

**THE PRESIDENT:** The hon. member is bound to act, unless the House gives him leave not to.

**THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST:** I move that power be given to the committee to call for persons and papers, and that the report of the committee be brought up on Thursday, 17th March.

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT:** Would it be in order to move that the committee report next session?

**THE PRESIDENT:** That will be in order.

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT:** Then I move that we report next session; for it will not be possible to do justice to the question in the very short time mentioned by the hon. member.

**THE PRESIDENT:** If the committee finds it has not sufficient time, leave can always be given to bring up the report at some later date.

Amendment negatived, and the original question—put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 4 o'clock, p.m., until Wednesday, 16th March, at 8 o'clock, p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 15th March, 1892.*

Floating of second instalment of Loan—Duty on theatrical placards—Clerical error in Customs Bill—Hawkers and Pedlars Bill: third reading—Railways Act, 1878, Further Amendment Bill: third reading—Game Bill: Legislative Council's amendments—Fremantle Jetty arrangements and Customs Office hours—Loan Estimates, 1892, introduced—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### FLOATING OF SECOND INSTALMENT OF LOAN.

**MR. DE HAMEL** asked whether the Government had received any despatch from the Agent General for the colony,

with respect to the floating of the last instalment of £250,000 of our Loan, and, if so, whether the Premier would place such despatch and other correspondence relating thereto, on the table.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that he hoped to be able to place the information required upon the table of the House, shortly.

#### DUTY UPON THEATRICAL PLACARDS.

**MR. QUINLAN** asked the Premier whether any duty was charged upon printed placards and programmes introduced into the colony for advertising purposes by theatrical companies? He believed a duty was charged in the other colonies upon these placards and programmes, and he thought there ought to be a duty here. It was not fair to the local printers that these things should be introduced into the colony without the payment of duty.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that no duty was charged here upon them.

#### CLERICAL ERROR IN CUSTOMS BILL.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have to report to the House that I have received a report from the Clerk of the Parliaments to the effect that a clerical error had been discovered in clause 92 of the Customs Bill, line 11, where the word "may" appears to have been incorrectly inserted. Our Joint Standing Orders provide that upon the discovery of any clerical error in any bill which shall have passed both Houses, and before the same be presented to the Governor for his assent, the Clerk of the Parliaments shall report the same to the House in which the bill originated. The Customs Bill having been originated in this House, the Clerk has reported this clerical error to me, and it is now for the House to deal with it as with any other amendment.

Ordered—That the consideration of the report of the Clerk of the Parliaments be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

#### HAWKERS AND PEDLARS BILL.

On the Order of the Day for the third reading of this bill,

**MR. CANNING** said: I have to move that the bill be read a third time this day

six months. This bill was passed somewhat hurriedly through committee last night, before I had an opportunity of referring to it. I have given the bill some consideration since the second reading, and I have also read the existing Act (46 Vict., No. 10), amended I think by a later Act, and it appears to me to contain all that is necessary for regulating this business of hawking, without going to this extreme of preventing it altogether. That Act provides that licenses shall be issued for hawkers who may carry their packs on their backs and for those who carry on their business with a pack horse, or a horse and cart, and it also imposes a severe penalty upon hawkers who shall be found in possession of any spirituous liquors; so that the business appears to be hedged round with all necessary safeguards. The present Act really provides all that is necessary for regulating this pursuit. From time immemorial hawking has been a recognised pursuit, and in every part of the world of which I know anything at all it is permitted. It is general all over the United States of America; in Italy, Germany, France, and in England it is a regular and lawful pursuit, and there has never been any outcry about it. I have never heard—even in times of oppression, when people were severely oppressed by their rulers—I have never heard of any law being passed directed against this pursuit. I heard, the other day, when I made some observations on the second reading of this bill, that those who engage in this pursuit would be better engaged in some hard work. There may be something in that; but I would ask members to bear in mind that all people are not fit for hard work. Some are constitutionally unfit for hard work, others are incapacitated by disease or bodily injuries from manual labor, and it seems to me a most reasonable thing that these people should be as free to buy and sell goods, and travel about with them, as any man who opens a shop and displays his wares to passers by. In many parts of the world, and even in this colony, these people are really a convenience to people living in out-of-the-way places, a long distance from town; and I am quite sure—in fact, it is my own experience—that periodical visits from these hawkers have been generally welcomed on these out-stations. They bring many

things that are required in a small household; and shepherds and others employed on stations and farms are very glad to be supplied in this way with these wares. Why should not these people be allowed to ply their avocation, so long as they do not transgress any moral law? In no other part of the world that I know of is the pursuit made illegal; and if it is made illegal here it will be simply rendered so by a law made for this purpose and nothing else. I really am at a loss to understand why this measure should have been introduced. I believe that some objection has been taken to the conduct of some of the Indian natives who follow this pursuit, but surely some restrictions might be placed upon the granting of these licenses which would prevent these persons becoming a source of annoyance to anybody. It might be necessary to make them produce certificates of character, before granting them a license, and, if they are found misconducting themselves, the law is sufficiently powerful to punish them. Provision might be made that they should be deprived of their licenses if they misconducted themselves in any way, so that they would not be permitted to trade in this way any longer. Surely that would be better than to have an oppressive measure of this kind, infringing upon the liberty of the subject, as we undoubtedly shall do if we make hawking absolutely illegal,—a measure the like of which is not to be found in any country of which I have any knowledge whatever.

MR. DE HAMEL: I have pleasure in seconding this amendment. I understand this bill has been introduced by the Government in consequence of a resolution of this House, passed this session, the object of which was to prevent peddling by Asiatic or colored hawkers, who travel about the country. It was not the intention of this House nor the object of that resolution to prohibit peddling altogether, but simply to prevent its being carried on by these Indians. With that I am in accord, and I believe the whole sense of the House was in accord with it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They are British subjects, you know.

MR. DE HAMEL: It was never intended to put down hawking altogether,

as this bill does, and for that reason I have pleasure in seconding this amendment, that the bill be read a third time this day six months, in the hope that at our next session we may have a bill brought in which will meet the wishes of members generally, without being so stringent as this one seems to be.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The hon. member ought to have made these remarks on the second reading.

MR. DE HAMEL: I was not in the House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Then you ought to have been.

Amendment put and negatived.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### RAILWAYS ACT, 1878, FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

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

#### GAME BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The House went into committee for the consideration of the following Message from the Legislative Council: "With reference to Message No. 38 from the Legislative Assembly, on the subject of the amendment made by the Legislative Council in clause 9 of the Game Bill, and with which the Legislative Assembly has disagreed, the Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it does not insist on the said amendment, provided that the Legislative Assembly agree to the insertion of the words 'last-mentioned' before 'person' in the sixth line, and 'first-mentioned' before 'person' in the seventh line of the said clause."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), without comment, moved that the amendment proposed by the Council be agreed to.

Put and passed.

#### FREMANTLE JETTY AND CUSTOMS OFFICE HOURS.

MR. TRAYLEN: One of the happy consequences of the introduction of Responsible Government is that we are having much larger importations of

goods than used to be the case, and I need not say that most part of these importations pass over the jetty at Fremantle. It might have been hoped that after several months' experience of this increase of traffic, the department having charge of it would have been found equal to cope with it. Instead of that, matters have come to this pass: a full jetty is the normal state of things, and a clear jetty the phenomenal. I believe this phenomenal state of affairs was absolutely witnessed as late as the end of last week, but I am not certain; at any rate, a crowded jetty and a congested traffic is the ordinary condition of things. For instance, the s.s. *Tenterden*, which arrived at Fremantle last Saturday week, or it may be last Saturday fortnight, and a case of goods that came by her, and which was very much required, reached its destination at Perth in 13 days. Now 13 days does seem a great deal too much time to get a case of goods delivered from a steamer over a distance of only 12 miles. This is not an exceptional case, as all who have had anything to do with this department are well aware. One would imagine that it would not be a very difficult matter to provide some remedy for the existing state of things as regards this jetty, if sufficient energy and if sufficient attention were displayed on the part of those responsible. I dare say if I could analyse this responsibility, and the cause of this delay and inconvenience, I should find that no one person is entirely to blame, that no particular officer can be charged with being the cause of it. We should probably find that each individual officer connected with the business was quite willing to do a great deal more to remedy the present state of affairs, if his actions were not dependent upon those of some other officer; and that officer on somebody else; and so on. Therefore, I am afraid that in order to get at the root of the matter, I should have to go to the responsible head of the department—whoever he may be—to ascertain if there is any explanation which can be tendered for this state of things that will be satisfactory to the very much annoyed importing public,—annoyed not only at the detention of their goods, but also because these goods must be exposed to the weather during their detention on this jetty. There

are two or three things which appear to me possible, to remedy the present block. One is that the trucks now laden with machinery belonging to the Midland Railway Company should be discharged. I believe that this would be a somewhat expensive process; but is it not a great deal too bad that people in the colony wanting goods, and some of whom are under contract to supply these goods, cannot get them, because the trucks are occupied through the shortcomings of this Midland Railway Company? I should think it ought to be—if it is not actually so, it ought to be—possible for the Government to discharge these trucks, and to charge the defaulting company with demurrage a sufficient sum to recoup them for the expense of unloading these 35 trucks, and so set them free for ordinary use. Another thing which might be done—or, at any rate, it is what we all should do in our ordinary business when there is an extra pressure of work; if the machine working under a normal pressure is unable to cope with the work, it must be made to work a little harder, or for longer hours. It seems out of all sorts to me that the workers on this jetty, no matter what the pressure may be, should only just comfortably go on at a stipulated hour, and go away at a stipulated hour, instead of making some efforts to clear the jetty of its cargo as that cargo arrives. I have no doubt I shall be told that there is not sufficient sorting room to enable the work to be done more expeditiously. Well, then, is it altogether beyond the devices of those having charge of this work to overcome that difficulty, until additional sheds are erected where that sorting can go on properly? Lastly—the whole matter is so urgent and so conspicuous and so well known that it is unnecessary for me to dwell upon it at any length—but, lastly, ought not the Custom House to be opened longer hours than it is for the transaction of ordinary business with the general public? By that ordinary business I mean the making of entries and the receiving of moneys for Customs duties. I think I am correct in saying—at any rate it has been my experience on going to Fremantle to pass entries—that one must wait until 10 o'clock in the morning before you can possibly pass an entry; and, if there

should be occasion to pay duty after 3 o'clock in the afternoon, then you must wait until 10 o'clock next day before you can do it. What is the necessity for these short hours? Possibly I shall be told that the banks close at three o'clock, and that somebody might steal a £5 note from the Custom House if they were to accept money after that hour. If so, can another £5 not be expended in obtaining an iron safe that will hold this money in safety until the bank opens next day? At any rate, that argument will not apply to not opening the office until 10 o'clock in the morning. At present steamers may arrive a few minutes after three, and it is notorious that any goods brought by these steamers cannot be entered at the Custom House until next morning at 10 o'clock. I believe I am correct in saying that. I believe some arrangement is made by which a steamer can go on discharging her cargo if the agents choose to do so; but, then, that cargo is discharged under bond, and consignees cannot obtain possession of their goods, it may be, for several days afterwards, and not infrequently the steamer is back in Melbourne before the cargo she brought to Fremantle reaches its destination at Perth. I hope that at the few words I have said—and I do not wish to take up the time of the House by elaborating what I have to say; I have just mentioned the more salient features as they occurred to me—will lead to some satisfactory explanation, in the first instance as to why the department responsible for this work of clearing the jetty is not able to cope with the requirements of our increased importations, and, further, that it will also lead to the officers in charge of that work being instructed to do their duty in a more expeditious and more effectual manner. I beg to move the motion standing in my name,—“That in the opinion of this Assembly some efficient measures should be adopted by the Government for keeping the Fremantle Jetty reasonably clear of cargo; that the Midland rolling stock should be removed from the trucks now laden with it, so that they may be available for immediate use; and also that the Custom House should be open at least from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for all ordinary business, including receipt of entries and of moneys.”

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): With regard to this resolution, I suppose I am the only person that can give the explanation or information which the hon. member wants, and I presume I am the person to whom he refers as being responsible for the want of organisation (if I may so say) that occurs on this jetty. First of all I would ask him this question, whether he knows of any other place in the world where there is the amount of trade that is done at Fremantle, where the whole of that trade has to be focussed within such a small channel, and done with such limited means for coping with it? I think I may say I am a fairly good organiser—at any rate it has been a life-long habit with me to have everything as far as practicable done on some sort of system that commends itself to my own judgment, and which I hope may commend it to the judgment of others. With regard to this jetty business, I shall be very glad indeed if the hon. member who brought forward this motion, or any other hon. member, can give me some hint as to how we can accomplish what I consider, with our present means, is simply impossible. In the first place there are only two or three lines of rails on the present jetty, and, in the next place, if there were twenty lines of rails there, that would not increase our Customs shed accommodation for sorting and other purposes. Everything that passes over that jetty has to pass under the eye and the supervision of the Customs Department—that must necessarily be so; and the Customs department at the present moment has no sorting shed and no facilities for receiving and storing these goods. The present Government has not been long enough in office to provide all these requirements in the way of shed and sorting accommodation, and consequently we are unable to deal with this increasing traffic as we would like, and as we hope to do. One of my first acts of office was to go down to Fremantle, and see if some plan could not be worked out for remedying the evil complained of. Before we came into office, some sort of a shed was built to meet the increasing trade, but it was feared from the very outset that this would only be a temporary expedient; and I may say

those apprehensions have in time been fully realised; and with the present appliances at our command, with our present accommodation, I saw it would be impossible to deal with the traffic in that expeditious way we should like to deal with it. The next thing I did was to recommend that the Government should build large sorting sheds—transit sheds, as they are called. That, of course, cannot be done in a day, nor in a week; it takes months, and it costs a considerable sum of money. But until these sheds are built, and we are able to deal with the trucks as they are loaded, this congestion must take place. We cannot pack all the stuff as it is landed into trucks and switch it to its destination, without being first examined by the Customs officers; and I am afraid there is not much chance of our improving matters very much, until such time as we have these increased facilities in the way of transit sheds. We will then be able to send whole truck loads down to the sheds as they are loaded, and have a staff stationed there for sorting it and sending it to its destination. The Customs Department have not got any greater facilities now than they had for dealing with the trade when it was not one-third what it is now. If members will look at our shipping returns now they will see that they show a considerable volume of trade; and with our increased jetty accommodation, enabling vessels to discharge alongside instead of into lighters, the congested state of that jetty with our present inadequate means of coping with it, is not to be wondered at. Of course this is satisfactory in one respect, for a crowded jetty implies an increasing trade; still I am aware that it has its inconveniences. But, as I have said, as soon as practicable, we will do all we can to remove or minimise these inconveniences. Until we have a larger storage accommodation there must necessarily be a large amount of goods stored on the jetty. That is not always a detriment; on the contrary it is in the interests of shippers and importers sometimes—when goods have to be transhipped to the North-west for instance, and they are allowed to remain on the jetty, instead of being trucked away and trucked back again when a vessel for the North-west is ready to load. I think this is a de-

cided convenience in cases like that. Until recently we made no charge whatever for this jetty accommodation, but we now make a small charge, though not near so much as it would cost to truck the goods away and back again. Of course, as soon as we have storage room, we will not allow this at all. With regard to this other question of trucks: there are no trucks at the present moment, nor have there been for some days past, loaded with Midland Railway goods. Those trucks are all unloaded, and would have been unloaded before but for the reason which I explained on another occasion, that the Collector of Customs simply had no place where he could put all those huge cases. I was constantly at him to let me have the trucks, as so many trucks meant so much money to my department, and eventually we managed to stack them, and at present there are no trucks, to my knowledge, loaded with Midland Railway stuff. The trucks were left so long as they were, simply because we did not know where on earth to put the stuff without interfering with the general traffic; and even now it is rather an inconvenience to us.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Is there any charge made?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I don't know whom I can charge. The Collector of Customs finds that according to the Act he cannot under 90 days get rid of the stuff, but, after 90 days have expired, he can insist upon the removal of these cases. In the meantime we have to do the best we can. Nobody will take delivery of them. This jetty question has caused me a lot of worry. It worries me every day of my life. I try to do my best, and the officers of the department are very anxious indeed to do the work; but with the present means at our disposal, I really do not know how we can get over the difficulty, until such time as we have these transit sheds finished, which will be in a few months, when I hope the present cause for complaint will cease to exist. I do not know whether, after this explanation, the hon. member wishes to press his motion. I assure him that whatever can be done will be done by the department. The General Traffic Manager has the matter under his consideration, so that the present incon-

venience and delay are not because we have not given the matter our attention. As to the Customs office hours, I dare say my hon. friend the Premier, who has charge of that department, may have a few words to say. As to working overtime, I think there is nothing that members dislike so much as an Excess Bill, and I can assure this House that if we have to put a lot of men to work overtime there will be a very considerable excess vote. There is too much overtime now in my opinion.

MR. A. FORREST: Why not employ more men?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I dare say there would be something said about that by the hon. member when he got the vote before him.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): With reference to the office hours at the Customs, I believe they are the same as the hours in all the other public offices, — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MR. TRAYLEN: I was referring only to the hours for making entries and receiving money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hours in the Treasury for that purpose are from 10 to 3, and it is the same at the Customs; and the banks also have the same hours. I believe that is the universal custom. It is necessary to close the business a little earlier, so that the books may be balanced, which must be before the clerks leave every day. Of course, if we extend the hours for this kind of work, it will necessitate the clerks having longer hours, because they would have to remain behind to balance their books just the same. However, I am quite willing to look into the matter. But I may say this, that I have had no complaints from business people at Fremantle about the present hours being inconvenient. This is the first I have heard of it. I do not know whether Dr. Wollaston recommended it or not. I should think the people of Fremantle would have complained before now if the hours were not suitable. I do not suppose we could force the banks to alter their hours. But if it is shown to me that the present hours at the Customs are inconvenient to the general public, I will promise the House to inquire into it, and see what can be done.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** There can be no doubt, I think, that business people at present—in Perth at any rate—are inconvenienced by the short hours during which the Customs Office is opened for making entries and receiving payments for duties; and I do not think there would be much hardship in extending the hours. I do not see that it is necessary for this office to close at 3 o'clock because the banks close at that hour. With reference to the jetty arrangements, I quite sympathise with the head of the department in the difficulty he has to cope with in this traffic, in addition to his other work. It has been stated that goods intended for the Northern ports are left on the jetty for the convenience of the shippers. So far as I know there is no protection for these goods on the jetty, and I should like to know whether the Government hold themselves responsible for these goods when they are left to remain on the jetty.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn):** We don't.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** Then I do not see how you can make any charge. If the Government charge these people for storing their goods on the jetty, I should say they ought to become responsible for any damage done to the goods. With regard to the Midland Railway trucks which have been referred to, it does appear a most extraordinary thing that when the business people of the colony were calling out for more trucks, this Midland Railway Company should be allowed to monopolise 35 trucks for weeks. We have been told there is no means for charging for the storage of these goods.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn):** The Customs can charge for storage, but not for the trucks.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** All I can say is, if the Customs Act does not give the Collector this much power, the sooner it is altered the better.

**MR. RANDELL:** From my experience, the difficulty in getting entries passed at the Customs arises in some measure, so far as Perth people are concerned, from the fact that the bills of lading are not obtainable from the banks in time for the 11 train, and as there is no train afterwards until 2 o'clock, it is then too late. With regard to the jetty difficulty,

perhaps a little too much consideration is paid to the loading of outgoing steamers. Everything is put on one side for the sake of loading these outgoing steamers. I think the inconvenience should be equally shared by all parties concerned. Probably a little more system, too, is desirable in the way of regulating the traffic. No doubt the Commissioner of Railways will do all he can to meet the convenience of the public in this matter.

**MR. TRAYLEN:** After what has fallen from the Government and other members, I shall be only too pleased to withdraw this resolution, and more particularly so because it has produced the effect I desired.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### LOAN ESTIMATES, 1892.

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole, to consider the Estimates of Expenditure from Loan Accounts for the year 1892.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** The Estimates of Expenditure on Loan Accounts, which I had the honor to place on the table last evening, call for a few observations from me. As members can see, these Loan Estimates are now assuming considerably greater importance than they used to do. As our loan expenditure increases, so these Estimates must increase in importance. Last year this House unanimously, or at any rate without a division, authorised the raising of a loan of £1,336,000. It will be seen that the Government, last year, spent but a very small portion of that loan, but we now propose, as members will observe from the Estimates now before them, to commence to spend this loan in real earnest. We intend to carry out the works which have been authorised by Parliament to be undertaken, as expeditiously as is possible. Members will also notice that we have some small balances from former loans. Of the Loan of 1884 we have an unexpended balance of £3,599 1s. 7d.; and of the Loan of 1888 we have an available balance of £5,166 6s. 10d. These amounts, which are the remnants (if I may so call them) of these old loans, we propose to expend this year in the manner shown on these Estimates. We also propose this year to expend a total

sum of £669,963 16s. 1d. out of our last loan. No doubt that will strike members—in fact it strikes me too—as a very large amount. But it must be borne in mind that a considerable amount of this money, a very considerable amount, will be necessary in order to provide the rolling stock and the permanent way material for the railways that have been authorised by this House. It will be necessary, as soon as possible, to indent for all the rails and all the rolling stock, also for the dredges, and in fact for everything that will be required for carrying on the public works which the Government are entering upon; and, before we order these things, it is of course necessary that we should be provided with funds. Hon. members will see that no less a sum than £289,757 is included in these estimates for dredges, rolling stock, permanent way, and also immigration. As I said just now, it is necessary we should send these indents home as soon as we can, because, as members are aware, it takes a considerable time to get these rails out here, and a considerable time to construct these locomotives and the other machinery necessary; therefore we ask you now to sanction this expenditure, so that no time may be lost in proceeding with these works. Of course all the principal items on these Estimates must be familiar to hon. members; they know all these works have been authorised, either by bills or by resolutions of this House, and of course members expected to see them on these Estimates. I do not suppose they would have been at all satisfied if we had not come down with our Estimates framed so as to include these various works. Therefore it is unnecessary for me to detain the committee by any further reference to them. The part which takes up most room on these Estimates is not that which involves the largest items of expenditure; the greater portion of the Estimates is occupied with details of the individual salaries of the officers necessary to carry out these works, and that part will require some explanation from me, because, until members comprehend exactly the system upon which these Estimates are based, there will be some little confusion in their minds as to the necessity for all these officers as they now appear. These Estimates

have been framed in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Act. Our present Audit Act makes it necessary, not only that these Loan Estimates shall be submitted to Parliament showing the objects of the proposed expenditure, but they must also show all the salaries and allowances to be paid out of loan funds, just in the same way as the Estimates of ordinary expenditure. I may say that we have had considerable difficulty, both in the Treasury and in the Public Works department, in complying with the provisions of the Audit Act in the way that we would desire to do; and the only way in which we have been able to do so is in the form in which these Estimates are now, for the first time, presented. It would appear, from a casual glance at these Estimates, that a great many different officers are to be employed; but I wish to inform hon. members that it is not so. A great many of these officers who are shown in connection with various works about to be undertaken, or already undertaken, are really one and the same individuals; and if hon. members are curious enough and industrious enough to go right through these Estimates they will trace certain officers drawing salaries for one part of the year in respect of one particular work, and the same officers during another part of the year drawing salaries in respect of other works; sometimes they are employed for one month, sometimes for two, sometimes for three, and so on. But they are not all different officers. It is the same officer over and over again, and it has been necessary to arrange them in this way in order that their services should be charged to the particular work upon which they have been employed, at various times, during the year. Sometimes you have a resident engineer, or a draughtsman, or a clerk, drawing a month's salary in connection with this railway, and the same officer drawing two months' salary in connection with that railway, and the same officer again drawing three months' salary in connection with some other work. But he has to appear under all these works in these Estimates, and it is this which makes the list, at first glance, appear so formidable. But when members get to understand the matter, they will find that the number of officers employed is not



nearly so large as it at first appears. I hope I have made myself clear; if not, I shall be glad to explain any item when we come to it. It might have been competent for the Government to have lumped all these officers together, and put them under one head, "Professional and Clerical Assistance." That, of course, would have been a very easy matter, and probably hon. members would have had less trouble to understand it, and, no doubt, it would have led to less discussion. But we thought we would not be complying exactly with the provisions of the Audit Act if we had done so, and therefore we here show the salary and allowance of every officer to be paid out of each vote, in the same manner as we do on the Estimates of ordinary expenditure. No doubt this has some advantage, so far as this House is concerned, as it enables members to deal with the salary of each individual officer, whereas if the whole had been lumped under the head of "Professional and Clerical Assistance" the Government would have been able to expend the vote in any way they chose, and pay these officers what salaries they chose. Of course I need hardly say that if, in carrying out any of these works, some of these officers may not be required, or if their services may not be required for the time specified, the money will not be expended and no harm will have been done. These Estimates, I may say, have been made out by the Engineer-in-Chief, under the direction of my hon. colleague the Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works; and a great deal of trouble has been taken in preparing them in as fair and correct a manner as possible; and I have no doubt the whole thing will work out very well when it comes into practice. It must also be remembered that if some of the salaries, as they are shown on these Estimates appear somewhat large, the work on which these officers are employed is only temporary work. It is not the same as if they had permanent employment. Some of these officers may have to be brought from the other colonies, and being only employed temporarily you cannot expect them to work for the same salary as if they were permanently engaged. I do not know that I need say any more in introducing these Estimates. The various heads of services are as familiar to hon. members as they are to me; and

my friend the Commissioner of Railways will be glad, I am sure, as we go through the items in committee, to explain in detail any item which members may desire to have any information about. Members are all aware that the only great work we have actually undertaken so far, and is in progress, is the first item on the schedule, and that is the first section of the railway from Perth to Bunbury; and I am very glad to say that in a very few days we hope to be able to let the second section, and to push on the work as quickly as possible. My hon. friend the Commissioner will be able to tell you that he has on the table the plans and sections of the two, and I think you will say that they do credit to his department, and to the Engineer-in-Chief who is carrying out these important works under the direction of my hon. friend. I now beg to move the first vote, "Estimates of Expenditure from Loan of 1884, £3,599 1s. 7d."

MR. R. F. SHOLL moved that progress be reported. These Estimates represented a very large expenditure, and as they had only been brought in the previous evening he thought members ought to have an opportunity of looking into them. He regretted very much that the Government had not introduced these Estimates earlier in the session.

MR. A. FORREST said he had followed the Premier's statement very carefully, but he certainly failed to see the necessity for such a large staff of officers as appeared on these Estimates, especially in connection with some of the works. For instance, on the line between here and Bunbury, the contract having been let, or about to be let, and the plans and everything prepared, what was the necessity of having all these engineers and draughtsmen, and clerks? He could understand the necessity for a resident engineer and an assistant engineer, but certainly not all these clerks and draughtsmen. He also noticed an officer with a new title altogether,—Land Transfer Surveyor, at £626 per annum. That was a very large salary to pay this officer.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said this officer was a contract surveyor, and out of this amount he had to pay the men under him. If the hon. member would

look at the periods for which several of these clerks and draughtsmen were paid, he would see that the term of their engagement had already expired, as they were only charged for two months. As to not introducing these Estimates earlier in the session, the difficulty had been in preparing them so as to meet the requirements of the Audit Act. They had given his department infinite trouble to frame them in this way, and he doubted whether it would not be necessary to alter the provisions of the Audit Act in this respect. It was simply impossible to prepare these Estimates with absolute accuracy, and to say months beforehand how many weeks this officer might be wanted, and how many months another officer might be wanted, and split these officers up in the way they were here split up—one-sixth of a man for this work, one-fourth of another man for another work, and so on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said his hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways had been worrying him for weeks and months about these Estimates, so as to have them prepared in accordance with the Act. They thought at first it would be impossible to do it, but, after a great deal of trouble, they managed to get them into their present shape, which was the cause of the delay in bringing them forward.

Motion to report progress—put and passed.

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at a quarter past 4 o'clock, p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 16th March, 1892.

Appropriation Bill: third reading—Hawkers and Pedlars Bill: second reading: in committee: third reading—Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale: despatch from Secretary of State—Customs Bill: error in—Railways Act, 1878, Amendment Bill: second reading: in committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 8 o'clock.

#### PRAYERS.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL.

This bill was read a third time and passed.

#### HAWKERS AND PEDLARS BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I have to move the second reading of an Act to repeal the present law relating to hawkers and pedlars. The reason why the Government introduced this bill into the Assembly in the first place was owing to representations made during the recess as to the great nuisance these hawkers and pedlars were in the country districts, and it was thought desirable that some step should be taken to put a stop to it. Also, during this session a resolution was passed in the Assembly requesting the Government to bring in a bill to repeal the old Act. Under the provisions of this bill no further licenses will be granted to hawkers and pedlars; but any license granted at the present time shall continue in force during its present term. This bill will not, therefore, interfere with licenses now in force. Clause 5 deals with penalties. Clause 6 exempts certain persons, such as commercial travellers and others, from the provisions of the previous clause. Clause 7 provides that nothing in the Act shall take away or diminish any of the powers now vested in any municipal council. I think most of the hawkers and pedlars are Asiatics, and hardly a single one can be called a native of the United Kingdom. Besides the Asiatics, there are probably a few Italians or other foreigners holding licenses. In the old times, when the means of communication was not so good as now,