

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton) moved, That all the words after "game," in the third line, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—"or if any person shall wilfully take out of the nest or destroy in the nest the eggs of any bird of native game for which a close season has been proclaimed, or shall knowingly have or permit or suffer to be in his house or possession any eggs of any such birds so taken after the passing of this Act, every such person shall on conviction forfeit and pay a penalty not exceeding the sum of Ten shillings for each egg so destroyed or found in his house or possession." He said that the reason that the Government proposed this clause was that their attention had been drawn to the fact that on Perth Water a bird called the shag was a great nuisance, not only on account of its destructive habits with regard to fish, but also to the owners of boats. It was now proposed to reserve power to the Colonial Secretary to issue licenses to persons for the destruction of this bird, or for the taking of its eggs.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I would call the attention of the committee to the fact that the word "owner" is still left in all its exquisite vagueness. It has no meaning at all, and simply makes the Act unworkable.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I would suggest that we report progress, so that we may see this new clause in print.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: Under this bill, as it now stands, a man may not have a clutch of eggs under a tame duck.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I move that progress be reported.

Question—put and passed.

FIRST OFFENDERS BILL.

This bill was considered in committee, and agreed to without amendment.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 4 o'clock p.m. adjourned until Thursday, 14th January, at 8 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th January, 1892.

The Orient Company and Owen Anchorage—Delay in erection of Public School House at Roebourne—Municipal Institutions Act, 1876, Amendment Bill: third reading—Bills of Sale Act, 1879, Amendment Bill: recommittal—Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Affirmations Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

THE ORIENT COMPANY AND OWEN ANCHORAGE.

MR. TRAYLEN, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier what is the nature of the communication from the Orient Company with respect to Owen Anchorage, and how far it is binding upon the Company?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that there had been no definite communication in writing upon the subject, but the manager of the Company in Australia had verbally informed the Government that he intended to write to his Company, and to strongly recommend that Fremantle should be made a port of call so soon as facilities were afforded for prompt despatch.

DELAY IN ERECTION OF SCHOOL HOUSE AT ROEOURNE.

MR. W. H. SHOLL: I beg to ask the Director of Public Works, When the Government intend to proceed with the erection of a Public School House at Roebourne? Also, why this necessary work has been so long delayed, the necessity for this building having long been recognised by the Government and the money voted for the purpose.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that the Government intended to proceed with the erection of a Public School House at Roebourne when funds were provided for the purpose. A sum had been placed on the Estimates for 1892. The work had been delayed in consequence of the tenders having been beyond the sum at disposal for the purpose.

**MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT,
1876, AMENDMENT BILL.**

Read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

**BILLS OF SALE ACT, 1879, AMENDMENT
BILL.**

This bill was recommitted on the motion of the ATTORNEY GENERAL, who introduced some verbal amendments, which were agreed to without discussion.

**SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.**

This bill passed the committee stage without comment.

AFFIRMATIONS BILL.

This bill was agreed to in committee *sub silentio*.

AN ELECTRIC LIGHTING BILL.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, moved: "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable, in the public interest, that the Government should take into consideration the advisability of introducing an Electric Lighting Bill, at as early a date as possible this session." It was not his intention to say much, nor was it necessary, in asking the House to agree to this motion. Inasmuch as they had already made a beginning with the electric light, having introduced it into the Chamber where they now sat, and, as the probabilities were that this kind of light would be much more in use in the future and perhaps to a large extent displace the use of gas and other means of lighting, and as he understood there were certain dangers connected with the use of this illuminant which it was desirable to guard against, and certain objections also to running the wires across the streets, and the conductors underneath the streets—in view of these considerations, and other considerations, he thought it was desirable that they should have some legislation on the subject. He found that in other parts of the world there were Electric Light Acts in operation. There had been two passed in England: one in 1882, and another in 1888,—he was not certain whether one was an amendment of the other,—and he believed that they were

working satisfactorily in England, where the electric light was gradually coming into greater use; although he believed that in the city of London itself, which was generally looked upon as the pioneer of every good thing, comparatively little progress had yet been made in adopting this system of lighting. That, however, it appeared from a paragraph he had seen in yesterday's paper, was about to be remedied, provisional orders having been granted by Parliament for bringing the electric light into use in various parts of the great Metropolis. They were all aware of the beauty of the light—they had a practical demonstration of it in that Chamber—and were impressed with the desirability of its being utilised at as early a date as possible for the ordinary purposes of public lighting. He found that the Legislature of Victoria had been recently asked to introduce a public bill dealing with electric lighting, and he understood that in that colony those who provided this system of lighting were placed under the control of the municipalities. No company could take steps for the installation—he believed that was the word; it was rather a grand word, and perhaps the light was a grand light—no company could take steps for introducing the electric light into any town without the sanction of the municipality. As he had already said, there were elements of danger connected with this system of lighting by electricity, as there were connected with gas; and it was necessary, he thought, that at the very outset we should be prepared to lay down certain rules and regulations by which these companies should be guided in distributing their lights. His object was to call the attention of the Government to the necessity of introducing some legislation on the subject. Possibly its attention had already been directed to the question, in which case his efforts in the same direction would be superfluous; but he had seen nothing about it in the public prints, nor heard any intimation that the Government proposed to take any action in the matter. He believed there were plenty of precedents to guide them in legislating on this subject, and he understood the Acts introduced in the other colonies worked very well. In those colonies, as he had already said,

the matter was under the control of the municipalities; and he believed that some of those bodies had been very much exercised and incensed by the action of a private company, who, by means of a private bill, had been virtually endeavoring to obtain a monopoly, and over-riding the municipal authorities, and to carry on their operations without being under their control. He thought it would be very undesirable to give any such powers to any private company. There might be some serious objections, and it might be even dangerous, to have such powers vested in any company without being under some control. The company's wires might come in contact with the telephone wires, for instance, and great inconvenience might result. He believed there had been strong objections taken to the carrying of the electric light wires overhead. There were other elements of danger and inconvenience, which rendered it necessary that these companies should be placed under some control. Without endeavoring to labor the question, or to go into it fully (which he confessed he was not able to do), he merely wished to direct the attention of the Government to the matter, in the hope that they might see it desirable, in the interests of the public, to take immediate steps for introducing some legislation so as to bring these electric light companies under the control of some local authority, whether it be the municipal authorities or some other authority. With these few remarks he would now leave the matter, simply asking members to consider what he had stated as to the necessity of some legislation on the subject.

MR. TRAYLEN said that what had occurred in the City Council only a few nights ago somewhat emphasised the stand which the hon. member had taken in this matter. An application was made by the Perth Gas Company for permission, if necessary, to run their electric light wires about the town, and a majority of councillors resolved that for the present no concession of the kind would be made to anyone. Yet, in the face of that decision of the Council, he noticed that electric light wires were already running overhead in the city, for which no permission that he was aware of had ever been given. There was evidently a necessity for some legislation on the sub-

ject. He also joined with the hon. member in expressing some fears that the telephone and telegraph services might be interfered with if the electric light wires were allowed to run overhead. This formed another additional reason why there should be some Act of Parliament to regulate these matters, so that this boon of electric lighting might not interfere with another equally important boon.

MR. PIESSE thought it very necessary that there should be some legislation introduced on this subject. He was given to understand that some discussion had already taken place in the City Council in reference to the matter, and he understood that a clause had been inserted in the new Municipal Bill dealing with the subject of electric lighting. But the provisions of that bill would only apply to Perth, and as there were other towns where no doubt the electric light would be introduced sooner or later, he thought it was necessary there should be a bill dealing generally with the subject. There could be no cheaper or more efficient means than the electric light as an illuminant, and he had no doubt that it would eventually be adopted, not only in our larger towns, but also in the smaller towns of the colony. He therefore hoped the Government would introduce, this session, a bill embodying all that was required for effectually dealing with the subject, and the provisions of which would be applicable to outlying towns as well as to the city.

MR. SIMPSON was happy to have the opportunity of rising to support the motion of the hon. member for the Moore. But he differed from him in one essential point. Without referring in any way to the *personnel* of the present City Council, he thought it would be in the public interest that the Government, and not the municipal authorities, should have charge of a measure of this kind. There had been City Councils to whom he would not have cared to entrust the administration of an Electric Light Bill. They knew that gas at the present time was the illuminating medium in Perth, and, although he was not there to say unpleasant things, he must say he had never understood the connection between the City Council and the Gas Company. He was perfectly satisfied, if the same

power as regards the electric light were placed in the hands of the same Council, that gas would be the light used in Perth for many years to come. In addition to that, he wished to point out that the gas was deteriorating in quality. There were many reasons, in fact, why it was desirable that the power to control such companies as these electric light companies should be in the hands of the Government, with proper provisions for regulating their operations. He thought the result would be better and more economical in every way, so far as the public were concerned. He had no wish to interfere in any way with vested interests or vested rights, or with any company's dividends and bonuses, but he did think it would be very much wiser and better, in the interests of the citizens, if the power under the contemplated bill were vested in the hands of the Government of the colony, instead of the Municipality of Perth.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the Government would have no objection, as suggested in the motion, to take this proposition into consideration; but, on first looking at the question, it struck him that possibly legislation on this subject should be more of a private character than public. They all knew that Gas Bills—bills enabling gas companies to run their pipes about a town—were as a rule measures of a private nature, and introduced into Parliament by the companies who were seeking to obtain the powers to be conferred by such bills. But he believed that in England the powers granted to Electric Light Companies were granted under a public or general Act that applied to the whole country. Perhaps it was considered better to have one public bill relating to all matters connected with electric lighting, and dealing generally with them, rather than have a private bill in every instance that a private company sought to have these powers. The Government would give the matter their consideration. The House, however, would recognise that the Government had supplied a good number of bills this session already—he believed they had already had nineteen bills before them in the space of a month; and if this bill did not make its appearance as early as members wished, he

trusted they would not think the Government were not giving the subject its consideration.

Motion—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 13th January, 1892.

New Member—Northam-Southern Cross (Yilgarn) Railway Bill: Select Committee's Report—Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Affirmations Bill: third reading—Harbor Improvements at Fremantle—Police Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

NEW MEMBER.

THE SPEAKER announced that he had, on the twenty-second day of December last, issued a writ for the election of a member to serve for the Electoral District of Perth, in the place of Mr. Edward Scott, resigned; and that by the return thereto it appeared that Mr. Thomas George Molloy, of Perth, had been duly elected in pursuance of the said writ. Mr. Molloy was then introduced, and took and subscribed the oath required by law, and signed the Members' Roll.

NORTHAM-SOUTHERN CROSS (YILGARN) RAILWAY BILL.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) presented the report of the Select Committee on this Bill.

Ordered—That the consideration of the report be made an Order of the Day for 14th January.