

**Legislative Assembly,**

Wednesday, 19th October, 1898.

Petition of J. Gibson: Cottesloe Road Contract, Compensation—Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Scheme: Preference to British Manufacturers; Ministerial Statement—Papers presented—Question: Spirit Distillation and Supervision—Question: Registration of Firms—Question: Duties on Perishable Goods—Question: Libellous Report and its Origin—Immigration Restriction Act and Alleged Existence of Leprosy: Select Committee's Report, Motion to print (negative)—Goldfields Act Regulations, Select Committee's Report—Deputy Speaker. New Order—Motion: Government Business, Precedence—Coolgardie Municipal Rate Validation Bill, all stages—Mining on Private Property Bill, third reading—Annual Estimates, in Committee of Supply; Votes passed for Works, Buildings, Lands and Surveys, Fisheries, Woods and Forests, Stock, Agricultural Department, Agricultural Bank; progress reported—Marriage Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Police Act Amendment Bill, third reading, Division—Coolgardie Water Supply Construction Bill, Legislative Council's Amendments—Adjournment.

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

**PRAYERS.****PETITION OF J. GIBSON: COTTESLOE ROAD CONTRACT, COMPENSATION**

MR. MONGER (York) presented a petition from Mr. John Gibson, contractor, praying that further inquiry be made into his claim for compensation, consequent on delays in the supply of railway trucks for conveying bluestone required in his contract for metalting the Cottesloe portion of the Perth-Fremantle road in 1896; his losses amounting to £1,489 13s. 4d. and £176 11s.: total, £1,666 4s. 4d.

Petition received, read, ordered to be printed, and to be considered at the next sitting of the House.

**COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY SCHEME: PREFERENCE TO BRITISH MANUFACTURERS.**

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) made the following statement:—With reference to a resolution of the House, dated the 21st September last,

the Government have made representations to the contractors, but have not been able to insert the necessary clause in the contracts providing for preference being given to British manufacturers, without guaranteeing the contractors against loss in consequence, and this has not been found practicable.

**PAPERS PRESENTED.**

By the PREMIER: By-laws of the municipalities of Bunbury (general), Perth (vehicles), and Bulong (rubbish deposits).

Ordered to lie on the table.

**QUESTION: SPIRIT DISTILLATION AND SUPERVISION.**

MR. HIGHAM asked the Premier,—1, Whether he was aware that considerable quantities of spirit, presumed to be made at authorised stills, were being vended in Perth and other places. 2, Whether these stills, allowed for purposes of distilling spirit for fortifying wine, were under any supervision; if not, why not? 3, Whether it was intended to transfer this department to the control of the Collector of Customs: if so, when?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—1, The police report that there is no reason to believe that this is so. 2, The police report that there is no reason to think that licensed stills are used for this purpose, and such stills are under the supervision of the police. 3, Yes; as soon as possible.

**QUESTION: REGISTRATION OF FIRMS.**

MR. WILSON asked the Attorney General,—1, In view of the fact that a very small portion of the firms trading in Western Australia had been registered under the Registration of Firms Act, 1897, what steps the Government proposed to take to enforce the provisions of that Act. 2, Whether the companies in Western Australia had complied with the provisions of the Companies Act. If not, what steps the Government intended to take to enforce the provisions of that Act in regard to the filing of balance-sheets and return of shareholders.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather) replied:—1, It is

not the fact that a very small portion of the firms trading in Western Australia have been registered, but it is the intention of the Government to enforce the penalty for any omission to comply with the provision of the Act. 2, The Government are not aware of any failure to comply with the provisions of the Companies Act by any company.

#### QUESTION: DUTIES ON PERISHABLE GOODS.

MR. LEAKE, without notice and by leave, asked the Premier whether he had taken any steps, as promised, with regard to the tariff and the duties on perishable goods.

THE PREMIER: Did the hon. member mean potatoes?

MR. LEAKE: Yes.

THE PREMIER: Steps had been taken.

MR. LEAKE: A telegram had been received from Albany, stating there had been a refusal.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: Steps were taken three or four days ago.

#### QUESTION: LIBELLOUS REPORT AND ITS ORIGIN.

MR. MORAN: I wish to ask the Premier, without notice, whether he can tell the House if any steps have been taken to carry out the resolution with reference to the false report sent to a Kalgoorlie newspaper, which emanated from Perth. There was a resolution of this House to the effect that inquiry should be made as to who sent the false report. Is there any correspondence?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: There is no correspondence. The evidence given in the Supreme Court, I believe, with other information which has reached me, seems to imply that an officer of the police had something to do with the report: and it is proposed to appoint a committee of three, in accordance with the police regulations, to investigate the matter. Probably the committee will be appointed to-morrow.

#### IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT AND ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF LEPROSY.

##### SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. VOSPER brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the working of the Immigra-

tion Restriction Act, and into the alleged existence of leprosy in the colony.

Report received and read.

##### MOTION.

MR. VOSPER: I beg to move that the report be printed.

##### AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not know what the regular procedure is, but I really think it is not right that a Committee should make statements which are not based on any facts, as far as I know. Unless they can produce evidence before us, it is time I should take some notice of it, and move that this portion of the Committee's report should be struck out. It seems to me that to make a statement that the Government sent a patrol of police all over the country to hunt for lepers and to scare them away, while the Committee were sitting, is a reflection upon the Government; and any Executive which would permit such a thing to be done would, in my opinion, deserve the censure of this House. As a matter of fact, speaking for myself as head of the Executive, I have never given a single instruction to anyone with regard to lepers, or scaring anyone away, nor am I aware that any police constable ever went in search of one, or ever did anything of the kind. If the Committee have received evidence to that effect, all I can say is it was done without the knowledge of the Government, or, at any rate, without my knowledge as Ministerial head of the police. Before we permit a statement of that sort to be received from the Committee—though I do not know who the members of the Committee are, nor do I care, if they make statements that are not true—I think we should investigate it. It makes little difference to me whether the report is placed on the table or not, because I have done nothing to incur the displeasure or censure of this House in regard to the action taken by this House. I have not given any instruction to the police to take any action which would, directly or indirectly, be likely to scare Asiatics while a search was being made by the Committee for lepers in the colony. I had thought that the Committee would pursue their investigations, and I was under the impression they would be able

to produce lepers, one or more, because the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) told us in his dramatic way, when moving his motion, that if we would only give him this Committee, he would produce a leper next day. I was under the impression that he would do so, because I saw nothing improbable in the statement that a leper existed in or about Perth, and possibly more than one; and I thought the hon. member would have kept his word and produced a leper. In fact, I assisted the hon. member to get the Committee appointed; but I do not think the hon. member and those associated with him are treating the Government well, by turning round and saying we did our best to thwart the Committee in their investigations.

MR. VOSPER: We have not said that.

THE PREMIER: The report says that the Government, or the police under their direction, carried on an investigation into this matter while a Committee of this House was sitting to investigate it. I say I never authorised an investigation to be made on behalf of the Government, while the Committee were sitting. I never gave instructions to the police to scour the country, while the Committee were sitting; and I should think it very improper for any department of the Government to in any way try to thwart a Select Committee of this House in conducting an investigation.

MR. MORAN: It was under the order of the Committee, and at their request, I believe, that the police went round.

THE PREMIER: I only know that the Executive did not take any action in the matter, after the Committee were appointed to make the investigation.

MR. VOSPER: This report, for which I as chairman am partly responsible, does not assert that the Premier, or the officers at the head of the police department, are themselves responsible for this action; but it is an undoubted fact that the police did take steps as mentioned in this report; and the Committee are of opinion, as shown by the evidence, that this action would have the effect of scaring those persons among whom lepers might be found. I have evidence, and in fact the police have sent a report to the Committee signed by Inspector McKenna,

stating that they have made an investigation, and been unable to find any lepers in or about Perth.

THE PREMIER: That investigation was made before the Select Committee was appointed—long before—and it was made in consequence of sensational articles which appeared in the hon. member's newspaper.

MR. MORAN (to Mr. Vosper): Did you ask McKenna to do it?

MR. VOSPER: No.

MR. MORAN: I was present when you did so.

MR. VOSPER: We asked Inspector McKenna to place a policeman at our disposal, so that he might go round Perth with Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith and visit places where lepers were said to be located; but, in addition to that, Mr. McKenna has sent in a report addressed to me as chairman of the Committee—I received it at a meeting held last week—and the conclusion the Committee arrived at, from the presentation of that report, was that the police had been making investigations quite independently of the Committee, and their report implies that also. That report is now in the hands of the *Hansard* reporters who were taking evidence before the Committee, and it will, I expect, be printed with the evidence as an appendix.

can assure the House that the Committee had no intention of censuring the Premier in his administration of the police department. All we wished to emphasise was that we did not think it right or just that the police should take action upon this matter, after the Committee had been appointed and while we were pursuing our investigations.

MR. MORGANS: Has the hon. member any evidence that the police did so?

MR. VOSPER: We have evidence in that report from Inspector McKenna. The report was sent to me as chairman of the Committee, but it did not reach me until the Committee had been sitting over a fortnight.

THE PREMIER: Did you not ask for it?

MR. VOSPER: No.

MR. LYALL HALL: I think the Premier looks at this matter in a wrong light—in a light in which the Committee never intended it to be regarded. The Committee, I feel sure, never intended to convey that the Premier or the Govern-

ment had anything to do with the police patrolling the city to look for these lepers. I was not present at the meeting when Mr. Cowan, police magistrate, was examined on this subject; but I was told to-day that the police authorities had acted entirely whilst this Committee was sitting. I took that to be so; but, from what the chairman of the Committee now says, it appears the action may have been taken by the police prior to the appointment of the Select Committee. I can assure the Premier that nothing was further from the thoughts of the Committee than to imply that the Premier had anything to do with the action of the police in this matter. I do not think that idea entered the head of any member of the Committee. I may say that, as the report shows, there appear to be absolutely no lepers in Perth. It has been stated freely, by Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith, that there were a number of lepers in Perth. He was given an opportunity to produce them, and he produced one man who, the doctors say, has no trace of leprosy upon him. I feel sure, from the evidence, that there are no lepers in or about Perth. I would also like to mention that the Committee found that at the present time and since the Premier's return from the old country, the Immigration Restriction Act has been most stringently administered, and there is absolutely no chance of any Asiatics getting into the colony improperly.

MR. MORAN: There is probably some little misunderstanding in connection with this matter. I do not think it is right that we should allow a report to be presented from a Select Committee, censuring the police for some action which is said to have been taken, without first finding out whether the police are deserving of censure. I was present when the chairman of the Committee met Inspector McKenna, who had been summoned at the request of the chairman; and the chairman arranged with him that Mr. McKenna should do all he could to expedite the investigation of the Committee. Is it wise for us to censure the police for being extra zealous in the matter? The inspector promised to do all he could to assist the Committee, and how was he to know that he was simply to go round with one man in a cab, that man being Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith?

And was it likely that Mr. Smith would be such an energetic man as to discover lepers, if there were any? The fact is, Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith has led the chairman astray, and the proprietor of the *Sunday Times* astray, by absolutely untrue though sworn testimony—an absolute deceit from beginning to end—a deceit perhaps ignorantly practised by Mr. Smith. I do not think these scares should be published broadcast in the colony and to the world, on the word of a man of the character of Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith, alleging the existence of numerous lepers in Perth. What is there to show the existence of any lepers?

MR. VOSPER: We tell you here in the evidence.

MR. MORAN: I have heard the evidence, and know all the circumstances. The *Sunday Times* has stated, on the authority of Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith, that 10 or 11 lepers exist in and around Perth, in the last stage of the affliction. The report now presented by the Committee tells us that they have not been able to find a single leper, either in the early, or the middle, or the last stage; and I say it is a libel on the colony and on the administration of the Government to say, as the *Sunday Times* has done, that the authorities were so careless, so filthy, and so idle that a dozen cases of leprosy existed in Perth alone. I object most emphatically to the police being censured in any way in this connection, and I do think that the particular language in the report, referring to the interference by the police, was not intended by the Committee to censure the Government; but the words do censure the Government, and I object to the phrase used. I would suggest to the Committee that their report should be taken back and re-drafted, and that, if possible, the Committee should avoid any ambiguous phraseology blaming the Government, or creating the impression that the Government had caused a scare amongst Asiatics, by warning them that some man was coming round to look for lepers. The chairman of the Committee has explained that this passage in the report was not meant to censure the Government; but I do not think it is fair to censure the police, for the inspector acted with and by the request of the chair-

mar. of the Committee, though what was done in the matter seems to have been done in such a way as to create a false impression. As to the police being to blame for not having detected lepers before the Select Committee were appointed, we know that the only case of leprosy found in this colony in recent years was that which was detected by the vigilance of the police at Coolgardie.

MR. VOSPER: That is not correct.

MR. MORAN: That is correct, and I know a good deal about it; and I sincerely regret that, amongst all the other things that may be levelled against Perth as a community, we should have such a serious scare raised by sensational articles in a newspaper, by assertions which are proved to be foundationless, and made upon the authority of a man of the character of Mr. Gilbert Probyn Smith. It will teach the people to be cautious in accepting all those "yellow journal" scares, in the future, except with a large amount of salt; and, when such reports appear again, I have no doubt the proprietor of the *Sunday Times* will be more careful as to the statements he puts forth. He created a scare, which the Select Committee have found to be utterly foundationless. I think the report should be revised. I throw out that suggestion to the authors of it, so that the objectionable paragraph may be struck out.

MR. VOSPER: I rise, as a matter of personal explanation, to say that the hon. member who has just sat down is absolutely mistaken as to the purport of the conversation between Mr. Inspector McKenna and myself. It took place in the Clerk's office in this House; and the only thing the inspector was instructed to do was to obtain a cab, to put a constable into that cab, and to accompany Mr. Smith on a certain tour of investigation he was about to undertake. But I understand the police had previously made an investigation, and also that they afterwards made an investigation. But in any case, whenever the investigation was made, the Committee maintained that it would have the effect which is indicated in their report. Again I reiterate that there is not the slightest fault found with the Government, nor is there any insinuation in the report that the Government attempted to baulk in-

quiry. That being so, I respectfully submit that there is no necessity to revise the report.

MR. SOLOMON: As one of the Select Committee, I am sorry the Premier should take the matter as he has done; because there is not one word in the report showing that the Committee had any intention of casting any censure whatever on the members of the Government or on the police authorities. It was mentioned, but I was not aware of it till the report was drafted, that the police had gone round the town before the constable could get round with the person who gave evidence; and it was considered that, if such were the case, it would tend to frighten Asiatics; and we know how it is amongst these people: even if they have a leper amongst them, they will do all they possibly can to hide him. That, I think, came out in the evidence of Mr. Cowan, who believed that they would do all they possibly could to conceal a case of leprosy among their Asiatic brethren. This note was not inserted in the report with a view of censuring either the Government or any officer of the department. I am sorry the Government should view it in that light. I feel sure that the public will think this matter of some importance; and the investigation made will relieve their minds to this extent, at any rate, that no case of leprosy can be found. But at the same time, taking into consideration the habits of Asiatics and aliens generally, we consider that the utmost precaution should be taken to prevent such a disease as leprosy being allowed to continue in our midst.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): From what has just been said by the last speaker (Mr. Solomon), it would appear—and the Government have no doubt about this whatever—that, perhaps with the exception of one member of the Committee, no censure was intended to be cast on the Government, or even on the police department. But, if the members of the Committee had only seen this report before it was sent to the House, I feel perfectly sure that none of them would have allowed it to be signed by their chairman and sent in. Here is the finding, which conveys, in language clear and unmistakable, an allegation against the Government, which is a direct

censure upon its action. This is the language of the report:—

The Committee found it most difficult to obtain any satisfactory data in connection with this subject, and consider that the action taken by the authorities in allowing the country to be scoured by troopers in search of lepers while the Committee was sitting, was calculated to defeat the ends for which the Committee was constituted, by scaring the Asiatic community, and causing persons who may be affected to be transported to a distance, or sent out of the colony.

If the language is intended to convey what it means, there is only one meaning to be drawn from that paragraph; namely, that the Government, or the authorities, have been guilty of an action they should not have taken: that they have caused these people to be scared, so to speak, out of the community, who otherwise would have been found and detected, and brought before the Committee. Then the last paragraph carries still further the notion of a vote of censure:—

Your Committee are also of opinion that when a subject is delegated to a Select Committee for investigation, the authorities should not take steps to pursue an investigation of their own until the Committee has been consulted, such action being calculated, in our opinion, to frustrate the labours of the Committee charged with the work.

That is a repetition of what I have just read, meaning, in other words, that the Government have connived at or directly authorised or instructed the police authorities, the police inspector, to do something that he ought not to have done. It was clearly intended, by the gentleman who drew this report, to mean that the Government or the authorities had attempted to frustrate the efforts of the Committee in obtaining the information which this House authorised them to gather. I do think it would be just as well, perhaps, for the future, if hon. members would only recollect, when they are appointed on a Select Committee, that they should take very good care that they hear the report of their chairman read before they allow him to present it to the House.

MR. KENNY: In justice to myself, as well as to this House, I ought to make a statement as to my connection, or want of connection, with this Committee. During this session I have been on seven different Committees; and when this Committee was elected, I was then act-

ing on three others. As soon as I heard my name mentioned as a member of the Committee, I suggested that it be struck off the list, as I could not attend all the meetings. I never attended a single meeting of this Committee—I was unable to do so—until yesterday afternoon when I was pressed to go into the room to make up a quorum. The Resident Magistrate of Perth was waiting there; and, in order that no discourtesy might be shown to the magistrate, I went in. That was the only occasion on which I attended. While there, after Mr. Cowan retired, we went into the matter of the report; and, although we did not get to the end of the report when we separated, I am bound to say that there was not one single word in regard to the Government or to the police, or any action in the nature of approval or of censure named while sitting in that room; nor am I in any way a party to the insertion of any censure of the Government in the report.

MR. MORGANS: I quite agree with what the Premier has said in reference to this matter, that the report implies not only a censure upon the Government but upon the police also. We must accept what the hon. member, the chairman of that Committee, says—that it was not intended to be a censure; and I quite believe that is so. But in this House we cannot deal with what people's intentions may be; we must deal with facts as they appear; and I think any ordinary man of the world would decide on reading that report, that it was a severe censure, and would look upon it as a very severe censure, upon the Government, and at the same time upon the police. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) asserted that there were lepers in this colony; and we know that a sensational report appeared in his journal about the large number of lepers who lived in the country. He came to this House and asked us to grant him a Select Committee. The Premier and the Government heartily joined in granting that request; and the investigation has resulted in this, that a leper cannot be found in the whole of Western Australia, at least so far as the Committee's investigations have gone. After having called

evidence, after having had at their disposal the services of the police, what is the result? No leper can be found; and a report is brought in endeavouring to give an excuse to this House and to the country for not finding a leper.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. MORGANS: That is the only way you can take this report. These lepers have been sought for. I believe that a very well-known journal in this colony made some such statement as this before; and I think it cost them five or six hundred pounds to try to find a leper, which I do not think they were able to do.

MR. VOSPER: They did find one.

MR. MORGANS: Well, I thought that journal was not able to find a leper; but, at any rate, I know it cost them a good deal of money to find him. The result was that, notwithstanding the fact that the hon. member knew quite well that this journal had such enormous difficulty in finding a leper—because I believe he knew all about it—he presses for the appointment of a Select Committee, and we know the result. No man in this House with any reason could accept this report in any other light than that it casts a reflection on the Government and on the police; and the inference is that, if the Government, through the police, had not interfered during the time that this investigation was being made, these gentlemen would have been able to find a leper in the colony. I think that is the inference; and, therefore, looking at the seriousness of the position, and the reflection on the police of this colony, I think it is only right that this House should object to receive a report which does reflect so seriously upon the Government and the police authorities. Therefore, I shall move that this report be returned.

#### POINTS OF ORDER.

THE SPEAKER: I do not think that can be done.

MR. MORGANS: Then, sir, I shall move that this report be not received.

THE SPEAKER: It has been received, and ordered to be read. The question now before the House is that the report be printed.

MR. MORGANS: Can I move that the report be not printed?

THE SPEAKER: Vote against it, when I put the question. Negative it, if you like.

MR. LOCKE: As one of the Committee, it is incumbent on me to say a few words. I think I attended all the meetings with the exception of the meeting yesterday, which I did not get back in time to attend; and that was the particular day on which this report was drafted. I certainly read it this afternoon; and I did not look at it in the same light as that in which it has been viewed by this House. I think we might possibly withdraw altogether the clause which has been criticised, and the rest of the report would then be all right. I think I suggested when I read the report that it would be better with that clause struck out; but it appears it was inserted owing to some information that Mr. Cowan gave yesterday; and, as I was not there, I did not hear what he said on the matter. But I think all members of the Committee would be willing to withdraw that clause; and then the report would be fairly correct.

THE SPEAKER: It cannot be done. You cannot revise a Select Committee's report, after it has been brought up and received. Action can be taken afterwards, by bringing forward some distinct motion upon the report.

THE PREMIER: The report could be printed, leaving out the objectionable passages?

THE SPEAKER: I do not think that could be done.

MR. LYALL HALL: Would it be open to me to move a motion?

THE SPEAKER: Not until the report has been printed and laid on the table; and then any member can make a motion with reference to it, say to the effect that it is incorrect, or anything of that kind—anything he may choose to bring forward. But the House cannot revise the report of a Select Committee.

MR. VOSPER: I rise to a point of order. The point is whether it would not be more correct to discuss this matter on a motion that the report be taken into consideration?

THE SPEAKER: Yes; I say that is the proper time to have a discussion on the matter.

DEBATE CONTINUED.

MR. LEAKE: At the request of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) I intend to read a letter, or a report, he referred to as having been sent to him, as Chairman of the Committee, by the Police Department. It is this:—

Perth, October 11th, 1898.

The Commissioner of Police,—

I beg respectfully to report, for your information, that I have had enquiries made by both foot and mounted police at Perth, and at all the Perth suburban stations, re the supposed Chinese lepers reported by the "Sunday Times" of the 17th of September, 1898, to exist in the Perth district. The police have made every inquiry, and also searched diligently, but failed to find any trace of the disease.—John McKenna. Insp't. District Officer.

THE PREMIER: What date is that?

MR. LEAKE: 11th October.

MR. MORGANS: At whose request was that report made?

THE PREMIER: What was the date of the *Sunday Times*?

MR. LEAKE: The 17th September. The letter is covered by a communication from the Commissioner of Police to the Chairman of the Committee, dated 11th October; but it merely says:—

I have the honour to forward herewith, for your information, a report I have received from Inspector McKenna respecting the alleged existence of leprosy in Perth or its environs.

THE PREMIER: He saw the newspaper report, and necessarily made investigations.

MR. VOSPER: On the 11th October, when the Committee were sitting.

THE PREMIER: Investigations were made at once on the 17th September.

MR. VOSPER: The Committee were appointed on the 20th September.

MR. QUINLAN: I happen to know one of the subjects of inspection—an old gentleman here 80 years of age, who visits my house nearly every day; and I think it is a reflection on his family that he should have been the one pointed to as suffering from leprosy. He has reared a family here, and has grandchildren in this colony. Although reference is made here to the fact that troopers went in search, and that it was calculated to defeat the ends for which the Committee were con-

stituted, by scaring the Asiatic community, I have no hesitation in saying, in contradiction to that statement, that the police came to my house after this very man, and to my surprise this man was the one they sought as proof of leprosy.

MR. VOSPER: What date was that?

MR. QUINLAN: I do not know the date, but it was while the Committee were supposed to be sitting. I think I told you I was surprised they had come for him.

MR. VOSPER: They were never asked to go for Hookum Shan.

MR. QUINLAN: I think it is not fair to say there was an attempt to defeat justice as far as the police were concerned, because they came for this very man. I do not blame you (Mr. Vosper) at all; for you believed the statement which had been made. I have known this man from my childhood, and can remember him for over 30 years. To say that he is a leper, on mere flippant information, is, I think, going too far. I believe there is plenty of valuable information in the Committee's report, but that portion to which I refer should be expunged, if possible, and that part reflecting upon the House or the Government should be struck out, because they were in no way responsible. The police came in good faith in order to give the information to the Committee.

MR. VOSPER: Who sent him?

MR. QUINLAN: The police came to my house for him.

MR. VOSPER: He did not go on behalf of the Committee; I can swear to that.

MR. QUINLAN: I am glad to hear you say it.

THE PREMIER: Who produced him?

MR. VOSPER: It was done on their own responsibility. Hookum Shan was summoned, and he came.

THE PREMIER: You are liable for producing the man.

MR. VOSPER: I did not send the police after him.

THE SPEAKER: Order, order.

MR. MONGER: I intend to support the amendment of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) that the report of this Select Committee be not printed. I think it would be a standing disgrace to Western Australia for a report such as has been furnished by the editor of the *Sunday Chronicle*—



A MEMBER: The *Sunday Times*.

MR. VOSPER: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in alluding to me as the editor of the *Sunday Times*?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order. The hon. member must address members by the titles of the constituencies they represent.

MR. MONGER: I beg the hon. member's pardon. But after a report which appeared in a certain paper edited in a certain portion of this city, and after the allegations and charges made against a certain part of the community, I say that if we, the representatives of the people in this colony, allowed such a report as has been furnished by the chairman of the Committee appointed to inquire into these particular circumstances to be printed, it will be a standing disgrace to the Legislature. I, for one, will most heartily support the motion of the member for Coolgardie that the report of the Select Committee be not printed.

Question—that the report be printed—put and negatived.

#### POINT OF ORDER.

MR. VOSPER: I beg to move that this report be taken into consideration to-morrow night.

THE SPEAKER: You cannot do that, if it is not printed.

MR. VOSPER: Then it is impossible to further discuss the thing.

THE SPEAKER: It is impossible to further discuss it, except on some further motion in reference to it. You cannot discuss a paper which the House has decided shall not be printed.

MR. VOSPER: I should like to have it discussed, because this is entirely sprung upon me. I had no idea it was going to take this form.

A MEMBER: Give notice of motion for to-morrow.

#### GOLDFIELDS ACT, REGULATIONS.

##### SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. KINGSMILL brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed in regard to regulations made under the Goldfields Act.

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed.

#### MOTION: DEPUTY SPEAKER.

##### NEW STANDING ORDER.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved

That standing order No. 21 be repealed, and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—"That whenever the House shall be informed by the Clerk at the Table of the absence of Mr. Speaker, in consequence of leave of absence granted to him by the House, or of illness or other unavoidable cause, the Chairman of Committees shall perform the duties and exercise the authority of Speaker in relation to all proceedings of the House as Deputy Speaker, but shall give place to Mr. Speaker on his arrival."

Question put and passed.

THE PREMIER also moved that an address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, submitting the amendment of the Standing Order, and asking for his Excellency's approval.

Put and passed

#### MOTION: GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved:—

That Government business take precedence of all other business for the remainder of the session.

His reason for moving in this direction was to expedite business, and close the session. Notwithstanding the motion, he would be only too glad to confer with his hon. friend opposite (the leader of the Opposition) on any matter which he (Mr. Leake) desired specially to bring before the House during the few remaining days. But it was really necessary the financial business of the Government should be brought to a close as soon as possible.

MR. LEAKE: There was no desire on his part to throw obstacles in the way of business being done; but when notice was given yesterday, he did not understand that the Notice Paper would be made up so as to postpone all private business for to-day. If the Premier would consent to the notices of motion on the paper being considered to-day, he thought we could get rid of the whole lot of them; but if the notices were to be taken to-day in the order in which they appeared upon the paper, it was quite clear that the majority of these simple motions would be shut out.

THE PREMIER said he would be very glad to meet the wishes of the leader of the

Opposition in any way, but the Bills mentioned on the business paper had to go to the other House.

MR. LEAKE: There was no desire on his part to throw obstacles in the way, but he did not think there would be any debates on the motions, with the exception of that of which notice had been given by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). There would be a few introductory remarks. If the Premier assured him that an opportunity would be given for discussing the motions now on the paper, it would facilitate matters.

THE PREMIER: Certainly. He would be very glad.

MR. MORAN: What had been said by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) met with his approval. Members wished to help the Government, but no hon. member should be debarred the right of speaking to his motion. We were bound to get through the business next week, and we ought not to leave any hon. member with the feeling that he had been debarred from the opportunity of speaking on a motion of which notice had been given.

THE PREMIER: There was a desire to get rid of the Bills, and they had to go to the other House.

Question put and passed.

#### COOLGARDIE MUNICIPAL RATE VALIDATION BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

#### SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER: I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time. It is a very simple Bill, its object being to render valid a general rate for the current year made by the municipality of Coolgardie at the beginning of the year, and regarding which doubts have arisen as to whether it is lawfully made. Of course the municipality is, in consequence, under a serious difficulty, and this Bill proposes to validate the rate. It contains the following:

Notwithstanding that the provisions of the Municipal Institutions Act, 1895, may not have been complied with by the Council of the Municipality of Coolgardie in striking the general rate for the current year, or in any matter or thing relating thereto, nevertheless

the said rate shall be deemed to have been duly and lawfully made, and the provisions of the Municipal Institutions Act, 1895, to have been in all respects duly complied with, and the said rate shall be deemed to be good and valid for all purposes, and shall be recoverable by the said Council accordingly.

The Mayor omitted to sign the roll, and in consequence he was advised by counsel that the rate was not properly made. It is fortunate that we are in session and can take steps to rectify the error. I am sure members will be glad to join with me in helping the municipality of Coolgardie out of the difficulty in which they find themselves placed by a technical omission.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I would ask the Premier whether it would be possible to insert, after "Coolgardie," the words "and Cue."

THE PREMIER: Are they wrong, too?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A very slight error has been made, and objections may, or may not, be taken. I think no harm would accrue from the insertion of the words I suggest. Their insertion would meet the case; but otherwise we may probably have to bring in a Bill of a similar nature.

THE PREMIER: The only objection I have is that I have not the facts before me; and there have been no representations made to the Government with regard to it; whereas in regard to Coolgardie, there have been representations made.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I believe the whole of the municipal council have resigned, except two, and there is a doubt as to whether there will be a sufficient majority to strike a rate for the year.

THE PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member will inquire into that, and I shall be glad to assist if there is any difficulty.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

**MINING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY BILL.**

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

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES.****IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.**

Consideration resumed at page 44.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Director. Hon. F. H. Piesse).**

Vote, *Public Works*, £162,991 10s. 7d.:

Debate resumed on vote proposed for General and Engineering divisions, and on the amendment moved by Mr. Leake to reduce item 166, "Roads and bridges throughout the colony, £40,000," by £20,000.

**MR. MORAN:** While not supporting the amendment of the member for Albany to reduce the item for roads and bridges, he believed the time had arrived when some effort should be made in the direction of land taxation. The roads board in the Kalgoorlie district levied a heavy rate for the maintenance of roads, and he would like to see other boards do the same. It was a good principle that, as the colony was likely to lose a tremendous amount of its Customs revenue by reason of the productions of the colony overtaking the demand, and thereby rendering importations of produce unnecessary, or nearly so, the incidence of taxation should be made to follow this change, for it must be evident that, if the producers were overtaking the demand, there must be a good market for their produce, and a large revenue must be going into their pockets, instead of coming to the Treasury through the Customs. If the producers in the country were receiving more money, they could afford to bear taxation on their land, and they should consent cheerfully to some part of the taxation being shifted on them, according to the changed conditions.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** Prices for produce would be down 50 per cent. this year.

**MR. MORAN** said he did not accept that. Could it be said that the colony was already over-producing?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** There was over-production in chaff.

**MR. MORAN:** Yes; but that was only one item, and that over-production was

largely accounted for by the fact of so many teams having been taken off the roads, so that the demand for chaff had gone down. As to bran, potatoes, onions, and eggs, a great deal of land in the colony was well fitted for the production of these necessary articles, and the owners of the good land did not pay any taxation at present. Some parts of the burden should be shifted on to them, and the roads boards also should be made to feel that they should levy a rate in their several districts for maintaining the roads.

**MR. LOCKE:** This vote should be £60,000 instead of £40,000, as all hon. members would doubtless agree, except those who represented townsites, and of course they did not care much about the settlers, but the member for Albany represented a rural district—

**THE PREMIER:** No; he only represented the town of Albany.

**MR. LOCKE:** Oh! Then that explained the hon. member's opposition to the item. He (Mr. Locke) had sat on roads boards for many years, and knew that good roads and bridges tended to promote settlement. To talk about taxing a man who had gone 40 or 50 miles into the bush, for the purpose of keeping up his road, was ridiculous. The Government were practically giving the land away to settlers: and was it not monstrous to propose to tax the land almost as soon as the people were on it? He hoped the vote would be increased next year.

**MR. CONOLLY:** The modesty of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), at the last sitting, in asking for the small amount of £7,000 out of the roads board grant, was admirable. It was an extreme request, even though not made on behalf of the hon. member's constituency, and it could hardly be taken seriously. The system of roads boards was a good and economical way of developing distant portions of the colony, for settlers in each district knew their own requirements best, and were individually interested in making the money go as far as possible. The mere knowledge of the abuses said to have arisen in the northern portion of the colony should have the effect of preventing the recurrence. The chief difficulty in connection with roads boards was to obtain enough

money for them, and such expenditure would undoubtedly be beneficial in the long-run. He would vote against the proposed reduction.

MR. LEAKE: Was the hon. member in favour of roads boards taxing themselves?

MR. CONOLLY: Yes.

MR. LEAKE: That was the principle of the amendment.

MR. WALLACE: While recognising the smallness of the vote, he also recognised the good intentions of the Government to the various districts, which had been too much spoon-fed in the past by money grants for many purposes. There were numerous districts where the population were large enough to keep up their own roads; but others, like that of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), were sparsely populated, and it was the duty of the Government to give them a grant for this purpose. The thinly populated districts, therefore, should be treated with greater liberality than others. In his own district, the principal roads had already been made; and, the Government having spent large sums in laying the foundations of those roads, the district should take charge of their upkeep. It was universally recognised that roads tended to develop the country perhaps to a greater extent than railways. Railways as a rule were not beneficial to the districts through which they had to pass, but merely to the termini.

THE PREMIER: Why not to the district?

MR. WALLACE: When there were good roads through the towns, and the traffic was carried on by means of teams, there was more money in circulation than in townships along lines of railway.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That applied to the towns, but not the districts.

MR. WALLACE: Railways were of little use without roads to feed them. It might seem strange that he, as the chairman of a roads board which had made large demands upon the Government, should speak in this strain; but he had always recognised that it was wrong for the boards to appeal to the Government for every shilling necessary for their purposes. It was time that the country districts should contribute to the local requirements in such matters, and also in matters of sanitation, etc. The remark

which fell from the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) last night occasioned him much regret, and he must protest against such reflections. He also regretted that members were allowed to use their tongues in the same direction, as many had done. One member spoke of chairmen of roads boards as storekeepers and said they acted in collusion with certain contractors in order that they might derive a profit. He protested against such an assertion. The roads boards numbered over 80, and this vote did not amount to more than £500 per board. It was well the Government had recognised the necessity of throwing these people on their own resources, and giving them power to levy a rate to maintain their own roads. The Government should be commended; and he said this although as representative of a mining constituency, he might not be expressing the views of his constituents; still, he feared not. He always felt that the Government were too liberal to the colony generally; and he hoped the Government would consider the people in the back blocks, and give them the greater portion of the grant.

MR. SOLOMON: The estimate for this item of expenditure was based on the requests made by various roads boards when applying to the Government for grants. He fancied the financial year of the roads boards commenced with that of municipal bodies; consequently for this year those boards might have calculated on the amount in their estimates, as sent to the Government. If the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) insisted on this amendment, it would cause great inconvenience to the various roads boards throughout the colony. He was perfectly in accord with roads boards levying rates to assist themselves. His experience was that, unless this were done, those connected with roads boards would not take the deep interest in the subject they otherwise would. He represented a portion of the roads boards in Fremantle; and he had told them the time was come when they must put their hands in their pockets and help the Government to make roads; and that they should be placed on a footing similar to that of municipalities. So far as he knew, they were agreeable to it. In next year it was intimated in time to the

roads boards that they must help themselves and declare a rate, and that the Government would assist them proportionately, he felt sure most of the boards would do what was needed.

**MR. LYALL HALL:** Roads and bridges were especially necessary in this new country, and therefore he would support the item in opposition to the amendment that had been moved. He did not think it desirable that any Government official should be a member of a roads board. It was well known that Government officials were not allowed to participate in any work outside the Government departments; and it was especially bad for a gentleman holding the position of Under-Secretary for Public Works to be a member of a roads board.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** The new regulations prohibited any member of the Public Works Department from becoming a member of either a municipal council or a roads board.

**MR. HALL:** It was only recently that he saw the appointment of the gentleman named, as a member of a roads board a little way out of Perth. If the Director assured him that this gentleman was not now a member of a roads board, and that no public officer could be so, he would be satisfied. If the Minister found, however, that this gentleman was a member of a roads board, there should be a remedy applied.

**MR. OLDHAM:** There was no desire on his part to interfere with the business of this House, but in justice to his constituents he must ventilate their grievances. Was it the intention of the Government to give the privileges of self-government to the people of Woodville, Toorak, and Forest Hill?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** The hon. member was asking a question he could not answer. The question of roads boards was in the hands of the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

**MR. OLDHAM:** If he were to tell the hon. gentleman that the Commissioner of Crown Lands was in perfect accord with the request made by these people, and that the existing roads board had no objection to the establishment of this particular board within their district, surely there ought to be a favourable answer.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** The Minister might deal with that.

**THE PREMIER:** Last night he had told the hon. member that the Government were trying to help in this matter.

**MR. OLDHAM:** A definite answer, one way or the other, was necessary.

**THE PREMIER:** It was for the Minister of Lands to deal with.

At 6.29 p.m. the **CHAIRMAN** left the chair.

At 7.30 the **CHAIRMAN** resumed the chair.

**MR. OLDHAM:** Even at the risk of wearying the House, he would follow out the course of duty he had mapped out for himself, by again calling attention to and giving the history of the application which had been made to the Government for permission to form a roads board on the northern boundary of the city of Perth. Having exhausted every possible means of obtaining the redress of this grievance, having exhausted every channel—

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member had not seen him on the matter, and that was one channel.

**MR. OLDHAM:** Having exhausted every channel for appealing to the Government, he was now compelled to appeal to the sense of fairness and justice of hon. members. A deputation had interviewed the Commissioner of Crown Lands, after the presentation of a petition, and the Commissioner promised to do all he could to assist the deputation in obtaining what they desired. That was a promise made by a member of the Ministry. The petition represented about 800 people, occupying some 300 houses.

**MR. A. FORREST:** Why did they not ask for power to form a municipality?

**MR. OLDHAM:** Allow them to judge as to what was best for themselves. They wanted a roads board, because they were unskilled in municipal government, and must creep before they walked. Give them the opportunity under the smaller powers, and see what they could do. Having anchored themselves to the soil, they wanted the convenience of roads; and although the Government had built a school in their district, yet there was

not a road within three-quarters of a mile which these people could use. They had no means of enforcing sanitary regulations.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** They could do that by forming a health board.

**THE PREMIER:** The roads board would not have power to make sanitary regulations.

**MR. OLDHAM** said he had the Roads Act, and would read it to the Committee if necessary. A roads board could strike a rate.

**THE PREMIER:** Yes; a board could do that.

**MR. OLDHAM:** It was not compulsory for the Government to grant any money to the board, if formed.

**THE PREMIER:** It was usual to make a grant to a new board. That was the general object of persons in trying to form a roads board. They wanted money.

**MR. OLDHAM** said he was assured by the Commissioner of Lands that this request should be sent to the Director of Public Works.

**THE PREMIER:** No; it should be sent to the Cabinet.

**MR. OLDHAM:** That statement could be refuted from a letter he held in his hand, which he received from the Commissioner of Lands. He would read the letter, as it was not marked private.

**MR. MONGER:** Read it, and wind up.

**MR. OLDHAM** said he would rather not read it.

**THE PREMIER:** The Government wanted it read.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Did the letter refer to the question before the House?

**MR. OLDHAM:** It did, inasmuch as he desired to show that the Minister in charge of the department was not fit to be entrusted with the expenditure of public money. The petitioners did not want a sixpence of Government money. They wanted merely to establish a roads board, so that they could rate themselves.

**THE PREMIER:** They could have their board, as far as he was concerned, so long as they did not want any money.

**MR. OLDHAM:** They already had the sanction of the Commissioner of Lands.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** Then let that Minister constitute a roads board, as he could do.

**MR. OLDHAM** then read a letter from the Commissioner of Crown Lands with reference to the proposed roads board in the North Perth electorate, to the effect that the matter was referred to the Under Secretary, who recommended that it be allowed to stand over until the Roads Act Amendment Bill, now before Parliament, became law. But members now knew there was no such Bill before Parliament; and did not the letter show that the Government of the country was not carried on by Ministers, but by their Under Secretaries? As the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) wished to bring before the House a matter of urgent public importance [referring to a reporter who had just been removed from the gallery by the Sergeant-at-Arms] he (Mr. Oldham) moved that progress be reported.

Motion (to report progress) put and negatived.

#### POINT OF ORDER.

**MR. VOSPER** asked for the ruling of the Chairman. He was desirous of moving the adjournment of the House, to discuss a question of privilege.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The House was not sitting. Hon. members were in Committee.

**MR. VOSPER:** Was it competent to ask that the Speaker be called to the chair, for the purpose of dealing with the matter he wished to bring forward?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Certainly not. It was for the Committee to decide whether progress should be reported.

**THE PREMIER:** What was it all about?

**MR. VOSPER:** Concerning the removal of a reporter from the gallery of the House, by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

**THE PREMIER:** That was not a matter of importance.

#### DEBATE RESUMED.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** The amendment to reduce the roads vote should not be seriously considered. He knew, as member for a remote and scattered constituency, that the amount ought to be increased rather than diminished. Let hon. members remember that there was no other vote by which so many people were benefited. The amounts voted in previous

years, which exceeded this in amount and were possibly distributed among fewer roads boards, were totally inadequate. The attitude of members representing municipalities was comprehensible, but their motives were somewhat selfish; for they should consider the wants of the more remote parts of the colony, with roads boards in some cases supervising 1,000 miles of roads, and with little help in the way of wheel taxes and other imposts. Consider the inadequacy of the Government grant to keep up roads over mountainous country, exposed to heavy rains and other inclemencies of weather. He supported the item.

MR. LEAKE: In moving the reduction of the vote, his object had been to have a discussion on the principle of rating, and to test the feeling of the Committee as to whether or not it was desirable that roads boards districts should, wherever possible, rate themselves in addition to the Government subsidy. True, there were places where it would be difficult to impose a rate, as in mountainous districts such as were spoken of by the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill). There was no desire to cripple such districts. But in regard to settled districts, where there were innumerable roads boards receiving a fair proportion of the Government grant, with rateable property within those districts which was yet unrated, was it not reasonable that the localities should contribute something, instead of depending wholly upon the Government subsidy? Such people should be forced to help themselves by levying rates, as several roads boards did already. Such boards should receive a larger proportion of the vote than those who did nothing. The member for Sussex represented a district which did not rate itself, and probably never would, so long as it could look to the Government for an annual subsidy. An expression of the Committee's opinion on the subject would strengthen the hands of the Ministry in insisting upon this being done. If such boards would not move in the direction indicated, let the Minister who distributed the vote deprive them of the little they had hitherto received. Insist upon their rating themselves, and, in default of compliance, give them very little of the Government subsidy. Having tested the feeling of hon. members on the subject,

he was satisfied, and asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. Leake's), by leave, withdrawn.

Item passed.

Item, Roebourne Marsh Road, widening, £200:

MR. WALLACE asked for explanation of this item.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The estimated liability on June 30, 1898, was £668; but it was subsequently found that the Government required only £200 to complete the work. He thought this fact should be satisfactory to the House.

Item passed.

Item, Perth, grant-in-aid vehicular ferry between Mill Point and Mount Bay Road, £250:

MR. A. FORREST: This work was now, he understood, going to be carried out.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: There were certain conditions under which the vote was placed on the Estimates, and if they were not complied with, the money would not be paid.

Item passed.

Item, Esperance jetty extension, including widening and goods-shed, £1,000:

MR. LEAKE: Why had the contractor not been paid?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The matter came before him to-day, and he had now a letter which had been handed to a member of the House by the contractor, stating there was every prospect of the matter being settled in a few days. It was a question of adjustment with regard to a few claims.

MR. A. FORREST: It was a source of great dissatisfaction to contractors throughout the country that it was impossible to get a settlement of claims in a short time.

THE PREMIER: They made such terrible claims.

MR. A. FORREST: A thing should be finished and done with, and not dragged on, as in this and other cases, month after month. It appeared to him that if a contract was let for £5,000 there was no trouble in getting the money as long as there were no extras. But once extras were in the contract, there was great trouble. Such should not be the case. The extras should be certified by the officer in charge of the works, and when the works were

completed, there should be no delay in payment. As far as he could gather, any excesses to the vote had to go before the Cabinet, and engineers and others connected with the bringing out of the contract were afraid to say they had been a little wrong in their estimates. Moreover, the Minister did not want to go to the Cabinet.

Item passed.

MR. VOSPER moved that progress be reported, and a division was called for by him. When the bells had been rung and the division was being taken, Mr. Vosper asked if he could withdraw his call for a division.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. VOSPER then withdrew his call for a division.

Items, Goldfields water supply, contingencies, total £15,500:

MR. LEAKE: A total of £23,500 was put down for contingencies, under various heads, and that amount was practically an annual charge.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It was reduced by leasing a good many of the wells, and was much less than last year.

MR. LEAKE: But here was £23,500, an annual charge in respect to the goldfields water supply.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: £15,500.

MR. LEAKE: He was dealing with the whole £23,500.

THE PREMIER: But there was the estimated revenue.

MR. LEAKE: Under the heading of "additions and repairs to public buildings," there was an annual charge of £22,000, and £5,000 for incidental expenses, and these items with the £23,500 made £50,000 as an annual charge on the department. Surely something might be saved. It was pointed out last year that it was not the mere voting of the money, but the annual charge which the country would ultimately feel. In these days of retrenchment, the pruning knife might be applied.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The goldfields could not be retrenched.

THE PREMIER: The road between Esperance and Norseman goldfield cost £1,500 a year to keep up.

MR. LEAKE: Then shut it up.

MR. KINGSMILL: One way to do it would be by making a railway.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: If members would refer to the expenditure of last year, they would find that it considerably exceeded the amount asked for this year. It referred to the upkeep of bores, condensers, clay-pans, lagoon reservoirs, soaks, tanks, roads, etc., in the different parts, and related to the eastern goldfields, the Murchison and Peak Hill goldfields, the Pilbarra goldfield and the stock routes. The object of the Government was to reduce the item every year as far as possible. To-day they had a tender for one of these wells, and it was just a test one. He hoped that very short tenders would be called for in relation to nearly all parts, the cost of maintenance thus being reduced, and that the vote would be very much less next year.

Item passed.

Item, Fremantle water supply, £3,820.

MR. LEAKE: Would the Director of Works say how much was charged per thousand gallons for water at Fremantle supplied to ships alongside the wharf?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said he could not do so.

MR. HUBBLE: Sixpence per hundred gallons.

MR. LEAKE: Yet they were going to supply the goldfields at 3s. 6d. per 1,000. There was something wrong somewhere.

MR. A. FORREST: The present water supply to ships in Fremantle was a disgrace to the civilised world. Ships carrying stock between Fremantle and Kimberley paid about £40 or £50 a day for demurrage, while waiting to get water. That sort of thing happened all the year round. Every steamer that came into port had cause for alarm, especially chartered steamers, in relation to which these expenses were enormous. Some boats were delayed for three days, and paid from £45 to £60 or £70 a day. He hoped the Minister would see his way to put on water so that ships might get it at once. There was no vote placed on the Estimates for the port of Derby which was one of the biggest ports in the colony for the shipping of live stock. They got a paltry £100 now and again for mending a well; but, in his opinion, the time had arrived when a vote should be given to put the water supply in



proper order there. Cattle came from large rivers, travelling a distance of 30 or 40 miles; and when they got there they could not obtain a drop of water. Sometimes they were there three or four days, and were then put on board.

THE PREMIER: People were satisfied now.

MR. A. FORREST: The season was now over, and, of course, they were satisfied for the time.

MR. MONGER: How much did the hon. member want?

MR. A. FORREST: About £5,000. They needed a tank, and not a well. He hoped the Commissioner would see his way to build a big tank. There was an immense rainfall. A tank and a jetty were all they asked for, and they did not get them, but he hoped they would do so.

MR. HIGHAM supported the complaint in regard to insufficient water supply for shipping at Fremantle, and said that if two vessels required water at the same time, the supply was so small that each vessel obtained a mere trickle from a small pipe. Plenty of water was available, but it was a question of service with sufficient pressure.

THE PREMIER: Why did not the municipal council at Fremantle take over the water supply?

MR. HIGHAM: They would be glad to take it over, but they had not the chance yet.

THE PREMIER said he would be glad if the council would take it over.

MR. HIGHAM: A high-pressure reservoir had been built at Fremantle, but the improved pipe service was not yet available after a delay of six or nine months.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Until a few days ago, when he visited Fremantle, he had never heard any complaint in regard to water supply for shipping. Arrangements were being made to put a main along the new quay, and he hoped that shortly the supply of water would be ample.

Items passed.

Items, Cool Storage Depot, Perth, total £2,388:

MR. LYALL HALL asked if these items meant that the salaries of the manager and the engineer of the Cool Storage Depot were to be increased.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No, the amounts were the same as before.

MR. LEAKE: What was the loss on the working last year?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: There was no loss, but a profit of £519 for the year.

Items passed.

Item 270, Railway to Bunbury race-course, £400:

MR. MONGER: Was this amount still owing?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: There was a liability of £319, but the amount was provided in the Estimates for defraying it, and the money had been paid.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

*Public Buildings, £216,790 10s.:*

MR. A. FORREST: Was it necessary, in view of the smaller number of public buildings to be erected during the year, that there should be a superintendent at £700, and an architect at £650, while at the same time nearly all the draftsmen had to go, the heads being retained at large salaries?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Those officers who were to be dispensed with were indicated by an asterisk, in the Estimates as printed. He had cut down the expenditure from £168,000 last year to £91,000 this year, without asking the House for authority; and if the Committee would leave the matter to him, he would cut down still further if there was necessity. He could not dispense with the officers who had been referred to, because the works in hand must be completed; but every care would be exercised in expending the money voted. He expected that by the end of the year the amount would be reduced to £51,000, as compared with £168,000 last year. He felt confident that, when the next year's Estimates came before the Committee, there would be no cause for complaint in this respect.

MR. A. FORREST: As three-fourths of the men employed had to go, all the heads of departments should not be retained. What was the necessity for so many heads?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No more heads would be retained than were absolutely necessary.

MR. WILSON: The remarks of the hon. member (Mr. A. Forrest) bore out what had been said by himself (Mr. Wilson) on the general Estimates, as to the fact that the rank and file were being cut down, and the heads were left on full pay. He wanted to impress on the Committee the necessity of retrenching in a proper manner, and this could best be done by doing away with a department when there was no longer a necessity for it, or at any rate reducing the heads, the highly-paid officials. The whole of the officers drawing large salaries remained on the Estimates, and he took it that the work they had to perform was to supervise the expenditure of some £22,000 on public buildings.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Not £22,000, but £14,044.

MR. WILSON: That was worse still. The salaries amounted to something like £14,000, for supervising an expenditure of £22,000.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Provision was made for a portion of the year only, for some of these men.

MR. WILSON: Taking the Minister's own figures, it was proposed to spend £14,000 in paying the heads of the department, while the Minister was doing away with the rank and file.

THE PREMIER: Where did the hon. member get the £22,000 from?

MR. WILSON said he had taken out the figures from the Estimates. The Minister had stated that the bulk of the buildings were being completed. He (Mr. Wilson) knew of some buildings he should like to have seen on the Estimates; for instance, a post-office for Victoria Park, which had been virtually promised by the Under Secretary; but no amount for it appeared on the Estimates, and he supposed it had been struck off. The Minister had stated there were twelve buildings to be commenced, and yet the architectural branch was to cost about 50 per cent. for supervision.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The hon. member knew better than that.

MR. WILSON: It would be nearer 60 than 50 per cent., while outside architects could be got to do the work for 5

or 7½ per cent. The proper way was to go through the departments, and see if any of them could be dispensed with. To reduce them would not make any great difference, but some of them should be struck off the Estimates.

MR. EWING: There was a great deal in what had been said, and it did seem absurd that, when the Minister stated he had to reduce the numbers of the small-salaried men, it was yet necessary to retain all the heads of the department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: If the hon. member would look at the Estimates, he would find that one officer at £500 a year had been taken out.

MR. EWING said he saw that one officer was drawing £700, and another £650, and others drawing large salaries; and he saw also that those who were to leave shortly were persons receiving small salaries; therefore, this reduction in number must leave less for the heads of the department to do. If a large proportion of the draftsmen were to go, surely some proportion of the heads should go. Those who were attacked in the Estimates were those who could least afford it, and these men should be the last removed. One highly-paid official would absorb as much as five or six of the small-salaried men, yet the latter represented five or six families.

MR. LYALL-HALL, referring to item 3, Chief Inspector of Works, asked if this was an increase of salary.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No; this officer was on leave part of last year, and did not draw the full amount.

MR. HALL said he hoped the Government would not increase any salaries, in view of the many reductions made in the service.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No salaries had been increased.

MR. HALL: In the Architectural division, an assistant-superintendent at £500 a year had been removed, and that was a wise step. He asked the Government to go further in the dismissals, and get rid of some of the highly-paid officials, especially those who had no need to work for their living. There were several men

in the service who were very wealthy, and a "show" should be given to men who needed to work for their living, in preference to those who had no such need. The Government would get better work out of men who were dependent on their salaries, than out of men who were not so dependent.

MR. HOLMES, referring to the assistant superintendent who had been removed from the Architectural branch, said that, having been advised by the Director to examine the Estimates, he found that this officer had not been dispensed with, but was transferred to the Engineering division; therefore, there was not a saving of £500 a year, as might otherwise be inferred.

MR. A. FORREST: In regard to those officers who were marked for dismissal, or had been dismissed, was it the intention to reinstate any of them, directly Parliament had risen? The Government might reinstate some of these men, and pay their salaries out of an excess vote.

THE PREMIER said he hoped the Government would reduce more. They certainly would not increase.

MR. HOLMES asked if he was correct in reference to the transfer of that officer.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Yes; the transfer had been already explained in his general remarks.

MR. WOOD: These Estimates were not put before hon. members in a clear and distinct way, so as to be readily understood. He again complained of the absence of the blue book showing the names of every officer in the public service, so that members might know to whom any particular item referred.

MR. HOLMES: Members were not expected to vote salaries to men whom they knew.

MR. WOOD: The whole system should be altered, and every man in the service should have a certain number by which he could be traced when dealing with the Estimates. A complete list of officers of the public service should be printed in pamphlet form, in time for members to examine it before dealing with the Estimates. There was no cause to find fault with the retrenchment that had gone on in the Works Department, his opinion being that it had been too severe and sudden, and had created quite a panic in

the place, causing a good deal of the depression. That depression arose mainly from sentimental reasons. Retrenched officers who had left the colony caused a bad impression elsewhere, by stating their grievances; and he only wished the Director of Public Works had commenced his retrenchment a year or two ago.

MR. A. FORREST: Parliament would not have allowed him to do it then.

MR. WOOD: The Government ought to have looked further ahead, and not promised so many works and buildings for the various districts throughout the colony. In one locality in the Eastern districts, a bridge had been built to accommodate two persons, in another a bridge to accommodate three persons, and so on. The Government were not the only people who had made an error by being too sanguine in their expenditure. What private individual had not been too prodigal, and perhaps landed himself in difficulties through being over-sanguine? There was no reason why last year's deficit should be wiped off within the present year, and it might well be spread over two years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How was it to be wiped out, when it was to be increased?

MR. WOOD: It could be wiped out easily in two years.

MR. SOLOMON: During times of prosperity, nearly all the heads of departments had their salaries raised, and those salaries should have been the first to suffer reduction. Subsequently, reductions might have been made in the lower ranks of the service.

MR. EWING: The higher officers had not been reduced at all.

[Discussion on items ensued.]

MR. HOLMES, referring to the item, "Chief Assistant Architect, £125," asked if this officer had also been transferred to some other department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The resident officer at Coolgardie had been dispensed with, and this officer, who had been receiving £500 per annum, was offered the vacant position at the original salary of £330. A trustworthy man was required for the position.

Item passed.

MR. HOLMES, referring to the item "Assistant-Inspector of Works, £60," said

the salary last year was £240. Why this reduction?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** The officer had been retrenched.

**MR. HOLMES :** There were seven officers under the head of "general supervision." Were all these necessary?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** Undoubtedly. They were doing good work all over the country.

**MR. OLDHAM :** What were the duties of the inspecting officer for general supervision, in the Architectural division?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** He was a general inspector, not only with regard to building buildings, but in matters of sanitation.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** There appeared to be five inspectors and four workmen in the Architectural division.

**MR. WALLACE :** The Minister had just reminded him of the usefulness of these officers. An instance recently occurred at Yalgoo. The Postal Department there wanted the office refrigerated, and an inspector was sent from Cue to inspect the building. He returned to Cue and called for tenders, and the work was done at an eventual cost of £16, which could have been effected locally for £6.

**MR. OLDHAM :** Seeing there were so many assistant inspectors of architecture, where was the necessity for the principal officer under this head?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** There was only one of them in Perth. The others were scattered throughout the colony.

Item passed.

**MR. LEAKE :** No provision appeared in the Estimates for alterations for the Legislative Assembly premises. A Select Committee had recommended certain works, which the Government had undertaken to carry out. Was it proposed to abandon this work altogether?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** The work had been abandoned for this year, but not altogether. Next year it was hoped the improvements would be effected.

Item, Hall's Creek police quarters and station, £1,300 :

**MR. WALLACE :** The vote for 1897 was £1,300, the actual expenditure £11,000, and there was an estimated liability of

£63, and still there was £1,300 set off against that.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** It was subsequently found that additions were required in making the cells, and other works, which accounted for the increased cost.

**MR. KINGSMILL :** Why should a place like Hall's Creek have some £2,400 spent on police quarters, when other towns of equal importance on other goldfields were left without police accommodation, and, indeed, without police supervision?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** These were matters for which his department could hardly be held responsible. The Police Department asked that certain works be carried out. In this instance, instead of sending up public works officers to have the work done, the warden had been relied upon to carry it out, with the result that the warden's estimate had been exceeded. The department was frequently told that the warden could do the work much better than the departmental officers. The result was obvious in this instance; and he hoped that such a practice would not be repeated.

Item passed.

Item, Lawlers police quarters and station, £3,100 :

**MR. WOOD :** This seemed a large amount. Evidently buildings of too substantial a character were being erected in these outlying districts.

**MR. KENNY :** The amount being spent at Lawlers was truly astonishing, considering that Peak Hill, with a greater population and a more progressive and payable field, had to be satisfied with a mulga stump in lieu of a lock-up.

**THE PREMIER :** Peak Hill did not turn out so much gold as Lawlers, or anything like it.

**MR. KENNY :** The East Murchison district was not identical with the small centre represented by Lawlers. The particular centre represented by Peak Hill turned out three times as much gold as the centre represented by Lawlers. If the Premier's family were settled at Peak Hill, the spectacle of men chained to a stump, which was to be seen there daily, would not long be visible. A solitary policeman had been asked for his district; but he was informed that the Government had neither the man nor the money; and

yet the Government were found expending £3,000 on a police station and quarters at Lawlers. He was promised a paltry £800 twelve months ago, to provide police protection in his district; but that money had not been paid, nor was it provided for on the Estimates.

MR. DOHERTY: Hon. members seemed to have a strong desire for police stations for their constituents, and at the same time to forget that buildings up country cost quite 100 per cent. more than buildings erected on the coast. When he was at Hall's Creek, the only police station was a log, to which the offender was chained; and on one occasion a teamster, who was a prisoner, took up log and all, and went to the public-house. It cost £4 10s. a load to get jarrah to Wyndham, and then there was quite £50 for cartage to a place like Hall's Creek.

Item passed.

MR. CONOLLY: There was no provision on the Estimates for a police station at Esperance. Two years ago, £3,000 was placed on the Estimates for this purpose; last year the amount was cut down, and now there was no provision whatever. The present police buildings at Esperance had been in existence 20 or 25 years, and were totally inadequate to the requirements of the place. The quarters were overcrowded to an unhealthy extent, and he would like to know whether it was intended at some future date to continue this work, and so carry out promises made, not only by the Department but by the Premier when he was down in that part of the colony.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: There was sufficient police accommodation at Esperance for the requirements of the place. The Government found that this year they could not carry out the work for which provision had previously been made; and, as there was necessity for curtailing expenditure, and this was a place where expenditure could be curtailed without inconvenience, the item did not appear in the present Estimates. If there was any necessity later on for extending the Esperance police buildings, the work would receive attention.

Item, Perth Government House, additions and ball-room, £13,000:

MR. OLDHAM: In view of the state of the finances of the country, even when this

contract was entered into, the Government were not justified in undertaking to spend £15,000, which was the probable cost of this work when completed. In face of an almost adverse motion carried in the House on this particular question last year, it was not fair to enter into such a contract; and it would have been better to spend a portion of the £15,000 in carrying out promises of public works made to various members of the House. His own district was promised £500 over two years ago for a mechanics' institute.

THE PREMIER: A mechanics' institute was to be provided for that district.

MR. OLDHAM: Then no more need be said.

Item passed.

Item, Royal Mint, £6,500:

MR. A. FORREST: Upwards of £30,000 had been spent on the Perth branch of the Royal Mint, and now £6,000 odd in addition was asked for, while there had been no information from the Government as to when the Mint would be opened. The Mint ought to be started as early as possible, seeing that the salaries of the officers were going on all the time, and that the loss to the country through the gold having to be sent to London and Melbourne, amounted to about 1s. per ounce, or £5,000 a month. As he had said, expenses and salaries were going on.

THE PREMIER: £10,000 a year.

MR. WILSON: Had the machinery arrived yet?

MR. A. FORREST: It was now said the foundations were not right, and that a cart going along the street affected the scales. When in London in May, 1896, he was introduced to the chief officer of the Perth Mint, and ever since that time that gentleman had been drawing his salary. It was the fault of somebody, and he hoped something would be done to bring about the opening of the Mint as soon as possible. The Deputy Master of the Mint had been away to the other colonies, had seen the Mints there, and had returned, but still there was no chance of the Mint being opened. It was a general source of dissatisfaction.

THE PREMIER said he sympathised with the hon. member and the people of the colony in the great delay which had taken place in regard to the opening of

the Mint. He had taken a great deal of interest in the matter, and had expected that the Mint would have been in working order long ago. In connection with this Mint nothing seemed to come up to expectations. The Mint cost more than was expected, then there was a delay in getting the building constructed, and we were glad when the Mint was proclaimed in July last, but we were as far off now, in knowing when the Mint was to be opened, as ever. He had written minute after minute to the Deputy Master of the Mint inquiring when the Mint would be opened, but the Deputy Master would not commit himself to even an approximate date. He (the Premier) was going to say he was disgusted, at any rate he was very much upset and annoyed that all his hopes seemed not to be realised yet. As the member for West Kimberley had said, the Deputy Master had been in the employ of the colony for two and a half years, and all the other officers of the Mint had been for a long time in the employ of the Government, and we had been paying at the rate of £10,000 a year for those officers since the 30th July; yet we could not get any statement in writing as to when the Mint would be opened. He had written fully half a dozen times to the Deputy Master asking when the Mint would be opened, and urging him to state when operations would be commenced. He had heard incidentally, through his secretary, that a verbal statement had been made that possibly the Mint might be opened at the beginning of the year. There were a good many excuses for the delay. There was a very good one, that the Mint was originally intended for an output of a million pounds worth of gold, whereas now it was found that machinery would have to be provided for three or four million pounds worth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Could not the smaller work have been gone on with?

THE PREMIER: It seemed not.

MR. A. FORREST: There was no delay in appointing the officers.

THE PREMIER: No, there was no delay in that. He had received a notification that the subsidy of £10,000 a year would not be sufficient now, and he (the Premier) had replied that it would be just as well to get to work before talking about an increased subsidy.

MR. VOSPER: Could the Government not make some delay in paying the subsidy?

THE PREMIER: The Government were under an obligation to the Imperial Government for giving the country the Mint, and he knew that the Deputy Master was anxious to get to work as soon as possible.

MR. DOHERTY: What did the Deputy Master say was the cause of the delay?

THE PREMIER: The machinery had to be so precise, and some of the machinery was not in the colony yet. The Deputy Master wanted him (the Premier) to go and look at the Mint, but he had informed the Deputy Master that it was no use going to look at the Mint, but that he wished as soon as possible to see the first sovereigns minted. He did not wish to blame the officers; he believed they were anxious to get to work as soon as possible, but it seemed tiresome and unsatisfactory that such a delay should have occurred, and that we should have had a Deputy Master for two and a half years, and that we had not reached the stage when minting could be commenced. He supposed we should live in hope. The Government had not the control of the Mint; it was under the direction of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of England, who was the Master of the Mint. He (the Premier) must, when he had a little time, see if he could not send a telegram to the old country, and get some kind of pressure to bear, so that we could get to minting operations. He did not think the member for West Kimberley was quite right as to the amount of benefit we should receive from the Mint, but he hoped the hon. member was.

MR. A. FORREST said he was sure of it.

THE PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member was right when we reckoned the amount for the exchange. We hoped the establishment of the Mint would be an increased saving to those who produced the gold. That was the reason that the Mint was established—so that the people who obtained the gold should save expenses. He hoped that, long before Parliament met again, the Mint would be in active operation, doing good to the colony, and also that it would not be run at a loss.

MR. MORGANS: This question of the Mint was a very important one to the country. The statement made by the member for West Kimberley was absolutely correct. In the event of the coining of all the gold that the Mint would be able to turn out, there would be a saving of £60,000 a year to this colony, and to the mine-owners of this colony. It was necessary that hon. members and the people of the country should know something about the operations of the Mint, and it was quite right that we should ask why the Mint had not been started. When it was proposed to establish a Mint, it was on the basis that one million sovereigns would be coined per annum; afterwards it was discovered that the output of gold here was so large that a Mint capable only of dealing with one million sovereigns per annum would be altogether too small, the result being that the authorities at Home decided to make this Mint capable of turning out three million sovereigns per annum. That made all the difference, because, not only would the coining of this large number of sovereigns involve the necessity of the erection of a larger amount of machinery, but it was necessary to make alterations in the general design of the Mint. He did not think the officers of the Mint could be held responsible for the necessity that cropped up for the large increase in the producing power; therefore, he thought that was a satisfactory explanation to hon. members and the country, that the Mint had not been started as soon as was intended. There was another point that had cropped up; the question of vibration. The authorities at Home could not be held responsible for the fact that the particular foundations of the rooms in which the weighing machines were to be placed were subject to vibration. The machines for weighing gold were probably the most delicate of all machinery constructed, and there was no doubt the Deputy Master of the Mint was quite right to hesitate before starting the Mint, because, if his weighing machines did not act properly, every fiftieth part of a grain in error the Deputy Master of the Mint would be responsible for. It was not likely that he would start coining gold until the machines were arranged so

as to ensure the correct weighing of the gold. These were automatic machines, and to show the committee how very delicate the machines were he might say that, when the strips of gold were placed in the machines, the machines were so constructed that, if a sovereign weighed one-hundredth part of a grain in excess of what it ought to weigh, then the machine threw that sovereign on one side, and if a sovereign were one-hundredth part of a grain too light then the machine threw this sovereign on another side. If the sovereign was of the exact weight it dropped into its proper place. The machines were of marvellous mechanical construction, and required to be erected very accurately. There was no doubt the Mint was going to be a very valuable institution to the colony. It would be of the greatest possible value to the mine-owners. It was admitted there had been considerable delay, but it was necessary that hon. members and the country should understand that the officers of the Mint were in no way responsible for that delay. He was sure the Government had never made an investment on behalf of the public that would give a better and more satisfactory result than the Mint.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Except the Coolgardie water scheme.

MR. MORGANS: With the exception of the Coolgardie water scheme this investment on the part of the Government was perhaps the most important ever undertaken by the Government. It would save to the mine-owners and the country not less than £60,000 per annum.

MR. A. FORREST: It appeared from what had been stated that the Mint was first constructed to deal with a million pounds worth of gold yearly. He could not understand how it could ever be expected that the colony would stand still at a production of 300,000 ounces of gold per annum.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It might not be necessary to mint all the gold.

MR. A. FORREST: What was going to be done with the gold if it was not to be coined? The banks preferred sovereigns to the gold bars. It was universal in Australia for nearly all the gold to be coined into sovereigns. It was more convenient. If this colony undertook at that time to build all these railways

throughout the colony on the supposition that we were to have a return of 300,000 ounces of gold per annum, we were a pretty reckless lot of people. He was told the machinery was capable of turning out two million ounces of gold per annum. The goldfields of the colony were producing one million ounces now. If blame was not due to the officers of the Mint, to whom was it due? He did not think it could be due to the Premier. In his opinion, it was due to the fact that the machinery first of all was too small. Why were they in such a great hurry to make the appointment of the officers?

**THE PREMIER:** It was absolutely necessary.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** It had been a mystery to him why the first set of machinery could not have been got to work. That would have been sufficient for a million sovereigns a year. There was not an increase in the size of the particular machine, but a duplication of the machinery, and it seemed to him we could have got to work with one machine. He did not know very much about Mints. He wanted to emphasise the desirability of the Mint being got to work as soon as possible. He knew that a great many companies at the present moment were holding back their gold at considerable risk, and also considerable loss to themselves, in the hope of eventually saving the cost of transmission to the other colonies. Seeing we had gone to the expense of the Mint, it did seem a little too hard that people should be incurring the expense of sending gold to other colonies to be minted, whilst all the time we were paying £10,000 a year in connection with the Mint.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** If the hon. member would look into the question a little, he would find that it would be quite impracticable to commence a portion of the work. If members would refer to page 68 of the report, they would find it very clearly explained why the Mint was not working. The report said:—

This important establishment is now within measurable distance of structural completion. The originally proposed extent of buildings and offices would have been completed some time ago, but owing to the large increased output of gold, the Deputy Master urged the imperative necessity of very considerable additional

accommodation and working rooms; and a special investigation made by one of his officers into the chlorine process in use in the Melbourne and Sydney Mints made it clear that that section of the Perth branch needed considerable extension for coping with the unforeseen extent of operations opened out by the great advance in gold production. A large increase to the number of furnaces, and many consequential rearrangements therefore became unavoidable, as well as additional out-buildings, large elevated tank for working balance-turbines, etc. Everything in the way of accommodation has now, however, been practically brought up to the, so far, known requirements of the Imperial officers. The installation of the machinery (for several months in steady progress under the general direction of the superintendent of the Perth branch, and the immediate supervision of an expert master mechanic from the London Mint) is now far advanced, although some of the more delicate instruments, such as the balances, etc., cannot be employed till all construction and dust creation is finally banished from the premises.

These very fine balances were very sensitive indeed, and until the whole of the building had been completed, and these balances were placed in their position, we could not commence coining. He was told by the Master of the Mint the other day there were machines yet to come, but some were received during the past week, which would help to make some further progress. He regretted that the delay had been so great, but members would see there was a good cause for it, on account of our having incomplete plant.

Item passed.

**MR. LEAKE:** Was there any chance of anything being done with regard to the Perth Supreme Court? Last year £3,000 was voted. The accommodation was wretched, and attention had constantly been drawn to the matter.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** The hon. member knew the necessity for cutting down in connection with the different buildings, and we had not been able to commence this work. Everything was in readiness. The plans were prepared, and had been submitted to those concerned, and there would be nothing to prevent the carrying out of the work immediately funds were available for that purpose; but, unfortunately, they could not be provided this year.

Item, additions and repairs to existing buildings, £4,000:

**MR. WILSON** moved, as an amendment, that the amount be reduced by £100. He



did so with the object of drawing attention to the fact that no provision had been made for the post-office at Victoria Park. He had a letter from the Colonial Secretary's office in May last, in reply to a request that the Minister would receive a deputation relative to a new post-office. In this reply it was stated that the Minister did not see any necessity for receiving the deputation, as the erection of the building had already been approved of, and the land had been, or was about to be, purchased, whilst there was very little doubt that the funds for the work would be provided on the next year's Estimates. He (Mr. Wilson) took it that it was a distinct promise made to the municipality, which had a very large and growing population immediately adjoining the boundary of Perth. The land was to have been purchased, a building put up, and the money provided on these estimates. He understood that a rule in connection with these works was that the Minister in control of the post offices and telegraph offices made his recommendations. These were sent forward and the pruning knife was inserted, certain buildings being cut out without any reference back to the Minister responsible. He believed the post office in Victoria Park was dealt with in that way. It was simply cut out without any reference back to the Minister as to whether the work was necessary or whether other works should be cut out in preference to this. He (Mr. Wilson) took very strong objection to that. He looked down the list on the Estimates, and found there were offices in his own district. There was a post office at Armadale; but would any reasonable member maintain for one moment that a post office was required at Armadale more than at Victoria Park? He found post offices had been, or were to be, built at Boyanup, Bayswater, and Greenhills, small country places with probably not more than one-fifth of the population of the municipality of Victoria Park, and certainly having nothing like so large a number of business people. In Victoria Park there were now several comparatively large factories employing a number of hands. Whenever these people wanted to despatch a telegram, they had to send into Perth.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** Could they rent a place?

**MR. WILSON:** Probably they could. Would the Minister promise that a place would be rented?

**A MEMBER:** They deserved something.

**MR. WILSON:** Would the Minister make a promise?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS** said he would communicate with the Minister.

**MR. WILSON:** The Minister recommended it himself. Might he take what the Director of Public Works said as a promise?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** No. He sympathised with the hon. member, because he knew this was on the Estimates last year, and the work should have been put in hand, but, unfortunately, among other items, it was struck out. In fact, the land was acquired, and he thought the neighbourhood really needed a post-office. As there was no prospect of having a new post-office built, he could represent to the Minister that a room might be rented for a time in the same way as was done in other places. He would endeavour to bring that about.

**MR. WILSON:** On that understanding, he begged leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn, and the item passed.

Item, Broad Arrow, Inspector of Mines, office and quarters, £600:

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS** moved, as an amendment, that the words "Broad Arrow" be struck out, and "Kanoona" inserted in lieu thereof. It was decided to erect this office at Kanoona, instead of at Broad Arrow, in consequence of the large increase of business at the latter place in connection with alluvial mining.

**MR. LEAKE:** What was the intention with regard to buildings on the goldfields generally? At Kanoona, for instance, stone buildings had been erected; but until the permanency of such fields had been ascertained, would not temporary buildings suffice?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS:** This was a temporary building.

**MR. LEAKE:** But other buildings similarly situated were not temporary.

Consider how much money might have been saved in Coolgardie itself.

**THE PREMIER :** The outcry there had been on account of the cheapness of the buildings erected.

**MR. LEAKE :** The stone buildings of the department were quite unsuited to the climatic conditions.

**THE PREMIER :** Stone was required, in that country.

**MR. LEAKE :** The buildings were put up as if for an Arctic instead of an equatorial climate.

**THE PREMIER :** No ; the stone buildings were cooler than wood or iron structures.

**MR. LEAKE :** Had the department any particular system with regard to public buildings on the goldfields generally ? Did they always intend to erect stone buildings on new "rushes," or would they be satisfied with timber and iron until places had proved their permanency ?

**MR. VOSPER :** Hon. members, and the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) especially, should recollect that Kanowna was not only a reefing, but an alluvial field, of some three or four years' standing, that its output had always been large, and that it was also the terminus of the Eastern railway, the main railway system of the colony ; so that, apart from its intrinsic value as a goldfields centre, it must always be a considerable place, for it would form an entrepot for the surrounding goldfields. He agreed with the Government that to put up wood and iron buildings on the Coolgardie goldfields would be absolutely inhumane. Such structures admitted the dust, which spoiled the goods stored in them, as well as the furniture, and the heat was unbearable. Unless substantial buildings were erected on the fields, the cost to the department in replacing furniture and in maintenance generally would amount to a sum sufficient to pay interest on the capital outlay. He supported the item.

**MR. LEAKE** said he had only asked for general information.

Amendment (by the Director of Public Works) put and passed, and the item, as amended, agreed to.

Items 221-2, Belmont school teacher's quarters, £250 ; and Belmont school, £1,100 :

**MR. A. FORREST :** To erect a school near the racecourse was a piece of extra-

vagance. There could not be many people residing there.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** A school had been established at a place three-quarters of a mile on the Perth side of Belmont, which he had lately visited. A large number of children attended it, and subsequently the department found it better to erect a new school in a more central position, the site selected being at Belmont. The design was not at all extravagant, and the school would be well appreciated and well patronised.

**MR. LEAKE :** How many children were there in the locality ?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES :** There were 50 children attending the temporary school twelve months ago ; and no doubt the number had since increased.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** The school had been taken away from the children.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES :** No ; the new school would be in a more central position than the present one. The site was selected after due consideration, and the erection of the building was clearly justified.

**MR. A. FORREST :** Did this amount include the purchase of the land ?

**THE PREMIER :** No ; that was a separate item.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES :** The land had been secured at a reasonable price.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** Was it not £30 ?

**MR. A. FORREST :** No ; it must have cost more than that.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** It could have been obtained for £30, whatever was given for it.

**MR. SOLOMON :** At Coogee (Fremanle) a school containing some 28 pupils had been closed up. The Government should consider the matter with a view to re-opening it, as it was situated some three or four miles distant from any other school.

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS** said he would bring the hon. member's remarks under the notice of the Minister, and would see what could be done.

Items passed.

Item, Boyanup school and quarters, £600 :

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS moved that the word "Boyanup" be struck out, and "Booranup" inserted in lieu thereof.

THE PREMIER said his hopes were all dashed to the ground. He had thought there were to be school quarters provided in this important place in his constituency, but the amendment showed how his hon. friend had treated his requests.

HON. H. W. VENN: Would the Minister give some reason for the change?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: If hon. members had read the report of the department, they would have found that last year a school was provided for at Boyanup to accommodate 50 children, with quarters for the teacher. The contract had been let in May, 1898, and was expected to be completed early next August.

Amendment put and passed, and the item, as amended, agreed to.

Item, Yalgoo school and teacher's quarters, £650:

MR. WALLACE thanked the Minister for placing this sum on the Estimates. When would the work be taken in hand? The department was now paying rent for a building, as the original building had been condemned by the local architect and the local board of health. The approaching summer made it necessary that a building, even if of timber and iron, should be at once erected. The number of children in the locality was increasing. He hoped he would not have to say of the Director of Public Works what he had said of the Premier, that no dependence could be placed on his promises.

THE PREMIER: Where had he made promises which had not been fulfilled?

MR. WALLACE: The remark, although specially directed to the Premier, was meant to apply to the whole Ministry.

THE PREMIER: But the hon. member said it was the Premier who had made promises which had not been fulfilled. When had he made a promise that had not been fulfilled?

MR. WALLACE: It would be far easier to mention the promises the Premier had fulfilled.

THE PREMIER: These were generalities. The hon. member made statements without being able to substantiate them.

MR. WALLACE: It was to be regretted that the ire of the Premier had been raised.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was rude and impudent, when he told people they did not fulfil their promises.

MR. WALLACE: During this session the Premier had, in connection with certain works, admitted in the most jocular way that he had made promises, and said he did not see why a Premier or Treasurer should keep to his promises.

THE PREMIER: They must have been conditional promises.

MR. WALLACE: Then the Premier should qualify them.

MR. LEAKE: Look at the promises made in the Governor's Speech.

MR. WALLACE said he had spoken with no desire to hurt the feelings of the Premier.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member would not hurt his feelings.

MR. WALLACE: It appeared that he often hurt the Premier's feelings.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member's words had no effect.

MR. WALLACE: Nor did the remarks of the Premier have any effect on him. What he wanted was an opportunity of expressing his views. The Premier was ever accusing members on the Opposition side of rudeness, and he (Mr. Wallace) took this opportunity of saying that the blame for any obstruction during this session lay with the Premier, who had prolonged debates, because of his senseless and rude interjections.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did not know what was rude.

MR. WALLACE: Judging from the behaviour of the Premier, the right hon. gentleman had been rude very often in the House. It was to be hoped the Director of Public Works would look into this matter, and provide buildings, not of an elaborate design, but constructed of timber and iron, with due regard to ventilation.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The remark of the hon. member would be borne in mind.

Item passed.

Item, Albany Mechanics' Institute, £350:

MR. MONGER asked whether it was proposed to have a vote every year for

this institute? Was it intended to rebuild the whole building, for the sake of throwing a sop to the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), or what was the object in giving so big a vote to so unimportant an institute.

**THE PREMIER :** It was a long-standing promise. That was all he could say.

Item passed.

Items, Furniture for public buildings, £9,450 :

**MR. SOLOMON** asked how it was that there was such a large amount under this head?

**THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS :** A number of new buildings had been erected and others completed during the year in different parts of the colony, and this necessitated a quantity of new furniture. The votes under this heading would receive careful attention, and the expenditure be kept down as much as possible.

Item passed, other items agreed to, and the vote put and passed.

Works Department votes were thus completed.

**LANDS DEPARTMENT** (Commissioner, Hon. G. Throssell).

**STATEMENT ON LANDS ESTIMATES.**

*Lands and Surveys, £66,164 16s. 8d. :*

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. G. Throssell) said that, perhaps the Estimates for the Lands Department required little explanation ; but still a few remarks from him might be interesting. Last year the estimated revenue of the department was £177,800, and the amount actually received was £168,972. This deficiency was not owing to a falling-off in land settlement, but to a falling-off in goldfields land sales, which could scarcely be considered legitimate land business. The estimated expenditure was £62,694, and the actual expenditure was £75,262 ; or, in other words, the department overran its income by £12,568. But this was by no means a bad indication. Hon. members reminded him last year that he would require more money to carry on the business of the department, and that prophecy had come true ; but this expenditure had been devoted entirely to the advancement of legitimate land settlement. Land settlement was going on at the rate of

400,000 acres per annum, or 33,000 acres a month, with compulsory conditions of improvement ; and expenditure in this direction must be received as an indication of the true progress of the country, and not of the reverse. He hoped, and believed, that at the end of the present year he would have to say he had overrun the constable once again for exactly the same reason—that during the year he would be forced to spend money for the survey of lands on which to place new settlers. Notwithstanding that expenditure, the figures showed that during the year there had been received £168,972, and there had been expended £75,262, and at the end of the current year there would be handed over to the Treasury the very handsome sum of £93,710 as the net profits of the year's work. That statement he thought would be acceptable to members. This year it would be observed that the income had been set down at £147,200, or much less than last year, while the estimated expenditure was £79,436, leaving an estimated gain at the end of the year of £67,764. But there were other indications that the income would exceed the amount he had named, and he would be very much disappointed if, at the end of the year, there was not shown an increase of £30,000 or £40,000. There were very few additions, indeed, to the expenditure. There were no increases of salary, except perhaps £10 here and there to low-grade officers with salaries of £160 and under. This was the proper time for him to bear testimony to the services rendered by his officers who, during the year, had responded most loyally to the call for extra labour. Although those officers had enlisted, so to speak, for eight hours a day, they were very often worked ten or twelve hours ; and he only regretted he was not in a position to give substantial increases of salary to such worthy officers. When an officer had proved himself worthy it was right that his chief should recognise his services ; but circumstances, to which he could not refer, prevented any increase of salaries. He looked forward, however, to the time when he would be able to recognise the services of those officers, with the assistance of hon. members, by increasing their remuneration. Two new appointments had been made in the department during

the year—one, of a dairy expert, and the other an inspector of conditional purchase compulsory improvements. The time had come when every effort should be made to start new industries in the colony, and unless there were officers to educate the people, all efforts in that direction would be stultified. This time next year good results would, he hoped, be shown for the expenditure on the salary of the dairy expert. In regard to the inspector of compulsory purchase improvements, members would recognise that, while we had those compulsory conditions, and while we were settling land at the rate of 400,000 acres a year, it was essential to have some one to see that the conditions and improvements were properly carried out. During the year the Under Secretary of Lands had been sent for a trip, and had visited South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, with the idea of picking up information for the reform of the Western Australian Lands Department; and the money on this trip had been well spent. Members might be surprised to hear that in some directions the Lands Department in this colony had nothing to learn, but in other directions there was a great deal to learn. He hoped during the recess to so re-organise the department as to relieve the Under Secretary and the Minister from the details of administration, and leave them ample time to undertake much higher work than at present in the interests of the country. He did not know that he could say anything more about his Estimates, except to call attention to the fact that for the first time hon. members would find the Agricultural Department would be put under the Department of Lands. He willingly took over that department, but he might say that it had given him a great deal of trouble. He believed that he would be able to place this department on such a footing that it would be of even greater use to the colony than it had been in the past. Hon. members must have noticed that a great deal of criticism had taken place in reference to this department, and in regard to the Government dispensing with the services of some officers. This he wished to say was entirely due to himself, to the necessity for retrenchment, and it was a right and proper course. Had we not removed

these officers, or threatened to remove them, and if the Lands Estimates had come down intact, there would have been great criticism all round the country, and an assertion made that the department required reorganising. He had reorganised the staff of officers, and the result had been satisfactory. There was now a revulsion of feeling, and instead of people cursing the department, they were blessing it. He had been a member of the Bureau of Agriculture since its inception; and while he began to think the department was carried on too luxuriously, he was gratified to find that all round the colony it had done sterling work in educating the people. Hon. members would agree with him that education in agriculture was as necessary as the ordinary education of a child. He would be disappointed if it was not shown that there were 300,000 acres under cultivation as the result of the work of this department. The experience gained would enable the people of the country to add one shilling per acre to their production, which meant 15,000 sovereigns being added to the wealth of the community. He was asking hon. members to support the best interests of the country. He might explain, in passing, that, although the salary of some of the officers was only set down for half the year, it was the intention of the Government, with a few exceptions, to restore the experts to their old positions, and this had been done after mature consideration. Reorganisation would place the department on such a footing that it would commend itself to the support and appreciation of hon. members. There was a little retrenchment in the Stock Department. He could only say, with deep regret, that he had to carry out this retrenchment. It was always a painful thing for a chief to retrench worthy officers; and although he did not know these officers personally, some of them were extremely worthy, and it was a matter for grave consideration for him and for the Government, whether the Government should not, after all, retain some of these officers. When he received instructions to retrench, he looked about, and took advice from his officers where retrenchment could be effected. It was only the dire necessity that caused him to retrench these officers; and if he could

he would restore every one of them. There were many diseases amongst stock besides those now raging. There were the tick in sheep and other diseases which required attention, and it was necessary to have officers to look after these diseases. In carrying out the retrenchment, some painful cases came under his notice. He had received letters in one or two instances from old officers and good servants, whom it had been considered necessary to send adrift. One case came under his notice yesterday; it was that of a poor fellow who had bought a plant believing his position was a permanent one. This officer was away in the bush when the notice was sent to him, and he arrived home one day before the notice expired, only to find that his plant had been thrown on his hands. What could he (the Commissioner of Crown Lands) do in such a case as that? He regretted that he could not give the officer another month's salary, but he authorised the payment of the officer's passage money and expenses, back to his own township, which was Geraldton. That was the best he could do for the man. Hon. members criticised the retrenchment that had been carried out, especially in connection with the Public Works Department, and probably the criticism was very proper, but he could assure hon. members that there was another side which they did not recognise. It was very painful for a Minister to deal with these cases. The time had come to think matters over, and see if the Government could not make the Stock Department and the Agricultural Department more self-supporting. This might be considered during the recess. There was no reason, when the Government kept a body of experts to educate the people, why a tax should not be placed on the orchards and vineyards of the colony; and he did not see why we should not restore in some measure, the tax on sheep, so that officers who had been retrenched might be able to return to their positions again, and work to keep stock clear from disease. Any information which he could give to hon. members, he would be delighted to give. His Estimates were simplicity itself. There had been no increase in salaries; and it was not wise to impair the efficiency of a department. He wanted it to go forth,

that while he supported his chief in the necessity which had been forced on the Government to retrench, he must say that beyond a certain stage he could not go. If the department was cut down to such a state that he could not carry it out efficiently, and such a position were forced upon him, then he would say he was not fit for his position, but he was sure his chief would not force that position on him. He would take that opportunity of expressing his hearty appreciation to hon. members of the generous way in which they had treated him ever since he had held his present office; and if hon. members wished to do him a favour that evening, they would pass his Estimate without debate.

Item, Assistant inspector of plans £220 :

THE PREMIER moved, as an amendment, that the words "assistant inspector of plans" be struck out, and "computer" inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed, and the item agreed to.

Other items agreed to, and the vote put and passed.

*Fisheries, £1,532 10s.—agreed to*  
*Woods and Forests, £2,431 5s. :*

MR. LEAKE: Provision was made in the Estimates for six months' salary only of the Conservator of Forests. He would like to know whether there was any particular reason why that proposal was made, and whether it was intended to disburse with the officer's services at the end of the year. In his opinion it would be imprudent to do so, unless there was some really solid reason, or personal ground he might say. That officer had done good work in regard to forestry, which was one of the most important matters we had to deal with. We did not know what amount of good might ultimately result to the country if this Forestry Department was started on a sound basis; but that could not be done unless we had men experienced in this particular line. No one could deny that the services of this officer had been directed to the booming of our timber. He had done it successfully, and no doubt to the advantage of the country generally, and whatever might be the intention of the Government with regard to development in this particular direction, we should not be for-

getful of his services. If the office of Conservator of Forests was to be abolished, why should not the whole staff go with him, and £1,600 be thus saved? It was said on good authority the department was paying, and that a very large revenue was derived from it. Of course the Committee could not add anything to the Estimates, but he would urge them to support him in suggesting to the Minister that this office should not be abolished. We wanted our young timber preserved, and while we recognised the importance of ring-barking, he thought the less of it that was done in regard to our jarrah and karri forests the better.

MR. A. FORREST: It was not done on jarrah and karri.

MR. LEAKE: There was a great deal of jarrah and karri, too, destroyed in some places, he believed.

A MEMBER: Years ago.

MR. LEAKE: It had been done in years gone by and it would be done again. This was a big national asset.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: It would be a calamity to dispense with the services of so useful an officer as the Conservator of Forests, and he was in a position to say this officer would be retained for twelve months. Sometimes it was good for us all to have a bit of a scare. He recognised the good this officer had done, and that he was capable of accomplishing a lot more. There was a great deal of latent energy in some people, which needed to be called out. He did not wish to say too much, but he believed this officer had a great capacity for good in him, and he thought he might say this officer would be retained. He liked him very much. This officer had had great experience in the other colonies.

MR. LOCKE: The feeling of the House was quite in sympathy with what the Commissioner of Crown Lands had just said, and he was pleased indeed the hon. gentleman had made this promise, which he was sure was in the best interests of the country.

MR. A. FORREST: It was a great satisfaction to find the Minister had agreed that this officer should be retained. If the officer had done no other work in the colony than publish the report issued, the work would be worth more than his salary ten times over. He produced a book

which was invaluable, and wherever our jarrah was quoted in our own country and in any foreign countries, it had been through this book. He had been the means of calling attention to the vast timber resources of Western Australia. He (Mr. Forrest) spoke for every man connected with the timber trade in saying that the work accomplished by this officer was invaluable, and in the future the benefit would be more than tenfold. At the present time it only required the shipping people to make our timber exports very large. The ships that brought the pipes for the Coolgardie water scheme could take back timber.

MR. MORAN: It was a subject for congratulation that the Government had decided to retain a really practical expert on perhaps one of the largest national industries we had. He believed Mr. Ednie Brown to be the first authority on timber in Australia, and it would be unwise to allow the Government, without some very strong reason, to dispense with the services of so able a man. How much was Western Australia going to get out of the timber? He would like to see an interesting return from Mr. Ednie Brown on the subject of whether we got a corresponding return for what we sent away.

Vote put and passed.

Stork, £3,911 9s. 8d.:

Item, Incursion of rabbits, £500:

MR. WOOD: The amount on the Estimates in relation to the incursion of rabbits was most ridiculous, being totally inadequate. He really could not understand the inability of the Government to recognise the dreadful importance of the matter. If there was anything that would pull the present Ministry down it would be the encroachment of rabbits.

MR. MORAN: It would not be rabbits, but "rats."

MR. WOOD: Some of these days the House would regret their action when it was found that the country was over-run with these animals, and farmers and agriculturists on all sides nearly were ruined.

MR. WALLACE: This £500 had, he was informed, already been spent. If so, he would like to know why there had not been a sum placed on the Estimates for the prevention of the incursion of rabbits this year. Apparently the Government intended to treat the incursion of rabbits

as lightly as they had treated the tick trouble. If so, he would abide by their decision; for what with the tick from Kimberley and the rabbits from the South, the colony might look forward to a very good time in the near future. Did the Government intend to take any steps to prevent this incursion?

HON. H. W. VENN: There was £500 on the Estimates.

MR. WALLACE: That appeared to have been spent already.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: This rabbit question had received from him a great deal of attention. After all, it resolved itself into a question of pounds, shillings, and pence. The sum of £500 on the Estimates was available for the current year, but would suffice only for sending men out to report. He had studied the question night and day, but when it came to a matter of erecting 150 miles of fencing, there was no money to do it with, and hon. members must be good enough to say how the matter should be dealt with. It would be folly for him or anyone else, in view of the thousands of pounds spent on rabbit extermination by Governments in the eastern colonies, to treat this question lightly, although some persons, whose opinions he respected, maintained that rabbits would not be dangerous in Western Australia, and those persons did not attach much importance to the report before the Committee. There was no positive evidence of the presence of rabbits at any particular place in the colony; but there was no getting away from the fact that the rabbits had travelled 400 miles along our coast, and what the consequence would be in another four years, Providence alone knew. The officer now in charge ridiculed the idea of constructing the fence recommended by the expert. The late expert had recommended the construction of a fence through country where there was no water. The present officer recommended that the fence be not proceeded with, but that a shipment of cats should be sent up. This reminded him of a cartoon in a comic paper, he believed it was the *Sydney Bulletin*, to the effect that Western Australia had no need to fear a plague of rabbits, for there was enough wild cats on its goldfields to kill them all. The Committee might rest assured, however, that he was thoroughly serious about

the matter. There was a sum of £500 on the Estimates; but, if the danger became imminent, he would fall back on the Treasurer to find not £500, but £5,000 or £10,000, as might be required. Though it would be useless to place a larger sum on the Estimates, his officers would keep their eyes open, and do the best they could in the circumstances.

MR. CONOLLY: It was pleasant to hear the Commissioner of Crown Lands express himself so sensibly on the question; but he regretted that a gentleman holding the responsible position of Premier, with the example of the eastern colonies before him, could not grasp the danger that faced the country in this connection. Hitherto the Premier contented himself with saying he did not think rabbits would come here, or could live here, and that we had nothing to fear from them.

THE PREMIER asked when he had said that.

MR. CONOLLY: Most hon. members had doubtless heard the Premier express such views. A short time ago he had questioned the Premier in reference to this matter, and the answer was that the Government were waiting for the report of the expert whom they had sent out to investigate, and presumably they would act on that report. That report had been furnished; but Parliament was no nearer to a solution of the problem than before. Every year the restriction of rabbits was postponed meant the handing over of so many miles of this colony to those vermin.

MR. MONAGH: No rabbits had yet been seen in the colony.

MR. CONOLLY: Nonsense. Had the hon. member ever been down there?

MR. A. FORREST: Had the hon. member for Dundas ever been there?

MR. CONOLLY: No; but he knew that rabbits were there; and, moreover, the Government expert had reported their presence.

MR. A. FORREST: But the expert had never seen one.

THE PREMIER: No; the expert merely stated he had seen rabbit tracks.

MR. CONOLLY: The report stated distinctly that there were rabbits there, and recommended the erection of a fence.



**THE PREMIER:** One thousand miles long.

**MR. CONOLLY:** Even if it were 1,000 miles in length, it would be worth the money. By dealing with the question immediately, the length of the fence would be curtailed; whereas, if the matter were postponed, a fence of 2,000 miles in length might have to be constructed, and even that might not have the desired effect. It was most absurd to say that there were no rabbits in the colony.

**MR. A. FORREST:** None had ever been seen. The expert had not said he had seen any.

**MR. CONOLLY:** If the hon. member wished to see rabbits, he must not stay in Perth. When rabbits were seen here, it would not matter very much, for the damage would then have been done. What was the use of denying their presence, when the report of the inspector distinctly stated they were here?

**THE PREMIER:** The report stated that the expert saw tracks.

**MR. A. FORREST:** Yes; but they might not have been rabbit tracks.

**MR. CONOLLY:** Evidently some hon. members did not wish to believe there were rabbits. It was regrettable that the Government did not realise the danger of the position.

**THE PREMIER:** What did the hon. member wish the Government to do?

**MR. CONOLLY:** To accept the report of the expert they had sent out. That report was deliberately ignored.

**THE PREMIER:** Would the hon. member recommend the construction of a fence from Point Culver to Geraldton? That proposal of the expert would stagger most people.

**MR. JAMES:** What did the Government suggest, as an alternative?

**THE PREMIER** said he was listening to hon. members.

**MR. CONOLLY:** The recommendation of the expert was that a fence 10 or 15 miles in length should be constructed.

**THE PREMIER:** A map which had been placed on the table showed a plan of a fence all the way to Geraldton.

**MR. CONOLLY:** Even that work would be preferable to allowing the introduction of rabbits into the colony. It was hard to conceive how any thinking man could regard this as a matter to be trifled with,

simply because rabbits were not to be seen round Perth.

**MR. A. FORREST:** The member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly) had apparently not read the report of the Government expert, who reported that, although he had seen tracks, he had not seen a single rabbit; and yet, at the same time, he recommended a fence to go as far as the north of Geraldton. If ever there was a mad scheme proposed, it was this fence.

**MR. CONOLLY:** Why was he sent there, then?

**MR. A. FORREST:** It was hard to say where the Government found the man, for when he shipped in Fremantle he was in a state he should not have been in, and at Esperance he was carried ashore, and was in that state all the time he was there. This man said he had seen tracks which looked very much like rabbit tracks; but, in no instance did he find a rabbit. His (Mr. Forrest's) own opinion was that rabbits would not live in that part of the country. He knew the Government were serious about this question; but what would be the good of asking for a large expenditure for the eradication of rabbits, when there were no rabbits to eradicate? This matter had been discussed for the last ten years, and in all that time no rabbits had been found. If a few rabbits did come over the border they would never get past the men on the goldfields.

**MR. JAMES:** It had for some time been suggested that rabbits were travelling towards this colony, and two years ago Mr. Mason was sent down to make inquiries, the result of which was to point very strongly to the existence of rabbits. Acting on what Mr. Mason reported, and what was afterwards stated in the public Press, another inquiry was instituted, and Mr. Page was sent down to confirm the report of Mr. Mason. The member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) had stated that traces of rabbits had been seen, but no rabbits had been found; yet it was not necessary that rabbits should actually be seen to know they were there. If experts found traces of rabbits and reported that rabbits were there, why, in the face of these reports, should hon. members be asked to accept the bare statements of hon. members who, so far as this question was concerned, had not travelled outside St. George's Terrace? Even if there were

doubts in the minds of the Government as to the value of the reports; the danger to this country from an incursion of rabbits was so great that somebody who could be trusted should be sent to make further inquiry. The examinations hitherto had not been satisfactory on account of the difficulties encountered, but the possible danger, disaster, and loss to the country, if it became over-run with rabbits, were so great and momentous, that the Government ought not to hesitate to spend a few thousand pounds for the purpose of having a reliable examination made in that part of the country where it was rumoured these animals existed. If half the money spent on bridges at York, or one-tenth of the money spent on public works at Bunbury, had been devoted to coping with the threatened invasion of rabbits, it would have been better for the country. It was difficult to see what the proposed £500 could be used for. Such a sum was useless, and was apparently placed on the Estimates for the purpose of lulling us into a state of false security, and making the country believe the Government were alive to this question, when, as the amount itself showed, they were perfectly indifferent. Let further inquiries be made, because there were people who had come from this district who said that rabbits were there. The Government might send down a man who could be trusted, to obtain some definite information on the matter.

MR. MORAN: It cost only £150 last year to find traces of rabbits. If the officer who had been sent down had been given another £50, he would have seen rabbits and all sorts of things.

Item passed.

Other items agreed to, and the vote put and passed.

*Department of Agriculture, £4,126 13s. 4d.:*

MR. LOCKE: The Commissioner of Crown Lands might inform hon. members what officers it was intended to get rid of. He hoped it was not going to be the experts. He had a number of petitions and requisitions and letters from different societies asking that the services of the experts should not be dispensed with.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Hon. members might leave it to him to say which officers should go.

No good would be done by giving the names of those officers who were to go. The chief experts who had been recommended by the Secretary would be retained. At the end of the financial year hon. members would find the department on a better footing that it was at the present time.

Vote put and passed.

*Agricultural Bank, £1,270—agreed to.*

Lands Department votes were thus completed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on the motion of MR. SOLOMON, read a first time.

#### POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

MR. LEAKE moved that the Bill be read a third time.

MR. JAMES: When this Bill passed its second reading most members were not, he thought, aware of the amendment which it would effect. For that reason no doubt the Bill was passed through without the discussion to which it was entitled. It was desirable to make these statements, because, as a rule, discussions involving a question of principle should be made upon the second reading of a Bill, and not be raised on the third reading—

MR. LEAKE: The subject was discussed, but members were not in their places.

MR. JAMES: When those present did not care a rap about the principle, and voted blindly with the member for Albany (Mr. Leake). He (Mr. James) found a great deal of support in the position he took up in following a suggestion of the member for York (Mr. Monger), when that hon. member told members to look up *Hansard*. He did look up *Hansard*, and found that the one member best qualified to give an opinion upon that system, trade, or occupation with which this Bill dealt was the member for York, who, in introducing the Act which this Bill proposed to amend, gave abundantly good reasons in favour of the Act. The amending Police Act of 1894

was introduced on the motion of the member for York, who urged that there were so many evils under the existing law that some amendment should be made for the purpose of removing those evils. The member for York testified to the evils of which he knew, and from which he had suffered, and he introduced that Act which he now in a haphazard way desired to have repealed with very little discussion. Under the present Act no betting was allowed in places to which the public had access. The old law, apart from the Police Act, was that no person should bet in a public place. Two interpretations had been put upon the meaning of a public place. The interpretation placed upon it by the Court of Crown Cases Reserved was that it meant the usual ordinary betting rings—Tattersall's and the racecourses were public places. The interpretation by the Court of Appeal was that such a place was not a public place. This second decision was under appeal to the House of Lords. It was notorious that the second decision, which stated that betting was legal if carried on in the betting ring, was obtained by collusion. It was a bogus action brought by a person who was desirous of obtaining the decision of a court superior to the Court of Crown Cases Reserved. The law in this colony, as he had stated, said that no man should carry on betting in a public place. That law was passed for the purpose of preventing that open and flagrant kind of betting which had been carried on for so many years past. In the administration of this Act the Government had, he thought, shown a wise discretion. He did not believe in any law of this nature being so rigidly enforced as to become an injustice. There were many laws which, if so enforced, would become intolerable, but which, when fairly and sympathetically administered, were recognised as just and equitable. Now, so far as he could see, we were going to leave the question of betting entirely open. If members turned to the Bill before the House they would observe that it did not repeal the whole of the Act of 1894. It did not place the law where it was before the Act of 1894 was passed, but it repealed section 2 of the Police Act of 1892. This legislation was introduced for the legalisation of the bookmaker, and

to add to the revenue of the West Australian Turf Club. He would like to ask the hon. member who was responsible for the introduction of this Bill what the effect of it would be.

MR. LEAKE: To stop all the "tote" shops in Perth. That was the aim of the Bill.

MR. JAMES: The hon. member knew that was entirely inaccurate. The Bill did not make anything illegal which had been legal before. It simply legalised that which had hitherto been illegal.

MR. LEAKE: The law could not be enforced while such absurd and drastic legislation was on the statute book.

MR. JAMES: That was where he ventured to differ from the hon. member. This amending Bill said nothing about tote-shops. It did not make their position more legal or less illegal than it already was. So far as tote-shops were concerned, the law would be exactly the same after this Bill had passed as before; and if the police had no nerve—if they could not enforce the law in respect of tote-shops to-day, they would not be able to do it to-morrow when this Bill had become law, for the measure left the law intact. Therefore it was not obvious how the Bill could be said to interfere with the totalisator shops unless the hon. member meant that the improper betting, the dishonest betting, connected with the totalisator shops to-day would be removed from such shops, and be carried on openly on the public racecourse. Was that the hon. member's meaning—that such illegal betting would be stopped in the shops, but that it would be made legal upon public racecourses? That was what the hon. member suggested as one of the reasons for this legislation: that it would abolish the tote-shops by having an open competition with such shops carried on upon public racecourses. This proposition was sufficient to condemn the Bill in itself, if we were to have a sort of glorified tote-shop carried on under the auspices of the West Australian Turf Club. But would the hon. member explain this—and he asked this for the purpose of obtaining information: by this Bill the House would repeal section 2 of the Act of 1894. Now section 3 of the Act of 1894 repealed section 2 of the Police Act. Why then was not section 2 of the Police Act reinstated, so that when we repealed

section 2 we should be placed in the same position as we had previously occupied? He (Mr. James) had understood that the law was to be placed in the same position as it had been before. Under the Act of 1894, the prior provisions against betting were abolished. The legal restrictions on betting were abolished by placing section 2 in the Police Act; but now it was proposed to abolish section 2, and we had already abolished the old restrictions against betting. What, then, would be the restrictions against betting, when this Bill had passed? We would not even have the restrictions they had in England.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member wished to speak much longer, he had better move the adjournment of the debate. Surely he did not intend to talk all night.

MR. JAMES assured the Premier he was not anxious to talk all night. He was strongly opposed to the Bill.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The Government had made up their minds to pass it.

MR. JAMES: It appeared that in the Act of 1894, Parliament abolished the prior restrictions dealing with betting. Section 3 of the Act of 1894 did that; but in the Bill now before the House, instead of replacing the old law, so as to leave the position as it was when the Act of 1894 was passed, there was a provision in the present Act the effect of which would be that, if the Act were passed as it stood, so far as could be seen—and that was the point on which he wanted the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) to check him if he were wrong—if the Bill as it stood were passed there would be absolutely no restriction upon betting.

MR. MONGER: What did the hon. member want?

MR. JAMES said he wanted information, and, if he could get it from the member for York (Mr. Monger), he would be surprised and delighted, for it was from the hon. member that he had gained a great insight into all the intricacies of betting; and the hon. member had expressed such a strong opinion in favour of the Act of 1894 that he (Mr. James) was quite certain the hon. member could not "jump jim crow" in the comparatively short period of four years. This Bill would not place the law in the same position as in 1894, and it was wrong to pass legis-

lation which had not been demanded by the public outside the Western Australian Turf Club, and bookmakers and their clients. Hon. members were not in the House to legalise a tote-shop for the benefit of the Turf Club, but were here to suppress betting as far as possible. The present Act had worked admirably. It had enabled persons who wanted to bet, to bet, and it also enabled persons who wished to see *bona fide* racing to do so without being assailed and insulted by the roar of bookmakers, who were privileged on payment of 10 or 20 guineas to the Turf Club. If the arguments of the member for York (Mr. Monger) in favour of the legislation it was now sought to repeal were true when used, they were true to-day; and some solid reason ought to be given for the recantation of that hon. member. He (Mr. James) opposed the Bill because it was the duty of hon. members to suppress betting, and not only betting, but two-legged sweeps and also the consultations, which were now carried on in the most open way. There was far too much betting in Australia, and he hoped that hon. members would not take a retrograde step. In every colony wherever an advance had been made in the direction of restricting betting, a backward step had never been taken.

MR. MONGER: On the occasion of the third reading of a bill, it was not necessary for a member to tender personal explanations as to opinions which he held a few years ago. The action of the member for East Perth, and one or two others who was opposed to the Bill, was surprising. The Bill was not introduced in a hurry, but was debated in another place, and passed its second reading in the Assembly unanimously. No doubt the opposition arose from the fact that a deputation of gentlemen, for whom hon. members had the greatest respect, waited on the Premier and laid certain views before him; and the members who were opposed to the Bill had thought fit to take cognisance of the arguments submitted by those gentlemen. As the member who introduced the Bill, he (Mr. Monger) thought it his duty to be present and hear those arguments, and before that distinguished body he stated the reasons for the position he took a few years back. He was surprised that the member for East Perth

should make such remarks upon the third reading of the Bill, when ample opportunity had been given for discussing the measure in its previous stages. He (Mr. Monger) could give many reasons for altering the ideas which he held four or five years ago.

Question—that the Bill be read a third time—put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	...	9

Majority for	...	...	6
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<i>Ayes.</i>	<i>Noes</i>
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Mr. Hall	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Hubble	Mr. Harper
Mr. Kenny	Mr. James
Mr. Leake	Mr. Leifroy
Mr. Locke	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Monger.	Mr. Throssell
Mr. Moran	Hon. H. W. Venn
Mr. Morgans	Mr. Wood
Mr. Pennefather	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Phillips	(Teller)
Mr. Quinlan	
Mr. Solomon	
Mr. Vosper	
Mr. Wallace	
Mr. A. Forrest	

(Teller)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Council with amendments.

#### COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY CONSTRUCTION BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of two amendments, made by the Legislative Council, considered.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Put and passed.

Resolution reported, report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Legislative Council.

##### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.50 p.m. until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th October, 1898.

Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Land Bill, third reading (debate)—Mining on Private Property Bill, second reading; in Committee; third reading—Bush Fires Act Amendment Bill, second reading; in Committee; third reading—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

##### PRAYERS.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, on the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

##### LAND BILL.

##### THIRD READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Bill be read a third time.

HON. R. G. BURGESS moved, as an amendment, that the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause 145.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment. The Bill had been seriously and carefully considered at the hands of hon. members here and also in another place. If further amendments were now made, the measure might be jeopardised.

THE PRESIDENT: At this late stage of the session, it was highly inconvenient that the Bill should be recommitted. There were a number of amendments which had been made in the Bill and which had to be considered by the Legislative Assembly. The work of the session was nearly finished, and if the Bill were recommitted, it meant further delay.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question—that the Bill be read a third time—put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.