

orders that the Flinders shall be engaged at £100, or more if necessary, to make a trip pending the acceptance of a tender. We recognise that a growing place like Esperance deserves a good service. The Government did not want a small boat, but endeavoured to meet the wishes of the people of Albany in the matter. I am glad the hon. member has brought this matter forward, because it has enabled me to give this explanation.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: The remarks of the hon. the Minister are very satisfactory. I am pleased he is glad that I have brought the matter forward, because hitherto he has not been satisfied with motions I have deemed it necessary to put before the House. I trust that when this House sits again he may be in the same pleasant mood in which we find him to-day. I beg, by leave, to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BOATING FATALITIES ON SWAN RIVER—PREVENTION OF.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: Last session, consequent upon some boating fatalities which had occurred, a motion was carried in this House that life-saving appliances should be placed along the banks of the river, and that a police boat should be obtained. I should like to know whether anything has been done in this matter.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Recognising the interest the hon. member took in this subject, I feel certain that something must have been done, but what it is I cannot exactly say. At present I am not prepared to give a definite answer, but I will make inquiries.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: We know that some time ago, when a motion was carried in this House in favour of the placing of beacons about the river, nothing was done; and a similar course seems to have been taken with regard to the motion which I brought forward last session. I draw attention to the matter now, because I am not prepared to bring forward motions in this House without following them up.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I have every sympathy with the hon. member, and I may say that when the resolution was agreed

to it was sent on to the proper quarter. I will inquire into the matter, but I feel sure that if nothing has been done it is through an oversight or pressure of work on the part of the department concerned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 8:20 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Friday, 12th March, at 3 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th March, 1897.

Meeting of the Assembly—Message: Opening of a Session Extraordinary—Paper: Lands and Mining Regulations Amendment—Question: Electoral Claims and Registration—Message: Supply—Question: Perth Water Supply and Analysis—Emergency Motion: Compensation Claims re Losses by Fire—Election of Acting Chairman of Committees—Suspension of Standing Orders—Committee of Supply: Objection to Procedure; in Committee of Supply; in Committee of Ways and Means—Supply Bill, £750,000; all stages—Speech of the Governor: Address-in-Reply—Australasian Federation Enabling Act (1896) Amendment Bill; all stages—Question: Steamship Macgregor and Danger to Life—Message: Concurrence in Bills—Adjournment.

MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 o'clock p.m., pursuant to Proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which Proclamation was read by the Clerk.

MESSAGE—OPENING OF A SESSION EXTRAORDINARY.

A message from His Excellency the Governor was delivered at the Bar by the Usher of the Black Rod, requesting the immediate attendance of the Speaker and members of the Assembly, in the Chamber of the Legislative Council.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker and Members of the Assembly proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber, where His Excellency delivered a speech, formally opening the Fourth (an extraordinary) Session of the Parliament. [*Vide* report of Council's proceedings, *ante*.]

PAPER—LANDS AND MINING REGULATIONS AMENDMENT.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST) laid on the Table of the House a Paper, showing amendments in the Regulations made under the Mineral Lands Act and the Goldfields Act.

Ordered—That the Paper do lie upon the Table.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL CLAIMS AND REGISTRATION.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, by leave, asked the Premier: Does he intend taking any steps to secure the registration of claims, made in the present quarter, on the electoral rolls for the coming election of members to Parliament?

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST) replied: The only reply I can give to the hon. member is that all which can be done under the law will be done, in regard to placing electors on the electoral rolls. I believe those persons who applied and were qualified to be put on the rolls prior to the holding of the last registration court—held, I think, early in January—will be placed on the electoral roll by the registration court on the 6th of April next. Those persons who apply now (during the current quarter), as far as I have been informed—and I do not speak with any great authority on the point—will not be able to be placed upon the rolls at the sitting of the registration court on the 6th of April. The hon. member, I suppose, knows the law on the subject as well as I do. The Government are very anxious to place every qualified person on the electoral rolls, as far as possible; but the Government are absolutely powerless to break the law, and must keep to the law.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Keep to the law, certainly.

THE PREMIER: Yes, we will try to do that, and will keep to the law while also trying to give every facility that is possible for persons to get on the rolls.

MESSAGE—SUPPLY.

The following Message was presented and read:—

“GERARD SMITH,

“Governor.

“In accordance with the requirements of Section 67 of The Constitution Act,

“1889,” the Governor recommends to “the Legislative Assembly that an appropriation of Four hundred thousand pounds be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and Three hundred and fifty thousand pounds out of the General Loan Fund, for the purposes of the undermentioned Bill, intituled ‘An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the General Loan Fund the sum of Seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1898.’

“Government House, Perth, 11th March, 1897.”

The foregoing Message was considered at a later stage.

QUESTION—PERTH WATER SUPPLY AND ANALYSIS.

MR. GEORGE, by leave, asked: Do the Government intend to take any steps to satisfactorily analyse the water supplied to Perth; firstly that supplied from the Victoria Reservoir (Canning Hills), and secondly the water which is being supplied through the artesian bore at West Perth? There is reason to suppose that the impurity of the water supplied is at the root of a great deal of the illness that is prevalent in Perth at the present time.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST) replied: The Government are quite ready to do everything they have the power to do, in regard to carrying out any wish from the Perth City Council; but I may say that the Perth City Council are in an equally good position with the Government to have this water analysed. As perhaps most hon. members are aware, the Government have had the water analysed, as far as what is called a chemical analysis, that is for impure dead matter, and the result has been very satisfactory. The Government analyst, Mr. Mann, has reported that the water he has examined on two occasions is fairly good water, of an average quality with surface water. He has not examined the water for bacteria or for bacilli, because he has not the necessary apparatus put up yet; but, as it is now in the colony, he hopes to be able in a short time to deal with the water for these more difficult tests also. Mr. Mann informed me, in an interview yesterday, that the detection of bacteria

and bacilli in water is a most difficult operation, and that there are very few men even in Australia—I give his own words—who are capable of detecting these minute germs. I believe the typhoid bacillus is very like another germ which is very common in water—at any rate it is not uncommon—and which is not dangerous; and the only way, as Mr. Mann informs me, of detecting the typhoid bacillus is by a process of fattening it, in order that it may grow under favourable conditions to such a size as will bring it within the magnifying power of the microscope. I am told that the power of the microscope is not sufficient to detect the presence of the typhoid bacillus in its natural state, and that it is only by a process of fattening up that the bacillus grows large enough to be observable under a microscope. Mr. Mann also informed me that at the Melbourne University there are distinguished men who, he believes, are competent to report on the matter as to whether typhoid bacilli exist in the water or not, and he suggested that some samples should be sent to the Melbourne University, or that application should be made to ascertain whether the University authorities are willing to undertake the analysing of samples to be sent from Perth. That is how the matter stands at present; and, so far as the Government are concerned, we are quite willing to make application to the Melbourne University. Of course we saw a statement published in a newspaper the other day, that some one in Melbourne—we were not told who that person is—had tested the water from the Perth reservoir, and found it impure. The statement made at the end of that report, that typhoid germs probably exist in the water, was a very rash and wrong statement to make, unless that person, whoever he is, was satisfied that typhoid germs did exist in the water he tested. Indeed, I do not think I could call a statement of that sort, unless founded upon good evidence, by a hard enough name; and I should like to know who this gentleman is, who made this very difficult analysis, so that we may judge as to his capability of making this very minute and difficult examination. I think that such an august and distinguished body as the Perth City Council should not come to the Govern-

ment to ask that an analysis should be made of the water supplied to the city, but that they should take the matter into their own hands, and at once obtain samples and have them tested by competent persons. If, however, I can assist the City Council by writing to the governing body of the Melbourne University, I shall be glad to do all I can to assist in that way. But I also think this is a matter that should not have been left till the meeting of Parliament, but that if the City Council believe the water supplied to the people of Perth is impure, and especially if they believe there are typhoid germs in it—though I do not believe for a moment there are typhoid germs in it—still, if they think so, they ought to have taken action long ago, or should at least take steps now, to have the water thoroughly analysed by a competent person.

MR. GEORGE: Will you (the Premier) reply now about the water from the bore? You are a representative of the people of this colony, and I ask whether you will have the water from the Government bore analysed, to protect the people's health?

THE PREMIER: I have not the slightest objection. If the City Council will ask me to have samples of both waters sent away for analysis. I shall at once comply with their wishes, and have the samples collected, packed, and sent away, under the superintendence of our own Analyst.

EMERGENCY MOTION—COMPENSATION CLAIMS RE LOSSES BY FIRE.

MR. HIGHAM, by leave, moved the adjournment of the House, to call attention to a matter of emergency. He said: It will be within the recollection of most members that, in connection with the burning of the transit goods shed at Fremantle, an immense quantity of goods was destroyed. In consequence of that, a law suit was brought by the owner of one parcel of goods against the Railway Department; and, after an exhaustive trial extending over twenty-one days, it was decided by the jury, and upheld subsequently by the Full Court on appeal, that criminal negligence had been shown by the Railway Department, and that the department was responsible for the loss of the goods by fire. This case was

one of some thirty or forty, and had been tried as a test case to determine the legal liability for the loss. The other claims are being pressed on the department for settlement, and the plaintiffs are being met, on the part of the Government, with what are considered to be obstructive tactics, so that the claimants have been compelled to incur excessive expense in proving that which has been already proved to the satisfaction of. I think, all concerned, and which has certainly been proved beyond all doubt. I should like an expression of opinion from the House as to whether these cases should be carried on in this manner. It seems a pity that those people who have lost the most by this fire should be compelled to go to so much expense in proving a case which has been already proved; and it also seems hard that the country should have to bear the expense of all these heavy law suits. One case, involving a claim for £260, has already cost £1,200, which the country has had to pay; and I do not think anything will justify the dragging on of other cases in this way.

MR. MOSS seconded the motion, formally.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The hon. member has alluded to some legal proceedings against the Government, in a case which came within my knowledge; but, since the case was decided, I have heard nothing about it. No representations have been made to the Government, that I am aware of—at any rate, in my department. No doubt, representations have been made to the department of the Commissioner of Railways, in regard to other claims arising out of losses in that fire; but, so far as I know, it does not at all follow that every case of that kind is on the same footing. Goods lost in that fire were in the custody of different people—some in that of the Collector of Customs, others in the hands of the Commissioner of Railways, some in his hands as a common carrier, and some left with him in his capacity as a mere warehouseman. Therefore, points do arise as to the liability in each case; and really, without having the circumstances of each case before me, I could not give an opinion about claims which the hon. member may regard as having been already decided. I am sure the Govern-

ment do not wish to litigate a matter that has been decided. I fancy that if representations had been made by the firms concerned in that action, directly to the Government, as to their grievance, the claimants would have been informed as to whether or not litigation was contemplated by the Government. The hon. member must not run away with the idea that all goods which were consumed in that fire were quite on the same footing. As far as I am concerned, I am always only too ready to advise the Government to settle, in a fair and equitable manner, any case in which there is a reasonable doubt, rather than go to law and put people to the expense of litigation. If there is any reasonable doubt as to the liability of the Government, the Government are fully prepared to pay. But because one case has been decided against the Government, the hon. member should not think that, necessarily, all those persons who have lost goods in the same fire are equally entitled to compensation on the same ground. I have not examined the cases. If the claimants had been advised to send in their cases, and submit them at once to the law officers of the Crown, that course would have expedited business.

MR. MOSS: Had it not been the fact that the particular claim has been paid by the Government, I should have risen before to address the House on this subject. That amount has been paid; but, as rumours are afloat that it is the intention of the Government to take this case to the Privy Council on appeal—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Where does that rumour come from?

MR. MOSS: I do not know; but the rumour is afloat, and it is necessary that this House and the country should know that the amount claimed in that case has been already paid. The Attorney General has stated that, so far as the Government are concerned, they are prepared to meet all those liabilities, and pay any just claim, rather than resort to legal proceedings. I am glad he has made that statement on the part of the Government; but I am sorry to say that, so far as the Railway Department is concerned—without referring to any particular officer as being responsible—that department does not meet the claims in the fair and equitable spirit

which the Attorney General has stated. I know that numbers of claims have been made in respect of goods that were in the shed at the time of the fire, being part of the cargoes of the steamers *Tangier* and *Innamineka*; and there can be no doubt, according to the ruling of the court, that at the time of the fire the Commissioner of Railways held those goods in the capacity of a common carrier; yet the Railway Department refuses to recognise those claims, notwithstanding that it has been proved, beyond all doubt, that the particular goods came out of the steamers I have mentioned. It does strike me that, as a matter of public policy, it is extremely bad on the part of the Government that thousands of pounds of public money should be thrown away in contesting claims when the liability of the Government has been settled so clearly and distinctly. The Attorney General will, I think, agree with me that the highest court of this colony has said there was ample evidence to justify the jury in coming to the conclusion that the fire in the goods shed was the result of gross negligence. I hope that, when these claims do go in, they will be met in the fair and equitable spirit which the Attorney General has mentioned.

Motion for adjournment put and negatived.

ELECTION OF ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

On the motion of the PREMIER, and in the absence of Mr. Traylen (visiting England), Mr. Randell was elected to be the Acting Chairman of Committees during the present session.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Standing Orders relating to public Bills were suspended, for enabling the House to pass a Supply Bill and another Bill through all stages at one sitting.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY—OBJECTION TO PROCEDURE.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), by leave, moved that the House do resolve itself into a

Committee of the Whole, to consider the supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I desire at this stage, not intending in any way to oppose or to embarrass the Government in the effort they propose to make—for, as hon. members know, I am in full sympathy with the object and the intention of this proposed procedure—to point out that, in my opinion, there is no necessity for this Parliament to take upon itself the granting of supplies for the next financial year. Nor do I think that, if this were not to be done now, it would in any way embarrass the Government or interfere with the national object which we have in view, that of the Premier's visit to England on the occasion of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, as it is called, though a jubilee is supposed to imply a period of fifty years. The present procedure, to say the least of it, is irregular, and I question if many precedents can be shown, if any. The position is peculiar, because this Parliament will die within a few weeks at the most, and we are asked to take upon ourselves, at this stage, to not only deal with the question of supplies for the next Parliament, but also to deal with the revenue of the succeeding year. I think the Government ought to have taken another course. That course should have been to make arrangements for calling the new Parliament together soon after its election, with a clear understanding that the only business of that particular session should be the granting of the necessary supplies for the year. I am certain that every member now sitting in this House who would then have had the good fortune to be returned to the new Parliament, would have held true to that pledge, and I am quite certain that other gentlemen, who may be returned at the ensuing election, would most cordially have concurred in the desire of the Government. I think the present course is irregular, and that it is unnecessary for us to take upon ourselves the responsibility of voting supplies for the succeeding year, and dealing with the revenue of the succeeding year, when the new Parliament, as far as the electors are concerned, will be in full power to carry on the business of the country. The absence of the Premier from a special session of the new Parliament, held for

the granting of supplies, would of course be lamented; but surely the able colleagues he possesses, and who will have to administer affairs during his absence, will be able to undertake the whole of the business during his absence from the colony. I desire to express my conviction on this matter, so far as to enter a protest against this action being carried forward, or being looked upon at a future time as a precedent. If I thought it was really necessary to take this irregular procedure, in order to secure the end, I would support it; but I think it is not necessary, and that the course is too irregular and too dangerous to allow it to pass without a protest. Therefore, I cannot vote for the motion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The Government quite recognise the friendly spirit in which the hon. member who has just sat down has spoken. At the same time, one cannot help feeling how very much misinformed he has been on this question; because, if I understood him rightly, he says, in a friendly way, this procedure is irregular; and I have no doubt he really thinks there is something irregular in it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: People in Victoria, the best men there, say it is.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member did not, I am glad to see, go so far as to say it was unconstitutional or illegal, but he ventured another adjective, and said the procedure was somewhat "dangerous." I cannot conceive how some persons have got it into their minds that, in asking this Parliament to vote supply for two months of the next financial year, the procedure in any way savours of illegality or is dangerous. It is the most common proceeding of Parliaments in any part of the world. It is the course of procedure that is adopted every year, and has been practised for hundreds of years, by the British House of Commons; and it is the procedure that has been adopted in this colony ever since about the year 1870: that is to say, Parliament votes, before the close of one year, a supply for a part of the next year.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not in a moribund Parliament.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, I give the hon. member the benefit of any point he can make out of that ground—

the assertion that this is a moribund Parliament. We have heard in the last session, and even in the session before last, that this is a moribund Parliament; but the moribund Parliament of last session passed a Loan Bill for something like six millions of money, and if that Parliament was competent to do that—and I have heard nothing of the irregularity of that proceeding—surely it cannot be irregular for the same Parliament to pass this resolution at the present time. I can assure the House that if the Government thought it was wrong to propose this course, in any case, the Government would hesitate to do it, even if it thought it had every member in the House at its back. We have considered this case, and it will be found that there is no authority whatever against the procedure, but, on the contrary, every authority and every precedent are in its favour. Now, what is the alternative of this proposal? The hon. member did suggest that, because he anticipates a dissolution—and we must bear in mind that this Parliament is not expiring by effluxion of time, but that we anticipate it will shortly be dissolved in consequence of the amending Constitution Act having been passed, and bearing in mind also that if we do not take this procedure we shall have to face the next financial year, beginning on the 1st July, without any supplies for that year having been voted by Parliament—the hon. member did suggest that, because he anticipates a dissolution, therefore this Parliament cannot grant supplies for two months of the next financial year. The Government will be bound to spend money in all directions, to a very large extent, during the months of July and August, without the sanction of Parliament, unless we obtain it now.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why can't you call the new Parliament together, after the elections?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I agree that, in the event of there being a dissolution, and in the event of a new Parliament being constituted shortly after the financial year has closed, it may be said we are taking somewhat from the functions of that Parliament. But how can that be? If we were proposing to decide now anything of great constitutional importance in this colony, if we

were making amendments in the constitution or in the procedure as to elections, or if we were dealing with any great constitutional question, it might be said, with some truth, "Why not leave these to the new Parliament?" It might be said that this Parliament is about to close, and these questions should not be dealt with by us, but by a newly elected Parliament. But, really, this question of granting supplies for two months touches no question of importance whatever; it concludes nothing, and interferes with nobody. We do not pass votes, in granting supplies for two months. We do not say that the salary of a single Government official shall be fixed at a certain sum, either more or less than the sum in the last Estimates passed by this House. We only say that, as money must be provided, and must be spent during the first two months of the next financial year, in carrying on the public services and works authorised, we ask you to grant so much on account, and the money so granted will be allocated according to the votes of Parliament to be passed afterwards, when we deal with the sums in the annual Estimates which will be laid before the new Parliament. Therefore, how can it be contended that, by this procedure, we are taking anything from the anticipated new Parliament with which it ought to deal, and with which we ought not to deal? We are dealing with nothing more than this position, that instead of attempting to spend money without the sanction of Parliament, we are asking Parliament to grant authority to expend a certain sum on account of votes which Parliament will be asked to make to a larger extent in the next financial year, because our estimated expenditure is vastly more than the sum we are now asking for on account. And the granting of this supply concludes nothing, for if Parliament at a future stage says a certain salary shall be cut down, or says it will spend more money on this work or on that, there will be ample power and opportunity for Parliament to make the particular reduction or the increase. I should like to hear some argument, if there is any, as I suppose there is, to show why it is thought that this procedure is irregular, or unconstitutional, or illegal.

Motion put and passed.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

On the motion of the PREMIER, and without debate, supply was granted to an amount not exceeding £400,000 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and £350,000 out of the General Loan Fund, on account of the service of the financial year 1897-8.

Resolution reported to the House, and report adopted.

IN COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, and without debate, a further resolution in accordance with the foregoing was passed.

Resolution reported to the House, and report adopted.

SUPPLY BILL, £750,000.

ALL STAGES.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, and upon leave given, the PREMIER and TREASURER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) introduced a Bill, intituled "An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the General Loan Fund the sum of £750,000 to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1898." The Bill passed through all stages, without debate, and was transmitted to the Legislative Council.

SPEECH OF THE GOVERNOR— ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THE SPEAKER reported to the House that he had, with members of the House, attended His Excellency the Governor in the Chamber of the Legislative Council, when His Excellency was pleased to make a speech to both Houses of Parliament, of which speech Mr. Speaker said he had, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy, which he read to the House. *Vide* report of the Council's proceedings, ante.

MOTION.

MR. CLARKSON (Toodyay), in moving the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's opening speech, said: It is not necessary for me to say much on this occasion. His Excellency's speech tells us that the revenue of the colony is in a flourishing state, and this fact will be satisfactory to all of us, for we anticipated that it would be so. I do not think there is any matter of importance contained in His

Excellency's speech on which I need to comment; therefore I beg to move that the following Address-in-Reply be agreed to:—

"To His Excellency Lieut.-Colonel Sir Gerard Smith, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Governor. &c., &c., &c."

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

"We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to assure Your Excellency of our loyalty and affection to our Most Gracious Sovereign."

"We thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been good enough to address to us, and shall give it our most careful consideration and attention."

MR. PHILLIPS (Irwin) seconded the motion, formally.

Question put and passed.

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION ENABLING ACT (1896) AMENDMENT BILL. ALL STAGES.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), by leave, introduced this Bill, which was read a first time.

THE PREMIER, in moving the second reading, said: Hon. members will notice at once the object of this Bill, on perusing it. In the first place, the Bill has for its object the validating of the writ which was issued on the 22nd February, 1897, and which, as hon. members no doubt are aware, was not in strict conformity with the Act. The Act passed last session provides that fifteen days must elapse between the issue of the writ and the nomination, in which respect the writ is in accordance with the Act. The Act of last session further provides that fifteen days must elapse between the nomination and the election day; but as it has been since found that to comply with the Act in this respect would prevent Western Australia from being represented at the Convention, at any rate in the early days of the Convention, the object of this Bill is therefore to validate the writ which was issued on the 22nd February, and which is given *in extenso* in the Schedule of the Bill. A further object is to make a permanent alteration in the Act of last session, by reducing the time between the

nomination and the election day to not less than two days. Of course that will not prevent the Government, should there be no emergency, from giving a much longer time than two days; but it will give them the opportunity of reducing the time to two days, if it is found expedient in any emergency to have not less than two days between the nomination and the election. After all, the main provision is the time between the issue of the writ and the nomination. After the nomination, of course hon. members can exercise the vote within two days without any inconvenience. I think this alteration, which has been found necessary, will commend itself to hon. members. It will also be noticed that, by Clause 4, the polling for the election of persons to represent Western Australia shall be held on the 13th day of March in this year, between the hours of ten o'clock in the forenoon and noon—these words being a repetition of the words in the existing Act—and the clause goes on to say the persons then elected shall be deemed the persons lawfully elected to represent Western Australia in the said Convention; thus dispelling entirely any doubt as to the legality of the position of those representatives who will be elected on the 13th inst. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed, without further debate.

Bill read a second time, also passed through the remaining stages, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

QUESTION—STEAMSHIP MACGREGOR AND DANGER TO LIFE.

MR. A. FORREST, by leave, asked: Has the attention of the Premier been drawn to the condition of the steamship Macgregor, which carries the mails between Albany and Esperance; and do the Government intend to take any action to stop this boat from further risking the lives of the people, and the safety of Her Majesty's mails, along that route; also, do the Government intend to discontinue that service, and put on a better boat?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: In answer to the hon. member, I have much pleasure in saying that the

days of the Macgregor, as a contract boat under the Government, have come to an end; that new tenders have been invited, returnable on the 15th of this month; and that, in the meantime, the Government are negotiating for the services of the steamship Flinders, to run the trip between this date and the 15th. Therefore I hope that the dissatisfaction which has been so often expressed in regard to the Macgregor will now be at an end, and that a better service for mails and passengers along that coast will be provided.

At 4:37 o'clock the SPEAKER left the chair, and at 5:10 he resumed the chair.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—THE PRESENTATION.

THE SPEAKER reported that, accompanied by hon. members, he had waited upon His Excellency at Government House, and there presented the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's opening speech; also, that His Excellency had been pleased to reply as follows:—

“MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—

“I thank you for your address in reply to my opening speech, and for the assurance of your careful consideration and attention to the matters therein referred to.

“Government House, Perth, 11th
“March, 1897.”

At 5:15 o'clock the Speaker left the chair, and at 7:30 o'clock the Speaker resumed the chair. After awaiting a Message from the Legislative Council, the Speaker again left the chair, and resumed it at 8 o'clock.

MESSAGE—CONCURRENCE IN BILLS.

A Message from the Legislative Council was received and read, intimating that the Council concurred in the Supply Bill and the Australasian Federation Enabling Act Amendment Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 8:5 o'clock, the House adjourned until 3 o'clock the next afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 12th March, 1897.

Illness of Acting President and appointment of Acting President—Address-in-Reply: presentation of—Address to Her Majesty—Prorogation.

ILLNESS OF ACTING PRESIDENT.

THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENTS (Mr. C. Lee Steere): I have to report to hon. members that I have received a notification from the Acting President, to the effect that, owing to indisposition, he is unable to attend the House this afternoon.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Owing to the regrettable indisposition of the hon. the Acting President, I beg to move that the Hon. Mr. Hackett do take the chair for the remainder of the present session. I hope, in the circumstances, the hon. member will accede to my request.

Question put and passed.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I have to thank hon. members for their vote, and I submit myself to the House.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J. W. Hackett) then took the chair.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION OF.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J. W. Hackett), accompanied by hon. members, proceeded to Government House for the purpose of presenting the Address-in-Reply.

On resuming,

THE ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J. W. Hackett) reported that His Excellency had been graciously pleased to receive hon. members, and had made the following reply:—

“MR. PRESIDENT AND HONOURABLE
“GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE
“COUNCIL,—

“I thank you for your Address to my
“opening speech, and assurances of your
“careful consideration and attention to
“the matters therein referred to.”