the year devoted to rejoicing and festivity—the happy Christmas season. It was no happy Christmas, however, to his sorrowing widow and her orphaned children; and he thought it would be a very hard thing indeed if the Legislature did not extend its sympathy to the widow. It was only one year's salary that he pleaded for; and he hoped he would not have to plead in vain, for there were circumstances connected with this case which could not fail to enlist the sympathy of the House. Mr. Ashton had been an excellent officer, and, were he still alive, the Government would have been called upon to pay a great deal more than this. Now that he was dead, the Government were obliged to employ two clerks to do the work which the deceased gentleman performed single-handed. He had come to the colony as a boy, joined the Imperial service and remained there for two or three years, when he was transferred to the Colonial service, and he remained in the Postal Department for a period of eighteen years; so that altogether he had a record extending over

twenty years as a public servant. He thought he need say no more to commend the claims of the widow to the generous consideration of the House.

MR. CONGDON had pleasure in seconding the resolution. From his own personal knowledge of the officer spoken of, he could say most truthfully that he was a public servant who did his duty towards this colony ably and faithfully for a long term of years; and he was sure—at least, he hoped—that every member of the House would record his vote in favor of the resolution now before them.

MR. PARKER presumed that so far as this individual case was concerned—if the House recognised the desirability of voting public money for the widows of officers dying in the public service—the House would come to the conclusion that this was a case peculiarly appropriate for the exercise of that privilege. They had discussed this question of gratuities to the widows of public servants on former occasions in that House, and they had voted such gratuities before, not only to the widows of those who died in the public service of the colony, but in one instance they voted a gratuity to the widow of a gentleman who had left the colonial service, and been appointed to a position in another colony. He alluded to the late Sir Frederick Barlee, who did not die in the service of this country; but that House, recognising the eminent services which he had rendered Western Australia during the long period he held the position of Colonial Secretary, voted an annual gratuity to his widow. Last year, again, they voted a gratuity to the widow of the late Mr. Slade, who died while holding the office of Police Magistrate at Fremantle; and they were now about to be asked by the hon. and gallant member for Pinjarrah—in addition to the motion now before the House—to vote another gratuity, to the widow of a gentleman who last year occupied the position of Colonial Secretary. In considering this question of gratuities he thought they ought not merely to look at each case simply upon its merits, but to consider whether it was a wise and proper policy to adopt. It could not be said that if they agreed to this address they would be establishing a precedent; they had already established several precedents, in doing which it

might be said they had affirmed the wisdom and propriety of the policy. They had at any rate recognised the principle involved, and, that being so, he was prepared to support the present address.

Mr. MARMION had much pleasure in supporting the motion. It might be mentioned that only last year he had himself the sad duty of bringing forward a resolution of a similar character, in favor of the widow of another deserving public officer; and he remembered stating on that occasion that he was not going to be guided by precedents in cases which called for the exercise of the nobler instincts of their nature. What he then said he would repeat now. He would ask hon. members to dismiss the question of precedents from their minds; he would ask them not to consider the difficulties in the way, but to deal with the case in the interests of mercy and humanity, and to leave others hereafter to discuss the question of precedents. He would ask hon. members to deal with the case as their own instincts of humanity told them they ought to deal with it. He was sure the country would never feel the loss of the paltry amount asked for the widow, and he felt sure that every hon. member who supported it would feel a glow of satisfaction hereafter in thinking that he had given the motion his support. In this case the widow was not without other claims upon their consideration, for she was the daughter of a gentleman, who, in his day, not only occupied a seat in that House, but who in other ways did good service for the colony. He alluded to the late Mr. Wallace Bickley. He hoped the House would without a dissentient voice respond to the appeal made to it in the present instance.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he merely rose to endorse all that had been said with regard to the services of the late Mr. Ashton, and also to endorse the remarks that had just fallen from the hon. member for Fremantle as to the value of the services rendered to the colony by the late Mr. Bickley. He hoped himself that the House would affirm the motion without dissent.

Mr. VENN said it was his misfortune, he thought, that he should have to rise on different occasions to speak

in opposition to votes of this character. Last year, and also the year before, and on former occasions, he had felt it his duty to speak very much in the strain he intended doing now. Notwithstanding the eloquent appeals that had been made to their better nature, he could not allow the opportunity to pass without again expressing his own views with regard to these gratuities. Those views were pretty fully expressed in that House last session, and perhaps he could not do better than refer to what he said on that occasion. He said then, as he said now, that these addresses appealed to their feelings rather than to their judgment, and that he thought it was a mistake in that House to be guided by one's feelings rather than one's judgment, especially in the distribution of public funds. He thought it was a mistake at all times to allow their feelings to usurp their judgment; and, if they were to make their heart rather than their head their guide all through life, they would often find themselves going astray. If they adopted that principle in governing their actions in private life, he was afraid they would soon find their pockets affected and their affairs going adrift; and he thought they ought to be governed by the same principle in public life, and in the disbursements of the public funds upon objects of charity. That was what he said last year, and he had seen no reason to alter his views on the subject in any way. Recognising in every respect, and to the utmost degree, all that had been said with reference to the services of the late Mr. Ashton, he must again point out this,—they must not be too generous with what did not belong to them individually. They must not be too ready to vote away the public funds upon objects which simply appealed to their feelings of humanity. If they were to be guided by such feelings in all their actions in that House he should like to know where they were going to stop. Were they prepared to admit free of duty the necessaries of life, required by poor people for their sustenance? No. They took good care to tax all these necessaries of life; they took good care to insist upon these poor people contributing by taxation to the public funds, and they were asked to vote this money, which these people could ill spare, for an object worthy in

its intent, but (as he viewed it) altogether outside the province of the Legislature. He thought if our civil servants were to exercise a little more forethought and thrift, if they were to take time by the forelock, as they ought to do, and insure their lives, so as to provide for their widows and families, they would not have these appeals made to that House so incessantly. It was clear to his mind that they were going to have these appeals made year after year, and that there would be no end to them, now that the door had been opened, and the principle affirmed. He should not actually oppose the present vote, but he should refuse point blank to support it, and he hoped this would be the last occasion—although he doubted it—when they should have cases of this kind brought before the House; and he trusted that those members who entertained the same views as himself on the subject would not hesitate to express them, so that the feelings of the House might be ascertained and placed on record.

MR. RICHARDSON thought the hon. member for Wellington deserved credit for a great deal of moral courage in giving expression to views which must have been painful to any hon. member to give utterance to, upon an occasion like this. He thought, with the hon. member, that the principle involved was a bad principle. If they were going to establish precedents like these, where were they going to draw the line? The revenue of the colony would never be able to stand without staggering under all the demands which they would have made to them. It might be generosity to vote away the public funds in this way; but it was a very cheap sort of generosity, voting away that which was not their own. The money was simply the money of the taxpayers, many of whom stood much more in need of it than the recipients of these gratuities. Having said that much against the principle, which he thought was a bad one—and the sooner it was done away with the better—he would say this with regard to the present case: if ever there was a case that ought to be made an exception to the rule it was this one. The officer in question was a very deserving officer, in receipt of a very inadequate salary; and, whatever blame attached to others who neglected to

make provision for their families, he must say it appeared to him it would have been almost impossible for the officer referred to to have done so with the salary he was receiving. While saying this much in support of the motion, he must again repeat that in his opinion the principle involved was a bad one, and they ought to have the moral courage to put it down. He thought it would be better and more becoming if hon. members put their hands in their own pockets, or gave their own cheques, which would show the genuineness of their sympathy a great deal more than voting away the public funds for such purposes.

MR. LAYMAN said it was with some reluctance that he found himself unable to support the resolution. He opposed it purely on principle. He should be sorry to vote against the motion, but he must enter his protest against the principle involved, which he hoped would not come before them again.

MR. SCOTT said, as the question had been turned somewhat into one of principle, he thought it was only right that one should say something upon it. He looked upon it as only involving a matter of principle to this extent—that the members of that House should have the courage to do what they conceived to be right. As to voting away that which did not belong to them, if they were to regard that as a matter of principle, and if it was considered they were unfit to be trusted to do that which was right in dealing with the public funds, all he could say was, they were unfit to occupy seats in that House. He had been surprised to hear the hon. member for Wellington expressing the views which he did on this subject. He felt certain that if an appeal were made to the people of Perth and Fremantle upon this subject they would all be in favor of their representatives supporting this address; and he doubted very much whether there would be any opposition to it on the part of the public, in any part of the colony. The circumstances of the case were painfully distressing, and he was sure that in supporting the vote he was doing that which would meet with the approval of those whose funds it was proposed to appropriate for the object in view. That was the consideration that weighed on his mind.

The hon. member for the North said it would be better if members were to put their hands in their own pockets in these cases. He thought, himself, if the case was a deserving one, the assistance ought to come out of the public funds and not out of private charity. The aid sought for the widow of a public servant ought to be a charge upon the funds of the public, whom he had served, rather than upon the purses of a few private individuals who might happen to have more liberal ideas and more generous instincts than others. It was his intention to support the motion; and, so long as the principle continued in operation, he should support every other appeal of the same character, if he thought the case a deserving one. It was only one year's salary that was asked for; and surely the public revenue could stand that much without "staggering."

MR. MARMION: Three half-pence per head, for the whole population.

MR. HENSMAN said that from what he had heard of the late Mr. Ashton he appeared to have been a most intelligent, obliging, and useful officer; and he thought no one would begrudge his surviving wife—who, he understood, had a large family—this little assistance out of public funds. He should not have risen to say a word himself, but for the fact that the hon. member for Wellington in expressing his views—views which they must all feel must have been unpleasant for any hon. member to state publicly in that House—had asked that other members would express their opinions upon the principle involved. His own views on the subject were in accord with the views of the hon. member for Wellington and the hon. member for the North, that the principle, taken as a general principle, was a bad one—that of voting money out of public funds for the wives and families of deceased public officers. At the same time there might be cases in which it might be desirable to make exceptions. It appeared to him that those who were in the public service ought to be paid a sufficient salary to enable them to live in decent comfort, and also, if frugal and thrifty, to make some provision for those they might leave behind them. It appeared to him they ought not to look upon the cases before them in this instance as precedents in the proper sense

of that term—he meant as something that they were bound to follow in future. Entertaining these views, it was not his intention to oppose the present motion, looking as he did upon the present as an exceptional case. But he thought the sooner they put an end to appeals of this kind the better.

MR. PEARSE said it was his intention to support the motion, and he did so with a great deal of pleasure. He had known the late Mr. Ashton for many years, and he knew that he was an officer who carried out his duties in a very satisfactory and efficient manner, and upon a very small salary—so small that he had no opportunity of making any provision for his family. With regard to the principle involved, it might be a bad principle, but it was a principle which that House in its wisdom had affirmed in other instances; and he hoped the House would do so in the present instance, in view of the exceptional circumstances surrounding the case, which was a very distressing one indeed.

The motion was then put, and agreed to.

GRATUITY TO MRS. SMITH.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to place a sum of £500, or one year's salary, on the Supplementary Estimates for 1887, as a gratuity to the widow of Captain Smith, late Commissioner of Police, and for some time Acting Colonial Secretary of this colony. The hon. and gallant member said he rose with mingled feelings of pain and pleasure to move this address,—pain at the thought of his departed friend being no longer amongst them, mingled with the pleasure that sprung from doing a kindly act for his widow. When that House was in session last year, Captain Smith occupied the position of leader of the Government on the benches opposite, and he was sorry that no reference had been made during the present session to the fact that he had since been taken away from amongst them. He was sure, however, that the present motion would be carried without a dissentient voice, and that if there should be any opposi-

tion at all it would be on the ground that the sum asked for was too small. When he died, Captain Smith was then in receipt of a salary of £900 as Acting Colonial Secretary, and, had he lived, he would probably still be receiving that amount; but all he asked for now was a sum equal to Captain Smith's salary as Commissioner of Police, and he was sure there was no one who would begrudge his widow that paltry gratuity. He appealed not only to their feelings, but also to their charity,—that charity which consisted in acting upon all occasions, and in the discharge of every duty, under the influence of the love of justice, tempered with judgment.

"Friend after friend departs.
Who has not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts,
That knows not here an end."

Their late friend was with them no longer. He had been translated to a higher sphere of usefulness; but his widow remained, and this appeal was on her behalf,—an appeal which he felt sure would not be made in vain, for he defied any hon. member to deny how faithfully the late Captain Smith had discharged the duties of his high office.

THE COMMISSIONER OF TITLES (Mr. J. C. H. James) said he desired to say a few words in support of the motion of the hon. and gallant member for Murray and Williams. He agreed with what had been said by another hon. member in a previous debate that, in dealing with the question of gratuities to the widows of public officers, each case should be taken upon its merits. He could see many possible cases that might arise, not deserving of recognition at the hands of that Assembly; but he took it that this was an exceptional case,—the case of an officer who had rendered signal service to this colony, and whose widow had been left, as they regretted to hear, in straitened circumstances. He could not believe that the present motion would be opposed by any hon. member. The late Captain Smith was an ornament to the civil service to which he belonged, as he had previously been an ornament to the noble profession of arms, in the loyal pursuit of which he had covered his breast with medals. His death was not a common occasion. In the words of the Laureate,—

"—that is not a common chance
Which takes away a noble mind."

And they felt here that the community, in the case of the late Captain Smith, had lost a most valuable member of its number; that the Legislature had lost an able colleague, one who had performed the very high functions of his office in a most signal manner, to the greatest satisfaction of the colony; and that the social circle had lost, in their late friend, an ornament. For his own part he was not ashamed to say that, although he belonged to a House of legislators, he hoped he was also a man; and he was not afraid to say that he was animated by that sentiment in giving his vote on this occasion. For these reasons he had very much pleasure in seconding the motion of the hon. and gallant member.

The address was agreed to *nem. con.*

HARBOR, JETTY, AND LIGHT DUES.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL moved for a return showing the average yearly receipts from harbor, jetty, and light dues throughout the colony, and, separately, the receipts under these heads at Fremantle and Albany respectively; also for a return showing the average yearly general expenditure in connection with the harbor, jetties, and lights at Fremantle and Albany. The hon. baronet said he moved for the return in view of his intention to take steps in the matter of the formation of Harbor Trusts.

Agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1887.

The House then went into committee of supply for the further consideration of the Supplementary Estimates.

Poor Relief Department, £2,000 :

MR. A. FORREST said this seemed a very large amount to place on the Supplementary Estimates for poor relief, and he should like some information on the subject.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the Superintendent had reported that, judging from the expenditure for the first quarter of the year, which was considerably in excess of the expenditure for the corresponding quarter last year, no less a sum than £2,000 would be required to carry out the service of this department. It was an item which they could hardly control or curtail, however regrettable the neces-

sity for it might be. There were about 140 men now in the dépôt, and a considerable number more were applying for relief, for whom there was no accommodation. The same remark applied to the female dépôt. Every care was taken that no undeserving cases were relieved.

MR. SHOLL said there was one very respectably dressed old gentleman amongst the inmates of the Mount Eliza Dépôt, —in fact he might say a regular masher.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the person referred to was not maintained at the colony's expense.

MR. SHOLL said there was another case he had heard of, that of a lady who came out here with letters of introduction but no funds, and who, he had been told, was kept for some time at a first class boarding-house, at Government expense. He thought it was a great shame that the colony should be saddled with the expense of keeping these genteel paupers. The lady in question had, he believed, subsequently sought fresh fields and pastures new, elsewhere.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he entirely agreed with the hon. member that it was a great shame that people should come out here and become destitute. The person in question, who had a child, did not come to the colony at the public expense; she was sent out here, and she was unable to obtain a livelihood, and it was not until she had proved herself to be destitute that an allowance was made to her, until the steamer left, when a steerage passage was paid for her and her child to go to another colony. By that means we got rid of her; otherwise we might have had her here still.

MR. MARMION was sorry to say that in his opinion this vote would be considerably exceeded, large as it was, unless the Government of the colony took those steps which he considered they ought to take in order to afford employment to the number of persons who were now out of work. He hoped the increase of the vote for poor relief would have the effect of impressing upon the Government and upon that House the necessity of inaugurating public works, and of inducing them to realise the gravity of the present situation. Unless they did so, he was very much afraid that, instead of £2,000 being required to supplement the annual

vote, they would require something nearer £5,000. There were large sums of money raised by loan still lying idle, which ought to be expended and utilised in carrying out necessary public works, and thus relieve the State from these eleemosynary charges.

The item was then put and passed.

Aboriginal Department, £250:

MR. RICHARDSON asked what this supplementary vote was required for?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said that all matters connected with native expenditure were now entrusted to the Aborigines Protection Board, who had this year £2,000 at their disposal; but, for reasons which he had explained before—the loss of the *Kapunda* with a thousand blankets on board—another year's supply had to be ordered. An additional sum was also required for provisions, according to the calculations of the Secretary of the Board.

MR. RICHARDSON: Were not the *Kapunda* blankets covered by insurance?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): They were, but there is another batch on the way. Meanwhile we have had to borrow some blankets from the Store department. We shall require a less vote for this purpose next year.

MR. SHOLL was afraid that the increase in this vote was not attributable altogether to the loss of the *Kapunda*, but to the increasing number of natives now wandering about the country without employment. [An Hon. Member: Gribble.] He was afraid there would also be an increase in the police vote, as it would require extra police supervision to look after these natives. If this vote went on increasing at the present rate, he should move next year to have it struck out.

MR. PARKER said he noticed one curious thing in connection with this vote—"Rewards for good conduct." What did these rewards consist of; a leather medal, an extra blanket, or a piece of tobacco, or what? He had noticed the item for some years, but he had never discovered what these rewards consisted of, and what they were given for.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the same heading had appeared to this aboriginal vote he might almost say from time immemo-

rial; but the words referred to were in reality superfluous in these days. He believed it was the custom many years ago to reward the natives for any particularly praiseworthy conduct; but, at present, all they received was in the shape of provisions and clothing, and, in future Estimates, these words might as well be omitted.

MR. MARMION failed to see the necessity of this supplemental vote. Out of last year's vote for clothing and provisions (£1,500), only £1,155 2s. 8d. had been expended, leaving a surplus of £344 17s. 4d., which would be ample to cover the cost of the lost blankets.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the House last year passed an Act for the protection of natives, and the amelioration of their condition, and, unless the Act was to remain a dead letter, this additional vote would be required. The only alternative would be that they would have to go to the Finance Committee, and, for his own part, he much preferred adopting this course.

The vote was then put and passed.

Volunteer Department, £640 15s.:

MR. A. FORREST thought the officer to whom they paid £500 a year to manage this department ought to be able to form an estimate of the expenditure for the year, without coming to that House asking for an additional £640. We were not a warlike people, and why should the House be asked to vote £480 at present for Martini Henry cartridges?

MR. SHENTON said the present Commanding Officer was not here when the annual Estimates were framed.

MR. A. FORREST said it did not matter whether he was here or not. Nothing had happened to require the Volunteers to be placed on a war footing.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) explained that the first item, "Defence purposes—two Magazine caretakers, £67 15s.," was caused by reason of the protection of the powder magazine having devolved upon the Colonial Government after the disbandment of the Enrolled Guard. The next item, £480 for Martini Henry cartridges, was in reality a reproductive item. 100,000 cartridges had been bought, and they were stored, and sold to the Volunteers, at a small margin of profit; so that all this

amount would come back to the revenue again. The next item, "Water bottles and straps, £28"—these were required for field days and parades. They were served out to the men in all the other colonies on such occasions. The item, "Incidental, £65," was to meet the expense connected with overhauling Snider rifles, and fitting up the Armory for the same. These rifles were to be called in from all parts of the colony, and stored in Perth for defence purposes.

The vote was then confirmed.

Roads and Bridges (Blackwood Bridge) £1,000:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) explained that this amount was voted last year, but, inadvertently, it was allowed to lapse, and hence the necessity of re-voting it.

MR. LOTON did not think such items ought to appear on these Estimates, unless in cases of urgent necessity. It was simply increasing the amount of expenditure when there was no real necessity for it. This was clearly an item that ought to appear on the Estimates-in-chief.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): The work, I understand, is being proceeded with.

HON. J. G. LEE-STEERE said he could explain the position of this vote. Last year it became apparent to the Blackwood Roads Board that some extensive repairs required to be made in the bridge, and it was considered desirable to have a report from the Resident Engineer of the Southern Districts, who, after inspecting the bridge, said that a new one would have to be built. The House last year voted £1,000 for that purpose, but, for some reason—although the contract was entered into before the year was out—the amount, instead of being carried to Suspense Account, as it ought to have been, was allowed to lapse; and the Government went to the Finance Committee, who, under the circumstances, assented to the expenditure.

The vote was then put and passed.

Literary, Scientific and Agricultural Grant (Railway Reading Room), £25:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said this was a new institution, intended for the use of the railway employés. It was to be established in Perth, and he believed a substantial

amount would be subscribed towards it by the employés themselves.

MR. A. FORREST said they must stop somewhere with these railway charges. They would be wanting a reading room at Chidlow's Well next, and every other station on the line. He would move that the item be struck out.

MR. MARMION thought it very desirable that these men employed on the railway should have some little mental recreation after their day's labor, and some suitable and rational means of employing their leisure hour. He thought, however, this reading room ought to be at Fremantle, where the great majority of the railway men were employed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he understood the project emanated from the Perth employés, and it was considered they ought to have the library at this end.

MR. LAYMAN said the amount was a small one, but he thought it was only an attempt to get in the thin end of the wedge. Every other station would want a reading room, and the House would be called upon to increase the vote every year.

MR. KEANE said if the vote was for Fremantle he should support it, because the great majority of the railway servants were employed there, in the stores, workshops, etc.,—probably a hundred men, whereas at Perth there were only a few porters and guards.

MR. VENN was not clear what the money was wanted for. He presumed it was intended to be an annual vote. For his own part he would prefer seeing the amount added to the vote for the Literary Institute of the town, of which institution these railway employés could avail themselves.

MR. SHOLL thought the item was one worthy of support, especially if the employés themselves, as they had been told, were going to contribute towards the fund. He believed in encouraging such voluntary efforts. He thought, however, there was no necessity to place the vote on these Supplementary Estimates. It ought to be left for the annual Estimates. They would see by then whether the men themselves were prepared to contribute or not.

MR. KEANE thought he might say, from what he had heard of the move-

ment, that this was not intended to be an annual vote, but a contribution to enable the men to establish this reading room.

MR. HENSMAN thought, however desirable it might be to provide a reading room, it was not an item that ought to appear on the Supplementary Estimates. It could not be a work of such very pressing necessity or urgency. There were already Working Men's and Mechanics' Institutes in these two towns; and why should the House be asked to favor one class of working men more than another.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said these railway servants were not working men in the ordinary sense, but servants of the Government, and, being servants of the Government, they were the servants of the public; and he knew of no part of the world where the railway servants were more civil and obliging, and did their duty more thoroughly and good-temperedly than in this colony.

The committee divided upon the motion to strike out the vote; the numbers being:

Ayes	7
Noes	16

Majority against ... 9

AYES.	NOES.
Captain Fawcett	Mr. E. R. Brockman
Mr. Hensman	Mr. Congdon
Mr. Layman	Mr. Harper
Mr. McRae	Mr. James
Mr. Sholl	Mr. Kenne
Mr. Venn	Mr. Loton
Mr. Forrest (Teller.)	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Parker
	Mr. Pearse
	Mr. Randell
	Mr. Richardson
	Mr. Scott
	Mr. Shenton
	Hon. J. G. Lee Steere
	Hon. C. N. Warton
	Hon. Sir M. Fraser
	(Teller.)

Pensions: (W. Cowan, late Resident Magistrate, York, £209 2s. 3d.; A. Helmich, late Postmaster General, £200; G. Eliot, late Government Resident, Geraldton, £16 6s. 6d.)—£425 8s. 9d.:

MR. SHOLL asked whether the pension of the Postmaster General, £200, was the proper allowance, according to the Act?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): Quite so. His pension will be £400 a year; his salary when he retired was £600, and for two-and-a-half years previously. He had a 47 years

record, and, in special consideration of his long and meritorious services, the Governor, acting under a power given to him under the Superannuation Act, granted him a pension equal to two-thirds of his salary. Mr. Cowan's pension here provided for is for nine months, computed on the basis of the amount of his annual pension, £278 16s. 3d.

The item was then put and passed.

Refunds, £21 :

Agreed to.

Immigration, £2,000 :

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said this vote was simply to meet the claims of the W.A. Land Co. Unfortunately the condition of the colony did not warrant the Government in asking the House to vote any sum for the resumption of free immigration, the colony having apparently reached the present limits of its absorbing powers as regards the labor market. He regretted that the House had not fallen in with the proposal of the W.A. Land Co. to cancel the immigration clauses of the "Hordern" contract. This regret was due in part to the fact that continued additions to our population, such as we had been receiving of late, would shortly land our working population in much distress, and the Government in a position of serious embarrassment, for they would have to face widespread destitution, and the necessity for a heavy expenditure to alleviate it. Already pauperism was on the increase, and daily calls were made on the Poor Relief Department from working men unable to obtain employment, or to support their families. As he had already said, the limit of our powers of absorbing fresh population of the laboring class had for the present been reached, and, unless a stop to the present influx of immigrants were speedily put, there was every prospect of a state of things arising which could not fail to be detrimental to the interests of the colony. He thought it was a most suicidal policy to induce men to come to the colony unless we were in a position to find them employment when they did come. The only system of State immigration now resorted to was the nominated system; and the present vote was in addition to what the Immigration Board had at its command to meet the claims of the W. A. Land Co. He regretted himself the necessity for

their having to meet these claims, which would have been obviated if the House had assented to the company's proposals.

MR. SCOTT thought if the Government were to exercise due care in having immigrants of the right sort brought out, they would have no difficulty in finding employment. It was no use sending imbeciles, and the lame, the halt, and the blind out here; what the colony required was a class of useful agricultural laborers, and men with a little capital.

MR. VENN also thought that the failure of our immigration policy was due in a great measure to the want of proper supervision at home, in the selection of immigrants. If the proper class of immigrants were sent out, there was no fear of the colony being unable to absorb them; and he should be extremely sorry for the impression to get abroad that Western Australia had already reached the limit of its tether as regards absorbing fresh population. He could not imagine anything more damning to the colony.

MR. MARMION could not agree with the argument that the colony had reached the limit of absorption as regards immigrants. No doubt there was a temporary depression, but, if the Government would only do what he had been endeavoring throughout the session to induce them to do,—inaugurate some useful and necessary public works, upon which employment could be found for these men, the destitution of which they had heard so much would soon disappear. If the Government, instead of allowing the loan money now lying unutilised, were to turn it to some good account, and provide work for those who were ready and willing to work, there would be no necessity to put a stop to immigration, and to proclaim to the world that Western Australia was in such a condition of depression that she could not absorb any more population than the present handful, scattered over its enormous territory. The Immigration Board had recently been able to adopt a system under which our immigrants only cost £10 per head, whereas formerly they cost about £17. The system in question was first introduced by the W.A. Land Company, and the Board, finding how successfully it worked, adopted the same system itself. But, unless the Government was prepared

to embark upon a bold policy, and a liberal public works policy, so as to afford employment to these new comers, the result would undoubtedly be disastrous to the colony.

MR. E. R. BROCKMAN knew there were a number of men out of employment at the present moment; and when the railways now in course of construction were finished, the immigrants introduced by the syndicates would be thrown upon the colony; and the result would be that Western Australia would be swamped with a pauper population.

MR. HENSMAN wished to know whether the vote now under discussion was intended to pay for immigrants introduced under the Hordern contract, or to pay for immigrants introduced on our own account, or for both purposes. If the former, why was the necessity for the vote not foreseen last session, when the main Estimates were voted? Until some further information were given on the subject, he could not bring himself to vote for this item.

MR. PARKER said the statement had been made by more than one hon. member that if we only had the right class of immigrants we could absorb them, and find employment for them. He would point this out to hon. members: we could not expect those who were introduced here at public expense to be other than poor men. A free passage was not likely to tempt men with capital to come out here; and the class from which our immigrants were mostly recruited appeared to be mechanics and artisans,—the very class we did not at present require. There were already many men of that class out of employment, and it would be folly to flood the market with any more. He had heard it stated that agricultural laborers could be absorbed. He doubted it. From inquiries he had made, he did not believe that if fifty farm laborers were introduced at the present moment they would be able to find employment. Although at certain busy times of the year the supply of agricultural labor was somewhat scarce, still everyone acquainted with the condition of the agricultural industry in this colony must be well aware that continuous employment could not be found for more than a very limited addition to our present stock of farm hands. Under

these circumstances he could not help thinking himself that if we could dispense with the influx of immigrants for the present it would be good policy to do so. He thought it was unfair, not only to the new comers, but also to those who were already here, that men should be introduced for whom no work could be found without taking the bread from other men's mouths. As to the W.A. Land Co's. proposals, he understood those proposals had been withdrawn, before the House had an opportunity of accepting or rejecting them. It was therefore hardly fair to blame the House in the matter. He thought it would be still wise for the Government to endeavor to negotiate with the company, with the view of suspending or cancelling the immigration clause of the contract. He could not help thinking that if such a proposal were made to the House, unfettered with any condition as to varying the contract in respect of completing the line at an earlier date than had been agreed upon, the House would be inclined to accept it.

MR. HENSMAN said that not having heard yet whether the vote now before them was required to meet the claims of the Land Company, under the "Hordern" contract, or whether a portion of it was to be devoted to the introduction of fresh immigrants by the Government; and, believing that those hon. members who had spoken on the subject of immigration represented the general sense of the House that the question was a very serious one; in order also to allow the Government time to consider the position before the House voted this large sum for a purpose which, it had been suggested by the Colonial Secretary, would be injurious to the colony, he would move that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again, when he hoped the Government would be prepared to inform the House what this vote was really required for.

Motion to report progress agreed to.
Progress reported.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock,
p.m.
