

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6:30 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 28th November, 1900.

Paper presented—Sessional Order, Amendment—Boulder Health Rates Validation Bill, first reading—Perth Electric Lighting and Power Bill (private), third reading—Kalgoorlie Roads Board Tramways Bill, third reading—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Conspiracy and Protection of Property Bill, third reading—Bills of Sale Amendment Bill, in Committee (resumed), reported; third reading—Railways Act Amendment Bill, second reading, etc.—Carriage of Mails Bill, second reading, etc.—Criminal Law Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported—Trustees Bill, Council's Amendments—Motion: Imperial Federation (amendment passed)—Motion: Government Railways, Control by Commissioners, discharge of order—Police Act Amendment Bill, discharge of order, division—Retrenchment of Mr. H. W. Hargrave: Report adopted—Motion: Minimum Wage in Government Contracts—Motion: Cavalry Horses, Breeding (amendment passed)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Railway survey, Newcastle-Bejoording line, as ordered.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SESSIONAL ORDER, AMENDMENT.

On motion by the PREMIER, resolved that the House do sit onward till 7:15 o'clock (without interval), on this day.

BOULDER HEALTH RATES VALIDATION BILL.

Introduced by Mr. RASON (for Mr. Moran), and read a first time.

PERTH ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS LIGHTING AND POWER BILL (PRIVATE).

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

KALGOORLIE ROADS BOARD TRAMWAYS BILL.

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

GOLDFIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

CONSPIRACY AND PROTECTION OF PROPERTY BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by Mr. EWING, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILLS OF SALE AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Consideration resumed from 26th November.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, on motion by Mr. WILSON, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: The object of this Bill is set forth in Sub-clause 2 of Clause 3. Under Sections 4 and 5 of the Act, 44 Vict., No. 17, there is an arbitrary provision that a notice board, toll-board, or time-table, to be painted in black letters on a white ground, should be exhibited at all railway stations. It is found to be inconvenient and impracticable to have all these times exhibited on notice boards of this particular character, and to be exhibited in every small station; for while it might be convenient to have these times printed and exhibited in the large stations on our railways, yet it is not practicable to do all these things at every small station; therefore this amending Bill provides a remedy by enabling the department to exhibit the time-table in printed form, and to have

the tolls painted on a board. That is the whole object of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, and reported without amendment.

RECOMMITTAL.

On recommitment, title amended by striking out the description of the principal Act, and inserting in lieu the words "The Railways Amendment Act, 1881."

Bill further reported with amendment, and the report adopted.

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

CARRIAGE OF MAILS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather), in moving the second reading, said: There is no provision yet made in our statutes to compel the owners of private railways to carry Her Majesty's mails; and this short Bill is brought in with that object. It provides that this may be done on certain terms, and provision is made as to the remuneration; but in the event of the parties not agreeing, the terms are to be settled by arbitration.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): It would be better to provide, in Clause 6, that instead of the terms there proposed, the charge should be so much a letter; and if it was found that the carriers were getting too much, the Postal Department might reduce the amount. Under the provisions of this Bill, there would certainly be resort to arbitration, and the colony might be landed in considerable expense.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply): This is a matter between the carriers and the department, and if they cannot agree, the matter can go to arbitration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Clauses 1 to 5, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 6—Remuneration for conveyance of mails. Arbitration in case of difference:

MR. A. FORREST: The colony had had some experience of arbitration. In the case of the Kalgoorlie-Menzies Railway, which went to the law courts, a large sum was lost to the country in the award and costs. Such arbitrations were frequent, and still the Government insisted on this provision in an important Bill. Could not the amount of the award be limited?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Parliament could not compel a person to do certain work except at prices to which the contractor agreed. In what better way could a dispute be settled than by arbitration?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member evidently wished a limit fixed. If so, as well fix at once the price of the carriage of mails. The Bill compelled people to do the work, therefore it was but fair to allow of arbitration.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10, inclusive—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

[AGE OF CONSENT.]

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of section 6 of 55 Vict., No. 24:

MR. KINGSMILL: Would this clause assimilate our law with that of the other colonies?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Apparently the age here was lower than in the other colonies or in England. By the clause it was proposed to raise the age of consent to 17 years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Better let it be 16, as in England.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The association of ladies interested in the subject were anxious to have it fixed at 17.

MR. KINGSMILL: There were two sides to the question, the law being often used for blackmailing purposes. He moved that "seventeen" in line 5 be struck out and "sixteen" inserted in lieu.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL accepted the amendment.

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

Clauses 3 to 5, inclusive—agreed to.
Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

TRUSTEES BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMEENDMENTS.

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

Mr. JAMES (in charge of Bill) moved that the amendments be agreed to. Regarding No. 1, trustees could now lend on leasehold properties having a 99 years' term. The Council had altered 99 to 200, thus adopting the English practice, and practically preventing such loans in the colony, where there were no 200-years leases. No. 2 was formal, and provided that a trustee must pass his accounts before the Master prior to being discharged. No. 3 was a new clause, enabling a trustee residing outside the colony to appoint a local attorney. No. 4 provided a necessary amendment to the schedule. He expressed his thanks for the great assistance rendered by the Hon. M. L. Moss, who had been in charge of the Bill in another place, and for the care and attention with which these effective amendments had been made.

Question put and passed.

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

MOTION—IMPERIAL FEDERATION, A GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Debate resumed from 24th October, on motion, proposed by Mr. Vosper, for a general conference of representatives from all self-governing provinces of the Empire.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There had been an expression of opinion that this motion should be amended, and he had undertaken to look into the matter. He moved the following amendment:—

Strike out all words after the word "colonies," in line 3, and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

To Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—

We, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the and the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, desire, as one of the

last acts of this Legislature prior to the Colony entering the Federal Commonwealth of Australia under the Crown, to assure Your Majesty of our loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty's Throne and Person.

We desire to place on record our high appreciation of the successful efforts recently made by Your Majesty's Government to consolidate and maintain the Empire, which have secured the sympathy and support of the British race throughout the world.

We trust that the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia will not only promote the advancement and increase the prosperity of the Australian people, but will also strengthen the bonds of affection which bind us to the Throne and to the Motherland.

We fervently pray that the Almighty may preserve Your Majesty for years to come to reign over Your loyal and devoted people.

In drafting this Address, he had sought to avoid anything that might be considered controversial, and to propose a very simple motion, setting forth the desire to address Her Majesty prior to this colony entering the Commonwealth, assuring her of our loyalty and devotion to her throne and person, and placing on record our high appreciation of the successful efforts recently made by Her Majesty's Government to consolidate and maintain the Empire, which efforts had given great satisfaction throughout the British dominions; and there was also expressed a hope that the Commonwealth of Australia would not only promote the advancement and prosperity of the Australian people, but would also strengthen the bonds of affection which bound us to the motherland and to the throne. The motion, as amended, would perhaps meet with more support than the original, which might convey the impression that we wished commercial reciprocity or a zollverein throughout the British dominions. That would raise a great political question, which, under existing conditions, might well be avoided. The same might be said of the intimation that the Imperial Government should call together a conference. The hon. member (Mr. Vosper) would doubtless agree that the colony should not make itself too prominent in this matter, for such action could have no tangible result. It was, however, very appropriate that this the last Parliament under the present Constitution should, just before the colony entered the Commonwealth, address Her Majesty in some terms expressive of our loyalty and devotion,

and our high appreciation of the recent efforts of the British Government to maintain the integrity of the Empire.

MR. VOSPER (in reply as mover): Needless to say, he would not oppose the amendment, which proposed an address to Her Majesty which all would support. Nevertheless, the main question at issue was completely ignored, and the Premier did not seem to have understood the object of the motion, which did not aim at the foundation of a zollverein, or at reciprocity between various parts of the Empire, but merely suggested that we should accept the invitation of the Secretary of State, who had, in almost specific terms, asked the colonies to suggest that a conference be held on matters of imperial concern. During the last few months a great change had come over the spirit of the British Constitution, though, like many other changes, it had been almost imperceptible. Formerly, imperial Ministers of the Crown found it necessary to consult Great Britain and Ireland only as to their foreign policy; but they had recently accepted assistance in men and money from various colonies; hence, in future foreign entanglements, the British Government would practically appeal to the whole Empire as a constituency, and unless public opinion throughout the Empire were in favour of that action, especially of their bellicose action in matters of foreign policy, it would be difficult to convince even the British public of the utility of the policy proposed to be adopted. That circumstance placed the colonies in a peculiar position; for unless there were some system whereby their ideas could be made known to the Imperial Government, any chance Ministry in office at home might plunge the Empire into a war entirely disapproved of by the colonial public; and the Secretary of State evidently desired that the leading men in the British dominions should be summoned together for the purpose of devising some means by which the public opinion of the whole Empire might be accurately determined. Any idea of reviving the Downing street system of government for this or other colonies had not entered his mind, in connection with this motion. Now that we had entered into federation, we must move forward towards Imperial Federation, or we must move backward and take

the risk of disintegration in the future. The greatest States in the Empire were seized of the fact, and would be prepared to take action towards Imperial Federation. Statesmen in the mother country certainly were in favour of that course, but they recognised that it might be dangerous for Great Britain to make the first move, and they looked forward to some substantial expression of feeling being expressed by the colonies or States of the Empire, and if such expression of feeling came from this colony it would redound to the credit of Western Australia, and might have a useful effect on the future of the Empire. It was evidently the opinion of the Premier that this was too great a subject for this colony to take up, and that the question must be left to the Federal Parliament to deal with, if dealt with at all in Australia. Under the circumstances, he (Mr. Vosper) would not oppose the amendment proposed by the Premier; but he could only express regret that this Parliament seemed unable to rise to the occasion, and that the Premier scarcely seemed to have grasped the meaning of the original motion. It only remained for him now, as mover, to ask leave to withdraw the motion, and allow the amendment to take its place as a substantive proposition. We were thus losing a golden opportunity in not taking a foremost part in a movement which, in the near future, and that future was not far removed, would be an accomplished fact. Having had this opportunity, this House refused to accept it; and in expressing his regret at this course, he must admit that it was entirely for the House to decide, and he was willing to bow to that decision. With regard to what had been said about our insignificance as a colony in raising this question, he believed that if this suggestion had reached the mother country from even the smallest of her West Indian possessions, it would be welcomed by the Imperial Government, and still more would it be welcome as coming from one of the self-governing colonies of the Empire. He, therefore, asked leave to withdraw the motion.

THE SPEAKER: There would be some difficulty about that. Better allow it to be put in the ordinary way, and then the amendment could take its place as a substantive motion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison) suggested that the amendment, when it took the place of the original motion, would need some verbal alteration to suit the change of circumstances, because this would not then be an address to the Secretary of State, but an address to Her Majesty the Queen.

THE PREMIER: The Secretary of State was the usual medium through which an address to the Queen should be forwarded.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Forwarded for submission to Her Majesty; otherwise this would be an address to the Secretary of State. Referring to the question itself, he did not look on the amendment as dealing with the subject which was brought forward in the motion; for the amendment absolutely evaded the subject, and substituted something that was colourless, as far as the question at issue was concerned. He agreed with the mover (Mr. Vosper) that if we could have reconstructed the motion in such a way as to indicate that some central committee or central authority should be constituted for the purpose of speaking on behalf of the whole of the people in the British Empire, we should have taken a judicious step, and one that would have been creditable to us, and probably be helpful to the mother country. He did not suppose any member of the House would vote against the amendment, though it shirked the real purpose of the original motion, and substituted a colourless proposition. Perhaps, however, the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) would be a member of the Federal Parliament, and he would there have an opportunity of reproducing his thought in the Parliament of Australia.

MR. WILSON (Canning): Whilst agreeing generally with members who had spoken, he had some sympathy with the mover, inasmuch as the address did not appear to embody the meaning of the original motion. It would be well if the Premier would agree to some slight amendment in paragraph 2 of his amendment, so as to convey the idea that early steps should be taken for promoting a closer political union of the Empire.

THE PREMIER: There would be controversy over that. An address to Her Majesty should be carried unanimously, without contention. The amendment

now suggested would lead to a debate on imperial federation.

MR. WILSON: That was what we were all aiming at.

THE PREMIER: All people were not in favour of that.

MR. WILSON: The home authorities were in favour of it. He agreed that any closer political union should be brought forward, if at all, as a matter for the Federal Parliament to deal with, because now that this colony had entered into federation, the supreme power was centred in the Federal Parliament. He trusted that our representatives in that Parliament would take the first opportunity of bringing this important matter forward when they took their seats there. If the Premier would agree with the addition he had suggested to Clause 2—

THE PREMIER said he had avoided that, because there would be a strong expression of opinion against it.

MR. WILSON: The reference to "reciprocity," in the last portion of the motion, would no doubt raise great controversy. We all desired the closer political union of the Empire; and although we did not know what form this should take, yet we were all working for that end, except perhaps a few members of this House, who might object to it. Our action in federating with the other colonies of Australia showed that we were moving in this direction. He moved, as an amendment on the Premier's amendment, that there be added at the end of the second paragraph the words "and trust that early steps will be taken with the object of a closer political union of the Empire."

THE PREMIER: That amendment could not be accepted, and if it were pressed, the debate would have to be adjourned. Better not have an address to Her Majesty at all, if we were to have a debate on it; and this amendment was certainly making a political matter of the proposal—mixing up political matter in a loyal address. This was not right. The object of the amendment was to bind us to a particular view with regard to closer union of the Empire, which meant imperial federation or reciprocity, and he did not think this was the time or occasion for us to affirm anything of the kind. He altogether objected to it.

MR. VOSPER: In the original motion the proposal was perhaps more harmless than in the amendment now moved by the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), because all that was proposed in the original motion was that a conference should be called to discuss the question of a closer political union of the Empire. Now hon. members would have to take the responsibility of defining their opinion on the question, for we could scarcely halt between two opinions. We had taken on ourselves a certain responsibility as a colony, in sending away contingents of soldiers to aid in the maintenance of the Empire; and we must accept the responsibility of that position if we were going to repeat the process, as he believed it would be repeated again and again, and perhaps in connection with the China trouble it would be necessary to send troops from this colony to aid in the settlement of that question.

THE PREMIER: We had nothing to do with that.

MR. VOSPER: We had to find the funds for it.

THE PREMIER: Not this Parliament.

MR. VOSPER: We had already spent a considerable sum of money in sending away troops to aid in the maintenance of the Empire, and either that would not be repeated under any circumstances, or if repeated we must take on ourselves the responsibility which it involved. If members said they were opposed to this course, let us have no more proposals to send men and money abroad; or if we were going to support the Empire, then we were entitled to have our share in determining the policy of the Empire. All he asked was that there should be some discussion as to the best means of giving the colonies an effective voice in determining the policy of the Empire on imperial questions.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): The question of Imperial federation was one of great importance, and could not be disposed of in a conversational way. The hon. member (Mr. Vosper) desired to fix members of this House to certain opinions, in voting on this subject; but, on the other hand, any member who opposed the amendment now moved by the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) would not necessarily be opposed to imperial federation. This

was not an occasion when we should commit ourselves and the colony to a definite course on a great question that required careful consideration.

Amendment (Mr. Wilson's) on the amendment, put and negatived.

Question (to strike out words) put and passed.

Further question (to insert the amendment in lieu) put and passed.

On further motion by the PREMIER, Message transmitted to the Legislative Council, requesting concurrence.

MOTION—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS, CONTROL BY COMMISSIONERS.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): In resuming this debate on the motion of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), he appealed to the Government that as this involved one of the greatest issues in connection with our railway system, and as this moribund Parliament was practically dead, it would be a grave mistake to discuss this question further, and he hoped the Government would consent to have the order discharged.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This matter was not so pressing at the present time that we should deal with it, and we might fairly leave it to the new Parliament. Perhaps the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) would consent to withdraw his motion. It was not that the Government were not in accord with the object of the motion, for he thought the time was coming when we would have to do something in this direction, as had been done in other colonies; and probably after we had had a turn at railway management by commissioners, we might then, as other colonies had done, go back to a previous system. No doubt it was difficult to carry on a great commercial enterprise like the railways under the direction of the Legislative Assembly; still, things were now pretty quiet. The arrangements for recognising the railway associations seemed to have given satisfaction; the Arbitration Bill, which he hoped would become law, would give another means of settling disputes; therefore probably we would be able to carry on for some time as well as we were doing now, or perhaps better. The matter might safely be postponed till next session.

MR. HARPER (in reply as mover): For some time past he had thought it was probable that this would be the action taken by some members; and he had come to the conclusion that although there were volumes to be said in favour of the motion, and matters in this colony offered abundant room for discussion, yet he could not see that anything practical would result by pressing the motion at the present time. Therefore it was desirable that this matter should be left to be dealt with by the next Parliament, and with that view he moved that the order be discharged.

Question passed, and the order discharged.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

Debate resumed from 25th October, on motion for second reading.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I regret to say that I feel there is no chance of this Bill being passed through during the present session. I have been informed, and have reason to believe, that it is not possible within the time at our disposal to deal with this measure; therefore I have come to the conclusion that the only course open to us is to withdraw it. I therefore move that the order for the second reading be discharged.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I must protest entirely against this course. This Bill was brought in at an early stage of the session. It has been asked for by large organisations, and it has been kept back for reasons which are not easy to explain. Now when the House is prepared to deal with the measure, as I believe it is, the Government take on themselves to discharge a Bill of this importance. Year after we have tried to get some legislation on the question.

THE PREMIER: It would take a week.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am prepared to stay here till Christmas, rather than miss legislation of this character. We can sit all night like members in another place, or two nights if necessary. I protest against the discharge of this Bill.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I support the remarks of the leader of the Opposition.

MR. A. FORREST: They would not give you a hearing in the Town Hall.

MR. WILSON: There are a large number of people watching the progress of this Bill, and they will be very much disappointed if it is withdrawn. If we set to work we can soon put it through this House.

MR. A. FORREST: That is impossible.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Test it: put it to the vote.

Motion—that the order be discharged—put and affirmed on the voices.

Division called for by two members, and taken with the following result:—

Ayes	10
Noes	4

Majority for ... 6

AYES.
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Hubble
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wood
Mr. Rason (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Harper
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kingsmill (Teller).

Motion thus passed.

THE SPEAKER: The result of this division calls my attention to the fact that there is not a quorum present, and according to the Standing Orders, when that occurs, the House must be adjourned.

THE PREMIER: The Standing Orders are suspended in regard to Bills.

THE SPEAKER: Not in regard to motions; but I think we may go on.

Order for second reading discharged.

RETRENCHMENT OF MR. H. W. HARGRAVE.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. KINGSMILL, who had brought up the report of the select committee, now moved that the report be adopted. It was regrettable that the machinery of the House had to be utilised to make an investigation which should have been granted by the department concerned. Such an appeal, however, seemed to be the last recourse of the officer aggrieved, and was the only way of clearing up misunderstandings between him and his superiors. The evidence showed a state of affairs not creditable to the financial management of the Coolgardie Water Supply Branch. Mr. Hargrave, an officer of high attainments and considerable

experience, was for three months employed at a salary of £400 a year to do work which would have been well paid for at 10s. a day. If other portions of the scheme were to be conducted similarly, the original estimate would be greatly exceeded.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: As the report was evidently very favourable to the department, it would not have his opposition. Had the last speaker taken his advice in the first instance, and accepted the evidence disclosed by the papers submitted, the select committee would have been unnecessary. No one in the department had aught to say against Mr. Hargrave's professional reputation. It was, perhaps, unfortunate better work could not be found for that officer, who had been employed temporarily until other work was ready. Unfortunately, as the report disclosed, friction had arisen between Mr. Hargrave and other officers, and someone had to leave. He supported the adoption of the report.

MR. WILSON: Though not strongly condemnatory, the report was not favourable to the department. Paragraph 2 stated the Committee were of opinion that the work to which Mr. Hargrave had been transferred did not necessitate the employment of a civil engineer. That was not favourable to the department.

THE PREMIER: Why dismiss a good servant because work could not, for the moment, be found for him?

MR. WILSON: Give him three months' leave of absence.

THE PREMIER: No. Better let him do some work. What would the hon. member have done?

MR. WILSON: Dispensed with the officer's services, and saved the country expense.

MR. GEORGE: Mr. Hargrave should not have been foisted on a department having no work for him to do.

MR. WILSON: Quite so. Such a transfer was bound to result in friction. Mr. Hargrave, who had at various times from five to twenty-five men under him, had had to take his instructions from someone whom he considered inferior. A very capable foreman was put in charge; there was friction between this foreman and a man named Hillman; then there were complaints made about Mr. Hargrave

and his foreman; and this went on until the foreman, McCarthy, was discharged and Mr. Hargrave retrenched. Mr. Hargrave had built up a case on the plea that he had been retrenched owing to the disputes between these men, and had made a detailed complaint to the Director of Public Works, asking for investigation.

MR. GEORGE: Taking up the time of the House with twaddle.

MR. WILSON: Yet that detailed statement had never been submitted to Mr. Hodgson, the engineer in charge, whose character had been attacked. Such inaction by the department was inexplicable. Mr. Hodgson, who was a witness, not having seen these papers, the select committee had to adjourn to give him time to peruse them. So far from being favourable to the department, the report showed there was a departmental system which ought not to exist. Let the Minister study the evidence, and take care that such a state of affairs did not recur.

MR. GEORGE: The evidence showed that through the whole of this department there was fostered a spirit of disloyalty which had its origin in the practice of one department foisting on another the services of officers who were not required by either department. Mr. Hargrave, upon whom he did not reflect, had been foisted upon the Water Supply Department on terms of which he (Mr. Hargrave) had known nothing; and although he was to work for that department, his salary was to be paid by the department from which he had been transferred. Mr. Hodgson had absolutely nothing for Mr. Hargrave to do which was worth anything like £400 a year; consequently the transferred officer had to supervise a timekeeper, a ganger, and from five to twelve men. In a private enterprise, such costly supervision would mean ruin; and if it were general in this department, the Coolgardie water scheme would cost five millions to complete. Again, by gossip, a grave accusation against Mr. Hodgson had been brought under Mr. Hargrave's notice, to the effect that the former had connived at the robbery of the department for his own benefit. In two affidavits shown to Mr. Hargrave it was stated that a man's time, entered on the pay-sheets, had been occu-

pied in doing work at Mr. Hodgson's house. Mr. Hargrave, who should have brought this under the notice of Mr. Hodgson, contented himself with notifying the officer second in command, and there left the matter; and this amounted to a tacit indorsement of the accusation. Mr. Hodgson had appeared before the select committee with witnesses and proved the statement to be absolutely false. The report should have expressed in strong language the select committee's opinion as to this false impeachment of Mr. Hodgson's honesty. It appeared that, after working a little over two months for this department, Mr. Hargrave applied for sick leave which was ultimately extended to four months. The work done by Mr. Hargrave could have been effected by a ganger at 12s. a day. As had previously been pointed out in Parliament, when such work was done by day labour, expenses were incurred on which Parliament had no check; whereas, in contract work, Parliament could supervise the expenditure even where there were extras. It was said the total cost of the Coolgardie water scheme could be criticised by Parliament; but that would be locking the stable door after the horse was stolen. This report reflected no discredit on the present Director of Public Works nor on his predecessor; but it certainly was discreditable to the Government of the country.

THE PREMIER: The Government might be very well satisfied with the report, which showed that rumours were not always well founded. Mr. Hargrave had been for a time employed on work which could have been done by a cheaper man.

MR. WILSON: He was not wanted at all.

THE PREMIER: Even so; that was the whole offence disclosed in the report. All the charges which had been alleged as reasons for appointing the select committee had been disproved. It did not appear Mr. Hargrave had been vindicated; in fact, he had been blamed by hon. members who had spoken. He (the Premier) would rather speak favourably of Mr. Hargrave, who had been the engineer for the railway to Cue, when he had performed his duties so conscientiously that he (the Premier) had remarked at the time it was satisfactory

to find a mere temporary officer serving the Government so well. At the arbitration on the contract, Mr. Hargrave fought every point in favour of the Government, did all he could to combat the demands of the contractor, and, as a consequence, incurred the odium of the contractor and his friends. When that work was over, the department was not ready to find him suitable employment on another work, but it did find him some employment, and treated him with proper consideration in doing so. If members wanted good honest service, and expected public servants to stand by the Government and see they were not imposed on, we must treat them well. Leaving out the qualifications of Mr. Hargrave, the stand he took against that contractor who was making immense and unreasonable demands on the Government, and the way he protected the revenue of the country or tried his best to do so, deserved the consideration of the Government; and he (the Premier) was glad that Mr. Hargrave was not sent about his business at that time, but that some employment was found for him.

MR. WILSON: Had they not done it now?

THE PREMIER: Disagreement and controversy arose, and someone had to go: that was the real explanation. He was glad Mr. Hargrave was given an appointment, even though it was small; and his salary was not reduced, because the department no doubt expected that, as other works were coming on, they would soon be able to give him a suitable appointment. He did not get that appointment, however, but it was because of disagreements between himself and those with whom he was working. He unfortunately fell sick, and was granted leave; but the fact of his sickness was not a reason why he should be discharged at that time.

MR. WILSON: The department sent him about his business when on sick leave.

THE PREMIER: He was allowed four months' sick leave. It was satisfactory this committee had sat, and had cleared the Government altogether. The evidence showed there was really no necessity for this inquiry. Nothing had been proved against Mr. Hodgson and those in authority, but the evidence only proved

that the Government showed proper consideration towards an officer who had served the colony well. The Government did right in trying to utilise his services for a short time, until a better position could be found for him.

MR. WILSON: It was proved that the select committee held an inquiry which ought to have been held by the department.

MR. KINGSMILL (in reply): The member for the Murray (Mr. George), in stating that certain affidavits had disclosed the fact that Mr. Hodgson was guilty of misconduct, was not altogether correct. A certain man, called Hillman, did state that Mr. Hodgson was guilty of misconduct; but between that statement and the facts proved in evidence there was a wide difference. The fact that sick leave was granted to Mr. Hargrave, after four years of continuous and extremely hard service, did not show that the leave was undeserved. The Premier and the Commissioner of Railways had both stated there was some little misunderstanding, and that one of the officers had to go. Nothing of the sort occurred. It was distinctly stated in evidence that the misunderstanding had nothing to do with Mr. Hargrave's retrenchment. He (Mr. Kingsmill) did not agree that the inquiry was unnecessary. That inquiry was the more necessary because Mr. Hargrave was unable to obtain an inquiry through the department. There was no case which pointed more strongly to the necessity for having a Public Service Act than did this case. At the same time, cases of this kind were not such as should require the machinery of this House to deal with them; but because this inquiry was not granted by the department, therefore the only appeal left to Mr. Hargrave was an appeal to Parliament.

Question put and passed, and the report adopted.

MOTION — MINIMUM WAGE IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, TO ENFORCE.

Debate resumed from 3rd October.

MR. VOSPER (in reply as mover): Since this motion was before the House, he understood the Government had taken steps to obtain the necessary information from the Eastern colonies; and he had read the information which had been laid on the table of the House relating to this

subject, showing that several of the other colonies placed in their Government contracts a clause requiring the minimum wage to be paid. This did not involve an expenditure on the part of the Government. All it proposed was that in future contracts made by the Public Works Department, the contractors should be required to pay the wage ruling in the district where the contract was to be carried out, and the contractor had to provide a sufficient sum to pay the full rate of wage. This would prevent him from making an unfair profit out of wages. The motion might now be allowed to pass, and he supposed the Government would not object to it.

MR. WILSON (Canning): This compulsory provision as to paying the minimum wage would be welcomed by all good contractors, because it put them on a footing of equality as against contractors who might try to obtain an improper advantage.

THE PREMIER: Would it be satisfactory to the men?

MR. WILSON: The men wished to have the minimum wage inserted in Government contracts, so that they might be protected against the sweating contractor; and the good contractor wished to have it inserted so that he might be protected against undue competition. One hoped therefore the motion would be passed.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not having been in favour of the minimum wage being inserted as a compulsory condition in Government contracts, he was not much enamoured of it at the present time, because he considered it was not necessary, and never had been necessary in this colony. He had always said, with regard to these social measures, that where there was no necessity and where no one had shown the necessity, such measures ought not to be passed, and that to pass them was over-legislation. This motion would place an obligation on the Government which no Government wished to take, because it would be necessary to decide what was the standard wage all over this colony in regard to particular classes of work. Wherever a contract was to be carried out, whether in the wildest part of the colony, or on the Eastern goldfields, or as far away as Eucla, or in the more

settled parts of the colony, the Government would have to determine the standard wage in each locality where a contract was to be performed, and he believed that in doing so either this or any other Government would cause a good deal of dissatisfaction. He feared that the minimum wage would become the maximum wage, and we should be making a burden for our own backs, because people would say the Government had put in a minimum wage that was too low altogether; and the result would be a good deal of friction and dissatisfaction with the Government. He was surprised that those engaged in manual labour were desirous of having this condition put in contracts, because while it would be easy for a contractor to pay the minimum wage stated in the contract, as he would know that all other contractors must tender on the same condition and would be on the same basis, yet the labourers, the manual workers, would not find the system operate so well for them, as it would mean that the minimum wage would become the maximum. He did not profess to know much about contracting, but he did know enough about it to feel sure that the contractors would find it to their interest under this system to employ only the most expert and most accomplished men for the particular work that could be obtained; that they would not employ the older man, or those men who were no longer so skilful or so quick as they used to be, and that the work would in this way fall to the young, the strong, and the quick. The question then arose as to what was to be done with these men who were no longer so good in their work as in former years—must they be knocked out of employment under this system? There would be a whole army of people of this class who could no longer expect to obtain employment from contractors when these were tied down to paying the minimum wage, which wage would be paid only to the best, to the strong and the quick workmen. The race would be to the swift, and only the strongest and the best could be employed under this system. If the wages were on a sliding scale, so that men could be paid in proportion to their ability to do the work, he could understand the system; but this other plan was intended to make

every man equal—that was if the minimum wage became the maximum wage.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It did not necessarily follow that it must do so.

THE PREMIER: If it did not follow, then his argument failed; but he believed it had been found to be so in the experience of those who had tried it, and therefore the result must be that only the strong and the swift would really be benefited by this principle.

MR. WILSON: There was not only speed but skill to consider.

THE PREMIER: But there were many things in which strength would be the main consideration, and that was especially so in manual labour. Still, he knew this was made a plank in the workers' platform; therefore he said, let them have it. Still, he must confess he could not understand how they would benefit by it. In other kinds of work all men were not paid the same rate of wage. If a person employed an expert accountant, he was not paid at the same rate as another accountant who was less expert; and so it was in many other occupations. Some artisans were far superior to others, and they were paid accordingly; in fact, he knew that some artisans earned three times as much as others: still this motion would put all these men on the same rate of pay. As far as the Government were concerned, it would be difficult to carry out this principle in a large colony where the rate of wage differed in many districts, and it would be no easy matter to find out what was the standard wage in a particular kind of labour in every part of the colony. He could see no good in this principle, for he believed the standard wage was already paid in all Government contracts for railways and other public works. He believed, indeed that the wages paid in these Government contracts were better than those paid in any other works of the same class in the colony. He supposed that private firms of eminence did not make any condition of this sort with regard to the labour they employed or the contracts they made; but they would let a contract at so much, and say to the contractor "Make what you can out of it." The Government, however, could not do that, for a Government was under parliamentary influence, and could not do as it liked in

all things. As far as he (the Premier) was concerned, he had not the slightest objection to this principle; but, as he said before, he could not see how it was to benefit the workers. Still, as they desired it, let them have it.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): While not opposing the motion, he did not think it would work in the interest of the men themselves. There was much force in the argument of the Premier as to what was to be done with the older class of workmen. If any contractor wanted to make money out of a Government contract, he would not care what wages were to be paid as a condition, because it would not matter to him whether the standard wage was fixed at 8s. or 10s. or any other price, as he would know that, in tendering for the work, each contractor must tender according to the same scale of wage. If the minimum were to be made high, the country would have to pay for it, because the country was in this matter the paymaster.

MR. GREGORY: The contractor would not be able to sweat men.

MR. GEORGE: As to sweating contractors, he must say from his experience that he had not met the sweating contractor; and charges of this kind were made only by the agitator, who could not prove his assertion when called on to do so.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—HORSES FOR IMPERIAL CAVALRY, LOCAL BREEDING.

Debate resumed from 3rd October.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This motion of the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) was brought forward with the best intention, but there were some expressions in it which were not borne out by facts, unless the hon. member could explain the motion in a way that was not apparent from the wording of it. The motion spoke of large unoccupied areas of Crown land suitable for the breeding of cavalry horses; but where could the hon. member find these large areas unoccupied and suitable for the purpose? He (the Premier) was not aware of them, for where food and water were available, such country was taken up for pastoral purposes. Land to the eastward, with little rainfall and very little feed, could not be used for this

purpose, and land on the coast suitable for maintaining stock had all been taken up by pastoral lessees. Therefore, if Lord Roberts were to take action on this motion, and ask us to point out these large areas suitable for breeding cavalry horses in this colony, it would be hard to find any such areas of Crown lands still unoccupied. Country suitable for this purpose might possibly be found at the head of the Glenelg River, or in the Cambridge Gulf, or in the Kimberley district; though he expressed this opinion without having much knowledge of those districts, and he doubted whether large areas suitable for this purpose could be found there. If they could be found, it would be an excellent thing for the Government and for the colony to promote the breeding of horses suitable for cavalry purposes, as proposed in the motion.

MR. HARPER (in reply as mover): The Premier did not fully appreciate the question. The whole secret was not the breeding of cavalry horses such as had been bred and had been in demand for many years past; but it was discovered, as a result of recent experience in war, that what was required for cavalry horses was a small hardy class of horse that could live on short-commons and endure a lot of hardship. It was found that horses of this class could be utilised for cavalry purposes to an enormous extent. A gentleman who was a horse-breeder had written an interesting paper on this subject, entitled "How to Breed Horses for War" (*Nineteenth Century* magazine), from which the following extract would be interesting to hon. members:

I would suggest that, though military horse-breeding cannot be indulged in at home, it may be attempted with advantage elsewhere within the limits of the British Empire. Look at the map of the world. It is everywhere studded with English possessions comprising the best breeding grounds to be found on the earth's surface. What reason is there of an economic or a political kind why Government studs should not be organised in some of these? Canada, West Australia, Basutoland, where could we find better? In all land of suitable quality is plentiful and cheap, and in all the settlers are used to horse-rearing, and are without the secular prejudices which are our bane at home.

The same writer stated that the best horse for military purposes was the wild horse of the country crossed with the best Arab blood; but it was impossible to breed a

hardy horse on rich country. The animal must be hard-fed in rough country; and of such country this colony possessed immense areas. The motion did not refer to rich lands, but to poison lands and forests.

THE PREMIER: The poison would kill the horses.

MR. HARPER: That could easily be prevented; for it was only when reduced to great straits that horses ate the poison plants; and all this country could be profitably utilised if the military authorities concerned could be convinced that the required type of horse could be produced in the colony. In India and elsewhere, army officers were inquiring into the question; and if suitable lands were paddocked, and provision made for feeding stock at times when natural pasture was scarce, we could produce some of the best horses in the world, and could even utilise our wild breed, were the Imperial Government to supply the sires.

MR. WILSON: As the hon. member did not ask the Government to establish a grazing farm for breeding purposes, there could be no harm in passing the motion, with the amendment indicated by the Premier. He moved that the words "unsurpassed character of a large portion," in line 6, be struck out, and "suitable" inserted; that all the words after "endurance," in line 6, down to and inclusive of "colony," in line 9, be struck out; and that the words "with the view of furthering this object," in line 9, be also struck out.

MR. HARPER: Though agreeing to the amendments, he did not agree that the colony was not unsurpassed for this purpose, for all the evidence supported his view, and further confirmation was provided by the work done by our horses in the Transvaal war. The writer he had previously quoted stated:

The studs should be located, not on rich grass lands, but on rough, natural pastures; for horses to be hardy must be accustomed to poor living, and their digestions to a variety of rubbish, with corn only as a supplement. In most countries of the temperate zones such pastures are not difficult to find, and even sometimes in the tropics; but it is a good general rule that only such regions should be chosen for horse-breeding on any large scale, in which at some season of the year it is cold enough to make horses out of doors put on a strong winter coat.

This colony possessed all those conditions, together with breeders having the necessary experience.

Amendments (Mr. Wilson's) put and passed, and the motion as amended agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 7:16 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 29th November, 1900.

Motion: Drunkards and Juvenile Criminals, Supervision—Motion: Timber Leasing, to Check (negatived)—Railways Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Criminal Law Amendment Bill, first reading—Boulder Health Rate Validation Bill, first reading—Remedies of Creditors Amendment Bill, Recommendation, reported—Hampton Plains Railways Bill (private), second reading, division—Privilege (arising on previous Bill): Pecuniary Interest of a Member, to disallow vote; points of order—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, Assembly's Message re Council's Amendments—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

MOTION—DRUNKARDS AND JUVENILE CRIMINALS, SUPERVISION.

HON. J. M. SPEED (Metropolitan-Suburban) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should initiate a measure dealing with the proper care and supervision of drunkards and juvenile criminals.

He said: I think this is a motion which will commend itself to all the members of this House. There is no doubt that in the past the Government of this country have been taking care of the country so far as concerns the making of railways and the spending of money on other public works, but I think there has been very little legislation of a social character. It is the duty of a country to see that the