

the inhabitants should have an opportunity of considering the provisions of the bill and of expressing an opinion upon it, before that House proceeded to deal with the question. He had himself spoken to the hon. member in charge of the bill (Mr. Randell), and he had no objection whatever to the debate being adjourned. Indeed had the hon. member not been precluded by the rules of the House from speaking again upon the motion—being in the position described the other day by the Attorney General as that of an “exploded volcano”—the hon. member would himself have made the motion which it was incumbent upon him now to make,—that the debate be adjourned for a week, so that the town of Fremantle might have an opportunity of expressing its wishes with regard to the bill.

MR. WITTENOOM said the town of Fremantle was not the only town in the colony, and probably there were other municipalities who would like to have an opportunity of considering this bill before it became law. He quite concurred with the hon. member for the Gascoyne that some of the clauses were of a very sweeping nature indeed. Not having had any experience in municipal matters himself—he had never even aspired to be an alderman—he could not say whether these provisions were good ones or not. The bill at any rate did not seem to commend itself very much to one ex-Mayor, and it seemed that the Mayor of Fremantle was not very much enamoured of it. He should also like to have an expression of opinion from the municipality of Geraldton on the subject, and he thought the bill ought not to be proceeded with at all this session, but that the various municipal councils of the colony should first have an opportunity of considering it.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he was sure the hon. member who had introduced the bill had no wish or intention to rush the bill through the House—(MR. RANDALL: Hear, hear)—or to take any advantage over country municipalities, and would have no objection to the debate being adjourned. He had not been aware himself that there was anything in the bill that would materially affect the interests of country towns; he had been under the impression that it was more particu-

larly applicable to the city of Perth and the town of Fremantle.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate for a week was then put and passed.

VOLUNTEER FOREIGN SERVICE BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

DAME BARLEE'S ANNUITY BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter to eight o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 2nd September, 1885.

Ecclesiastical Grant: how expended—Compensation for land resumed on 3rd section Eastern Railway—Gun Licensing Bill: first reading—Estimates, 1886: Financial Statement—Explosives Bill: report of Select Committee—Sanitation and Water Supply (Message No. 7): further consideration of—Superannuation Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Eastern Railway Further Extension Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ECCLESIASTICAL GRANT: HOW EXPENDED.

MR. GRANT, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary what portion of the Ecclesiastical Grant is expended in the North (including the Gascoyne, Roebourne, and Kimberley districts), and what portion of the grant is expended in and around Perth. The hon. member said he asked for this information in the interests of the Northern districts, as he was not aware that sixpence of the grant had ever been expended there; and, as those districts contributed very largely indeed towards the general revenue, from which the ecclesiastical grant was paid, he thought it was time to draw attention to this matter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he had instituted inquiries on the subject, and that when he received the required information from the heads of the various religious denominations amongst whom the grant was distributed, he would lay it on the table.

COMPENSATION, THIRD SECTION, EASTERN RAILWAY.

MR. SHENTON asked the Engineer-in-Chief whether any compensation had been paid to owners of country lands on account of land resumed for the construction of the third section of the Eastern Railway? If so, to whom, and the amount paid.

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright) laid upon the table a return giving the information asked for.

GUN LICENSING BILL.

MR. BURT obtained leave to introduce a Bill licensing certain persons using guns; and moved the first reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

ESTIMATES, 1886. FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) moved the House into committee of the whole for the purpose of considering the Estimates for 1886.

Motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he regretted that the printed Estimates of revenue and expenditure had not been placed in the hands of hon. members earlier than that day; he hoped, however, that hon. members had had sufficient time to cursorily glance over them, so that when he came to remark upon the general outline of the scheme of expenditure proposed, they would be able to follow him. It was only that day that he was referring in the *Hansard* report to the statement which he had made in that House when introducing the Estimates last session, and he thought he could not do better on the present occasion than commence his statement again by urging upon the House the necessity for exercising caution in dealing with the finances of the colony.

He did not say this in any spirit of despondency: there was no cause for despondency. The colony was steadily progressing; its finances continued to expand, and the country might be said to be moving onwards and looking upwards. At the same he must still continue to preach the gospel of caution. It was not a popular theme, but it was well that the necessity for the exercise of care and economy in the expenditure of the public funds should occasionally be insisted upon. With these few introductory remarks, he would now proceed to glance at the more salient features of the financial transactions of the past year. The receipts of revenue from all sources amounted to £290,319, exceeding the estimated revenue by the sum of £13,758, and showing an increase under almost all the heads of revenue, with the exception of Customs and Land, which showed a slight decrease, easily accounted for. The expenditure for the same year amounted to £291,306, which, though it exceeded the expenditure for the previous year by £50,000, was only about £1,000 in excess of the revenue,—which went to show how expansive the resources of the colony were, and how rapidly its revenue increased. The estimated revenue for the current year had been, modestly he thought, computed at £295,666, which, with the balance brought forward on the 1st January (£75,165) would give a little over £370,000; while the estimated expenditure, including the sum of £33,236 included in the Supplementary Estimates, amounted to £328,128 10s. 7d., leaving an estimated surplus balance at the end of the year of a little over £42,000. He was speaking now in round numbers—the exact figures would be found in the financial returns before the committee. The estimated value of our imports last year reached the large sum of £521,167, being at the rate of £16 2s. 4½d. per head of the mean population, while our exports for the same period were calculated at £405,693. No doubt this preponderance in the value of our imports over our exports was affected by the large sum of £163,451 spent from loans during the year. A considerable quantity of imported goods were necessarily purchased and used by those employed on the public works and railway in course of construction. With regard to our

exports, it was unfortunate for the colony that trade, as regards its staple products, had been so depressed during the past year. The depreciation in the value of wool and the fact of sandalwood being unsaleable had largely affected the value of our exports,—though he was happy to say that the actual quantity of wool sent out of the colony showed an increase, as regards weight, over the previous year; but the decline in the value of this staple article was such that the colony must have sensibly felt it. He only hoped that next year the scale would be turned, and that our wool would realise a far superior figure in the home market. The general, departmental, and other expenditure last year amounted to £253,527, while interest on loans and sinking fund required a further sum of £37,780, making a total, as he had already said, of a little over £291,300. This year the general, departmental, and other expenditure on the annual Estimates was calculated at £251,112, increased by the Supplementary Estimates to a little over £278,000, in addition to which there would be £650 to meet the increase in the Governor's salary and the annuity of £150 voted to Lady Barlee. With regard to interest on loans and sinking fund, provision to that effect this year has been made to the extent of £49,280, which, as already stated, brought up the estimated expenditure for 1885 to about £328,000. He now came to 1886. The estimated revenue for the ensuing year, from all sources, was £321,225. This estimate, he might say, had been prepared with particular care, and—unless of course some national calamity or unforeseen circumstances which could not be predicted occurred—there was no doubt in his mind that this amount would be realised. He wished particularly to draw attention to two items placed under the head of revenue,—the Imperial grant-in-aid on Convict account and the grant in aid of Magistracy and Police. With regard to the former it would be seen that the same amount had been placed on the debit and on the credit side of the account for next year. It would be of course necessary to make some provision for carrying on the Convict Establishment after it is handed over to the Colonial Government,—which

would probably be at the beginning of the ensuing year; and it was almost impossible at the present moment, until the department was reorganised, to say exactly what the expenditure in connection with carrying it on would be. Therefore the Government thought the simplest way to meet the difficulty was to place the amount of the Imperial grant-in-aid to the credit and the same amount to the debit of the Colonial Government. Doubtless, by next session, the Government would be in a position to place before the House detailed information showing how the whole of this department had been reorganised, and what amount would be necessary in future to provide for its maintenance. With regard to the vote for Magistracy and Police, hon. members were aware that this vote had been decreasing on a graduated scale for the past eight or nine years, and that in 1887 it would cease altogether. Last year it was reduced to £6,500; this year it amounted to £4,500; and next year we should only receive £2,500, there being a reduction of £2,000 annually; so that, after next year, there would only be £500 to draw from this source. Speaking generally, before entering into matters of detail, while on the one hand the colony undoubtedly had to face some heavy demands to meet an increasing public expenditure, still, on the other hand, he thought there was every reason to believe that the large amount of money that was about to be spent on public works would prove immensely advantageous to the revenue, and that we shall find it still expanding,—expanding, he hoped, to the full extent of our reasonable desires. Turning to the expenditure for the coming year, he might say that the Estimates had been framed with a due regard to economy, and, if there was any extravagance shown on any hand, it would be found to be such as had been necessitated by the action of the Legislature. The actual amount for which votes would be asked was £266,979. Of this amount the expenses of the actual management of the colony's affairs was not great. Those branches of the public service to which he might say the administration of the government of the colony was entrusted—the Governor's establishment, the Legislative Council, the Colonial Secretary's department, the

Treasury, Audit, and Customs departments—did not, comparatively speaking, involve a large proportion of this expenditure. The total cost of these administrative departments, as provided on the Estimates now in the hands of hon. members, was £11,279,—which was only a little above three per cent. of the sums which had to be dealt with. All the other departments, such as the Judicial, Police, Gaols, etc., were maintained for the protection of the public, and the maintenance of law and order. These departments involved an expenditure of £68,230, provided for on the Estimates for next year. This was a very large sum undoubtedly—over £2 per head of the population; but it was unavoidable expenditure, and the magnitude of its proportions was increased by reason of the scattered nature of our population and the immense extent of territory over which that population was spread. Deducting from these Estimates the sums he had mentioned, the whole of the remaining expenditure (about £186,000) was expenditure incurred entirely for the public benefit and the public convenience. Commencing with Surveys, he regretted that the amount set apart under this head for next year was not so large as in some previous years. But it must be remembered that we had of late years done a great deal in the way of vigorously prosecuting surveys in our Northern territory; and the result of the diminution in this vote for next year would be that the surveys in that part of the colony would have to remain in abeyance for one more season. He hoped that the next year we should be able to provide such a sum for surveys as would be satisfactory to the head of the department, who, however, he felt sure would do the utmost within his power to make the best of the circumstances under which he would be placed, in view of the diminution in the vote on the present Estimates. He next came to the Railway department,—a department the expense of which was increasing very largely indeed, and which promised to increase still more. If, however, the colonists desired to have these luxuries and conveniences they must be prepared to pay for them. At the same time, he thought it was well they should be made aware what their railways did cost them;

and, from a general inspection of the position of affairs, he had satisfied himself on this point—that a sum of over £46,000 would be required next year to carry on our railways. Of this large amount, the expenses of the engineering staff was not much more than £3,000, so that the cost of maintaining and working our two bits of railway amounted to no less than £43,000, making, with interest on loans, a total charge upon the revenue of £74,000. Let them next look at the revenue side of the question. His hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways estimated that his receipts from all sources would amount to about £30,000; so that it behoved us next year to provide out of general revenue a sum of from £43,000 to £44,000 to enable us to enjoy the luxury of railway communication. He trusted that the colony derived full value for this large expenditure; but it must be borne in mind that railway expenditure did not cease when a line was constructed, and that in a rudimentary colony like this every railway built became so much extra charge, a fixed charge, upon the revenue. He now came to another department of public utility and convenience—the Postal and Telegraph department. Hon. members would see how extravagant, he might almost say, we were in our postal arrangements. Here, again, he found that no less than £31,547 would be required next year in connection with the conveyance of mails and the working of our postal and telegraph system. This was apart altogether from the interest on loans from which our telegraphs had been constructed, so that it would be seen that in the matter of postal and other conveniences we were truly—well, he would not say an extravagant, but a luxurious community. Here we were, with our small population, a mere handful of 33,000 all told, already contributing about £10 per head to the revenue, and, at the same time, people were not satisfied unless every man had a post office within hail, and a telegraph office within a day's ride, and a railway into his district if not to his very door, and steamers careering up and down the coast continually. Truly, he said again, we were a luxurious little people. But we must be prepared to pay for it. Turning next to Works and Buildings, although large sums would be expended out of

loan money next year upon the various works and buildings agreed upon, still a considerable further sum would be required for additions and repairs and other works, all over the colony; and for this purpose a vote of £13,315 was asked. Coming next to Roads and Bridges, he regretted that with regard to the vote under this head for next year it had been found necessary to reduce it to £10,000. Hon. members must bear in mind that our railways, as he had already pointed out, were being worked at an annual cost to the revenue of over £40,000, and that these railways must necessarily relieve the traffic on our roads. Were it not for our railway expenditure, we could afford to make this grant for roads, instead of £10,000, £50,000. There was, however, one word of consolation which he might offer, in view of the reduction in this vote. He found that, since the first institution of these road grants, in 1882, the annual vote had only averaged £9,143, so that he might say he was asking nearly £1,000 more for next year than the average grant had amounted to during the past fourteen years. Looking therefore at the large amount of money that had been expended on our roads within that time (nearly £130,000)—in addition to the £50,000 loan money—and looking also at the increased facilities afforded by our railways, he thought that by judicious management the sum here asked for, under the head of roads and bridges, would be sufficient. He hoped hon. members would agree with him in that, or—show him where the money was to come from. He was not aware that there was any particular item on these Estimates calling for comment on his part at this stage. A question had been asked, whether it was proposed to increase the vote of £3,000 made last year to ensure the representation of this colony at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition. No further sum for that purpose was asked for on these Estimates, and for this reason, it was difficult to say where the money was to be found. This £3,000 would be expended with the greatest care and economy, and he hoped and believed it would be the means of enabling us to make a respectable show of colonial products at the forthcoming exhibition. There was one other important matter he should refer to, and that was Immi-

gration. Hon. members were aware that certain fresh proposals had been brought forward by the Board of Immigration, which proposals had been approved by the Governor and the Legislature, and he hoped they would be carried out in their entirety. Hon. members were also aware that it was estimated that a sum of £10,000 would be required for this purpose. It was not his intention to ask at the present moment for that sum to be included on these Estimates; but it would probably be his business, on a future date, to ask for that sum on Loan Estimates. There were many other matters which, were it necessary, he could dilate upon in connection with our financial affairs; but, as every information would be afforded hon. members as each item came before them, and as the House was already in possession of papers dealing exhaustively with our finances, he would not detain the committee any longer. He could only add in conclusion that, although our revenue was flourishing and expanding, and although there was every prospect at present that it would continue to expand, still it behoved us to act with extreme caution. With this word of warning, he now begged to move the first item on the Estimates—"Governor's establishment, £543 16s. 8d."

MR. S. H. PARKER said although he thought there was really no reason for that House or for the country to be in any way alarmed at the financial position of the colony, yet he must say, after a perusal of the estimates of revenue and expenditure which had just been placed in their hands, after also hearing the financial statement, which they had just listened to—he must say although there was no occasion for alarm there was very great occasion indeed for exercising caution and for exercising economy. In fact, he thought we ought to be more economical in the future than we had been in the past, notwithstanding all that had been said about the expansion of our revenue. Seeing, from these Estimates, that we were actually paying a sum equal to nearly £1 per head of the population for the upkeep of our postal and telegraph department, and a like sum for the maintenance of our police, he thought it became our duty to consider this large expenditure

very seriously. He did not suppose there was another community that was taxed so heavily for its postal and telegraph and its police service as Western Australia was. He did not say we could maintain these services at a less cost than we did; he did not mean to say there was any undue extravagance; but he did mean to say that the members of that House, as representing the country, were bound to look closely into such expenditure, and, if they could possibly economise it, it was their bounden duty to do so. Certainly, as the Colonial Secretary had stated, if we went in for the luxury of telegraph lines and post offices all over the colony, and undertook to provide police protection for everybody scattered over our extensive territory, we could not wonder at the cost of such luxuries and the heavy charge entailed by such protection. But the question to be considered was, could this expenditure be lessened or not? It appeared to him that the main thing which the colony required, in view of this heavy expenditure per head of population, was an increase in the number of that population. If we could only obtain some few thousands of people, not only to share our prosperity but also our taxation, it would wonderfully assist us in bearing our financial burdens, as well as in promoting the progress of the colony. The Colonial Secretary mentioned the subject of railways. Now he was sure that no one could deny that the intention of that House and of the country, when they consented to enter upon the cost of constructing these railways, was that they should be the means of opening up the country to settlement, that they should give a stimulus to the cultivation of the soil, increase the number of producers, swell the value of our exports, and contribute to the general prosperity of the country. But so long as the lands through which our railways pass were allowed to remain idle, or used for pastoral purposes only, he did not think our railways could be of very much benefit to us, and they must of necessity be worked at a great loss to the revenue. He had been led to these remarks from the fact of knowing that the railway running through the Eastern Districts to York and now being extended to Beverley, ran for about 40 miles through almost entirely private land,—land which

had been alienated from the Crown and which was now the property of private individuals. What he would like to see, and what the colony ought to see, was these lands utilised and cultivated, if not by their owners then by having them thrown open to other people, who would cultivate them and make them productive, and so conduce to the prosperity of the colony. He regretted to see, from his own observation, that very little indeed of the land through which this railway ran had been made to contribute to the prosperity of the colony. It was nearly all locked up. He believed this, to some extent, to be attributable to the large areas of land which had been granted in the early days of the colony to persons who had not the means to improve them. They either belonged to absentee proprietors, who were quite content to abide their time until their lands, through the energy and enterprise of other people, became of value to them—"uncearned increment," he believed, was the expression; or they belonged to persons in the colony, who were content to let the lands lie idle until they obtained an exorbitant price for them. Hardly any of them were prepared, as they ought to be, to cultivate the land themselves or to throw them open to other people to cultivate them. Wheat could be grown at 2s. a bushel; and he thought something ought to be done by the Legislature to remedy this state of things. He thought something ought to be done so as to make the railway a little more reproductive; and the only way it struck him in which this could be done was to levy a tax of so much an acre upon these lands. If they were brought into cultivation, a small tax would never be felt by the proprietor; and if, on the other hand, the proprietor of the land, who persisted in letting it remain idle, or using it for pastoral purposes, felt the tax to be too oppressive, he would either sell the land or be compelled to cultivate it himself. They were bound, he thought, in the interests of the railway itself, in the interests of the country at large, to do something in this direction. Taxation, he knew, was very distasteful to country people. They would never tax themselves voluntarily. That had been shown by the Roads Boards Act. In no solitary instance had a country district carried out the prin-

ciples of that Act as regards levying local taxation for the maintenance of their roads. The Legislature, when it passed that Act, recognised the soundness of the principle that land should be taxed for the upkeep and maintenance of roads; and it would only be an extension of the principle to make it apply to the maintenance of railways. He did not suggest that simply for the purpose of raising money by means of a land tax, but in the interests of the colony at large, so that these lands may be made to yield something towards the general prosperity of the country. In and about York all suburban land was already being cultivated or being brought under cultivation—almost every available acre of land within reasonable distance of the town was under cultivation, which was proof beyond doubt that, were it not for the large blocks of private land that were shut up, a very much larger area of land would now have been utilised for purposes of cultivation. He was not one of those who complained of the early settlers not having done so much with their lands as one could have wished: they had great difficulties to contend with, and the land was granted in large blocks to people who had no money to make use of them. But those days had now gone by, and these lands should no longer be locked up from people who would cultivate them if they had the chance of doing so. He did not know whether the Government was likely to adopt his suggestion, or that House; but he believed himself that if some reasonable acreage tax were imposed upon land through which this railway had been constructed at public expense, nothing would so much conduce to the settlement and population of the country. He did not mean that this principle of taxation should be confined to lands traversed by the railway running to the Eastern Districts, but to all lands through which any railway might be constructed at the public cost. While on the subject of railways, he still thought, as he did last year, that it would have been much better for the colony, that it would have been £100,000 in our pocket, had we been content to have the terminus of the Government line at York, and let Mr. Hordern's line meet the Government line there instead of at Beverley. Unfor-

tunately, we could not remedy that now. The money, having been borrowed, had to be spent, and the colony would have to be taxed for it, and our next consideration should be how we were to meet these increasing loan charges. That, he thought, was a matter of very grave consideration, seeing that the interest on the money we had borrowed amounted to nearly £60,000, being at the rate of about £2 per head for every man, woman, and child in the colony. If our population did not increase, and increase very largely, before this last loan is spent, he was afraid it would be a very bad look-out for the colony. The Colonial Secretary had pointed out that our revenue was expanding—it expanded last year some £50,000 more than the previous year. But what did they find on the other hand? That our expenditure also increased by £49,000. The hon. gentleman said he also believed the revenue would expand again next year, to meet our still growing expenditure; he said he thought it would do this because the expenditure of the loan money was bound to give a stimulus to trade, and increase the spending powers of the community. But he thought it behoved them to look to the time when all this money has been spent. He would ask the House to seriously consider what our position will be when all this borrowed money has been expended, and our financial burdens further increased. Without an increase of population, the outlook appeared to him a rather dismal one. It was at any rate a very serious one. For this reason he regretted very much to find that no money had been placed on these Estimates for immigration purposes. The Colonial Secretary said he intended to extract £10,000 out of loan for immigration purposes. He had not been aware there was a single item in the loan schedule for immigration. There was an item of £10,000 for contingencies, but he was sure it was never intended by the House that this was to go for immigration purposes. It was intended to meet any contingent expenses in connection with the numerous public works projected,—though, for his own part, he thought immigration was particularly a matter the funds for which ought to be provided out of loan. How could we possibly have a more reproduc-

tive public work? It had been calculated that every new-comer contributed about £4 to the revenue, in the shape of direct taxation, annually; and, as it only cost about £17 to bring this fresh taxpayer into the colony, it appeared to him we could not find a better or a more remunerative thing to do with our money. He was sure that none of the contemplated public works would thus pay for themselves in four years. In addition to contributing directly to the revenue, the new-comer also contributed indirectly to it, by becoming a productive power in the land. With regard to the vote for roads, he agreed that in those districts where railways had been constructed and were maintained at a large public loss, the settlers could not expect the country at large to further tax itself for maintaining their roads. He thought those districts which had the benefit of railway communication ought to levy their own local taxation for the maintenance of their roads; and he hoped that the Government, in apportioning this vote, would take care that the larger portion of it went to districts where there were no railways. He observed that expenditure in connection with the Convict Department was estimated at the same amount as the present cost to the Imperial Government. He thought the House was under the impression that when this department came to be transferred to the Colonial Government, although they might not be able to make any saving as regards the working of the prison at Fremantle, yet that they would be able to save something in connection with the Perth Gaol, by an amalgamation of the two establishments, with one staff. He could quite understand that the Government were not yet in a position to enter into any details as to the way in which they intended to carry on this department, but he trusted that when they did consider the matter they would see whether it would not be possible to do away with the Gaol at Perth altogether, or at any rate so reduce the staff that there would be a considerable saving of expenditure. He had already said he did not regard the condition of the country with alarm, but he considered it was such as called for the exercise of grave caution, and that they should apply their minds not only as to how they might economise expenditure, but also

how they could increase their population, which he considered absolutely necessary to the prosperity of the colony.

Mr. STEERE said that generally speaking he concurred in almost every word that had been said by the hon. member for Perth, only he went rather further than the hon. member did. The hon. member said he thought the present financial condition of the colony was such as merely demanded the exercise of caution on our part. He (Mr. Steere) thought the present state of our finances ought to cause us a great amount of anxiety. The hon. member particularly called attention to the increasing expenditure of the Government, leading one to infer that he blamed the Government in this matter. He considered that the Legislature was quite as responsible as the Government for this ever-increasing expenditure. It was the Legislature which had urged the Government to enter upon these increasing charges, and the Government had no other course but to go along with the Legislature. But he thought it time they should look at this matter very seriously. On looking at the statistical returns on the table he found that while the revenue for 1883 was £316,000, it had fallen in 1884 to £290,000,—or £26,000 less than the year before. He therefore could not see how it could be said that their revenue was expanding. It seemed to him rather to be contracting, whilst, as to our expenditure, there could be no doubt that our expenditure was expanding; and he noticed with some surprise that, by these Estimates, it was absolutely proposed to expend next year about £12,000 more than our revenue. He thought it was a very serious thing that we should thus deliberately propose to spend more than we expected to receive, especially if we were going to have large Supplementary Estimates brought in, as was now being done every year, to meet our increasing expenditure. But one of the most serious things of all in connection with our financial position was the great reduction discernible in the value of our exports. In 1883 our exports amounted to £447,000, whereas last year they only amounted to £405,000, showing a decrease of £42,000; and he believed himself that this year our exports will be nearly £100,000 less than they were last

year. It had been calculated by those who were in a position to do so that the loss to the colony this year through the decrease in the value of wool alone would be equal to at least £50,000. He also thought there would be a reduction of £50,000 or £60,000 in the value of sandalwood exported. A reduction of £100,000 in the total value of exports which only aggregated £400,000 was, it appeared to him, a very serious matter indeed; and, if it were not for the large expenditure proposed on public works, he really did not know whence we should derive the means to pay our way. He thought it was a very poor look-out if we had to look to expenditure of borrowed money in order to enable us to meet the ordinary expenditure of the colony. This sort of thing could not go on for long, with our exports gradually decreasing. He concurred entirely with what had fallen from the hon. member for Perth as to immigration. He was totally at a loss to conceive how it was proposed to get £10,000 out of loan money for this purpose. True there was a small balance of the loan unappropriated, which the Commissioner of Railways had already applied for, for the purchase of rolling stock and other matters in connection with the Eastern Railway; and, of course, if that was done, there would be nothing left for immigration purposes out of loan unless some other works were abandoned and the money diverted to that purpose. He did not know whether the House would consent to that. It was most essential, in his opinion, that the proposal to introduce 1,000 immigrants before the end of next year should be carried out. He thought, with the hon. member for Perth, that it was most important, if the colony is to make any progress, that we should try to increase our population. He believed that at the present moment our expenditure per head amounted to about £10, which was larger than the proportion per head of any of the other Australian colonies. He believed Victoria and New South Wales each had a population of upwards of 900,000, which, with our rate of expenditure per head, would give each of those colonies an annual expenditure of £9,000,000, whereas he believed it only amounted to something like £7,000,000. How we were going to

reduce our expenditure he did not know. He believed the Government had cut it down to the lowest limit possible to enable them to carry on the machinery and administration of the Government in a proper manner, and he thought all the Council could do was to try for the future to prevent any large increase of expenditure, until it was seen that our means justified us in sanctioning it. He must say again, it appeared to him it was incumbent upon us to exercise the gravest caution in dealing with our finances.

MR. MARMION maintained that the hon. member (Mr. Steere) had erred in stating that the revenue for 1884 was less than the revenue for 1883. On the contrary he submitted that an analysis of the returns would show that in reality there was an increase of about £6,000. The hon. member had apparently taken into consideration the surplus balance brought forward from the previous year in dealing with the revenue for 1883.

On the motion of Mr. Brown, the debate on the budget was then adjourned until Monday.

EXPLOSIVES BILL: REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) brought under the notice of the House the report of the select committee appointed to consider and report upon the provisions of the Explosives Bill. The committee recommended the insertion of a clause empowering any person within the limits of a municipality to keep on his premises as much as 5lbs. of gunpowder or 30lbs. of blasting powder, without a license, and any person residing outside the limits of a municipality to keep any amount of blasting powder not exceeding 100lbs. They also recommended that kerosene and all mineral oils imported into the colony should be examined by a Government inspector before being landed, with the view of testing it, and that, if found to be explosive at a certain temperature, the oil should be forfeited and destroyed.

The consideration of the recommendations of the committee was deferred until the next sitting of the House.

SANITATION AND WATER SUPPLY (MESSAGE No. 7).

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright), in view of the result of the division upon the 3rd clause of the report of the select committee appointed to consider the question of sanitation—the clause recommending that the expenses of the Central Board of Health should be paid out of the general revenue, which, it will be remembered, was rejected upon a division—now moved the adoption of the select committee's report minus that clause, with reference to which, the hon. gentleman said, His Excellency would probably further communicate with the House by message.

MR. CROWTHER was afraid, if the House agreed to this, it would be undoing what it did—and in his opinion very properly did—the other day, when it refused to provide the means for paying the members of the Central Board of Health. If, as now proposed, they agreed to the report—which recommended that these gentlemen should be paid—the Government would take good care that funds were provided to pay them. He thought hon. members generally when they agreed to that portion of the report the other day were under the impression that the work of this Board would only cost a few hundreds a year, whereas it appeared it would cost at least £1,000 a year. That was the estimated cost, and he never yet knew an estimate of expenditure of this kind that was not exceeded. He therefore thought it behoved them to be very careful what they were doing in this matter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) pointed out that His Excellency's message now virtually remained unanswered, and that unless the course proposed by the Director of Public Works be followed, it would remain unanswered. He believed every hon. member in the House, and all, must agree as to the necessity of the appointment of some sanitary body or bodies entrusted with power to deal with questions affecting the public health, and he understood that the recommendations of the committee generally commended themselves to the House. There was one clause, however, which, apparently—he said apparently, for he thought it was very doubtful whether the result of the decision was not brought

about through a misunderstanding—did not commend itself to a majority; and, if the course now proposed were agreed to, the probability was that another message would follow, and that hon. members would have another opportunity of dealing with the matter. He himself, the other night, without expressing any opinion, *pro or con*, as to the clause in question, drew attention to what appeared to him to be the dangerous ground they were entering upon, when they proposed to remunerate the members of public boards. He did not do so with the view of preventing the clause being carried into effect, but in order that at any rate it should not be regarded as a precedent. It appeared to him that the proposal now before the House was the best that could be adopted under the circumstances.

MR. STEERE said if he agreed to the proposed course it must not be supposed for a moment that he and those who voted with him the other day were in favor of the recommendation that the members of the Central Board should be remunerated for their services by an attendance fee. The reason why he had not called for a division upon that clause was because he understood that the whole matter would have to come before them again in the shape of a bill to give effect to the committee's recommendations; and, if he agreed to the motion now made, it must not be supposed that he and those who had voted with him were in favor of any payment at all.

The motion submitted by the Director of Public Works was then put and passed.

SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. BURT, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that the Superannuation Act now in existence was passed in 1871, and it might be in the recollection of some hon. members that in 1873 a select committee appointed to consider the question of departmental expenditure recommended that, after that date, pensions to public officers entering the colonial service should be abolished altogether. That resolution was confirmed by the House, and in 1875 the hon. member on his left (Mr. Steere) introduced a bill to give statutory effect to the resolution—a

bill entitled an Act to regulate and abolish pensions in certain cases. That bill was passed by the House, and vetoed by His Excellency the then Governor (Sir William Robinson). The bill amongst other things provided that in computing the superannuation allowance of any officer entitled to such allowance, the amount of his pension should be based upon his salary alone, exclusive of any emoluments in the shape of forage or travelling allowance. The Governor vetoed the bill on the ground that it would have been an injustice to those officers who had entered the service between 1871 and 1873, but it was evident from the tenor of His Excellency's message that he considered that forage and travelling allowances should be included in computing a man's pension; and, judging from what dropped from the Government benches the other evening, when the question of the retiring allowance to the late Superintendent of Rottneest was under consideration, it occurred to him that it would be as well to settle this matter once for all by enactment, inasmuch as they had been told that no resolution of that House could over-ride the statute. The wording of the statute was to the effect that the retiring allowances of public officers entitled to such allowance should be computed upon their salary and emoluments, but there was no definition as to what "emoluments" meant, and it was well known to some hon. members that one public officer had had his pension computed upon his forage allowance. That would be seen from a return presented to the House in 1876, and it appeared that this word "emoluments" was simply at the mercy of the Attorney General for the time being, who appeared to vary considerably in their interpretation of what the word should embrace. He thought it would be agreed that that Council had always set its face against allowing the emoluments referred to in this bill—namely, forage or travelling allowance, or any income derived by an officer from his private practice—to be taken into consideration. He thought the present bill would do no injustice to anybody. He did not himself propose to touch the question of house or lodging allowance. Some hon. members, when the bill went into committee, might perhaps wish to include house or lodg-

ing allowance in the bill, but for his own part he thought that a man's lodging allowance should be allowed to enter into the computation of his pension. It might be asked, who ever dreamed of computing an officer's forage or travelling allowance as part of his pension, under the head of emoluments? But they knew that it had been done, although it was absurd to do so; and it had been said that the income derived by an officer from his private practice might possibly be calculated in computing his pension. There were many of the medical officers in the Government service allowed private practice, and it might be that some day we should find them having this private practice calculated as part of their emoluments. [The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, no.] Forage allowance, at any rate, had been held to come under the head of emoluments. Governor Robinson, in the message which he sent to the House when he vetoed Mr. Steere's bill, said distinctly that "heretofore, the word 'emoluments' as used in the first section of 'The Superannuation Act, 1871,' has been held to include forage allowance, house allowance, and fees of office, according to the circumstances of the case." And it was because His Excellency considered it would be unfair to those officers who had joined and remained in the service since the Act of 1871 was passed—if forage allowance were not to be taken into account in computing an officer's pension—that Governor Robinson vetoed the bill. That being so, and the evident sense of the House being otherwise, he thought it was time an enactment should be passed excluding such allowance and profits as the present bill contemplated from being taken into consideration in calculating any officer's pension. He therefore hoped hon. members would go with him in passing the bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said he had been anxious to hear what the hon. member would say in support of his bill, for, certainly, looking at it off-hand, it seemed to him an unnecessary bill, and a bill sinning in every respect against the first principles of good legislation. The Superannuation Act of this colony was founded on an Imperial Act, the 22nd Victoria, c. 26, and the words used in

our Act were exactly the same as in the Imperial Act, namely, that an officer's retiring allowance shall be computed upon the annual salary and emoluments of his office; therefore, if there was no one here to construe the meaning of these words, the same enactment had received judicial construction in England, where house allowance was always taken into consideration in calculating an officer's pension, but certainly not forage allowance. The word "emoluments," according to the dictionary, simply meant the profits and advantages arising from one's office or employment. It must be clear that the profits of office could not include the expenses which a man incurred in carrying out the duties of his office. He never heard of a person honestly making any profit out of travelling about to fulfil the duties of his office; and, certainly, a man's private practice could not possibly be regarded as part of the profits of his office as a public servant. If you took away from him his office, he might still carry on his private practice; therefore, it was clear that his private practice was not part of the duties of his public office, and, if it was not part of the duties of his office, the income derived from it could not be regarded as forming any portion of the profits or emoluments of his office. He had never heard it suggested before that the earnings of a man who occupied his time as a private practitioner when not discharging his official duties were among the profits of his public office. It might as well be said that the man who left his office at 4 o'clock, and who after going home executed a piece of work and sold it, might claim the amount which it realised as part of the profits of his office. Therefore, he maintained that the present bill was unnecessary. He also thought it undesirable from another point. An Act to define the meaning of another Act was unusual: there were very few instances in which such Acts were passed. There were no doubt old Acts which declared what the common law on a subject was, when there was some doubt as to what the law on that particular subject was. But these declaratory Acts were not supposed to alter the law, or to reduce what was the custom or the unwritten law into written law. The present bill even went further than that.

The preamble of the bill set forth that it was desirable to limit the application of the word "emoluments," occurring in the principal Act,—an Act framed word for word upon an Imperial Act. If by that it was meant that it was desirable to change the meaning of the existing Act, limiting its intention, and that this bill should be retrospective, it must obviously be unjust to those officers who had entered the service when the word possessed a wider signification; and, if they were now to limit its signification, they would be breaking their contract with those officers. If, on the other hand, the bill was simply intended to have a prospective effect, he certainly could see no object in it. He understood the hon. member to say that his object was not to alter the law; yet he said it was to limit the application of a word to which a certain meaning had been given effect to, in past years. He would suggest to the hon. member that the bill was unnecessary, that the meaning of the word "emoluments"—in other words, the profits of office—was easily understood, and that there was no necessity to have an Act of Parliament defining it, especially when the same word was used in an Imperial Act, which had had a judicial interpretation put upon it. They might vary the meaning of the word as they liked, but it all came to this—the profits or advantages arising out of a man's office. A forage or a travelling allowance surely could not be regarded as the profits of office,—that which a man had to live on; while, as regards private practice, it was obvious that private practice could not be taken as part of the profits of his office as a public servant. One man might make a great deal out of his private practice, while another man occupying the same office might make very little; and how then were they to apportion the value of his private practice with the profits or emoluments of his office? He thought the House would be playing with legislation if it passed a bill of this kind.

MR. STEERE said it appeared to him the bill was a very necessary bill, in consequence of the different interpretations put upon this word "emoluments" by different Governors and by their legal advisers. Some said it could not possibly mean forage allowance, but there was a message from Governor Robinson in

which he stated that it did mean forage allowance, and a similar statement had been made by a late Colonial Secretary and also by a late Attorney General. Yet they were now told that the word meant nothing of the kind. He thought, in the face of such diversity of opinion, it was absolutely necessary we should have an Act clearly declaring what the collective opinion of that Council on the subject was—not what the personal opinion of any particular Governor, or Colonial Secretary, or Attorney General might be, but what the Legislature itself intended.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said it was needless for him to address himself at any length to the point in dispute after what had been stated by the Attorney General, who had very clearly expressed the views of the present Government. With regard to the statement that forage allowance had been computed in one instance as part of an officer's pension, they all knew that was the case of the late Resident Magistrate at Newcastle. When that officer was about to retire on a pension it was found that his salary being a very low one, his retiring allowance, notwithstanding a long period of service, would be very small indeed, and it was the opinion of the Government of that day—though not the unanimous opinion—that his forage allowance might be allowed to count. But that was an exceptional case, and he thought he might say of a certainty that it was never likely to occur again. With regard to private practice, that was a claim that had never been put forward; nor had it ever been suggested to the Executive to his knowledge since this Superannuation Act was passed. He need only refer to the case of the late Colonial Surgeon, a very old officer when he retired: his pension was simply calculated upon the emoluments of his office as Colonial Surgeon, and it never entered into anyone's mind to take his private practice into consideration. Therefore, he was entirely with his hon. and learned colleague when he said that this bill was wholly unnecessary. He was sure no hon. member desired to express a want of confidence in the Government in this matter. Knowing as the Government did what the feeling of the Legislature was, and that the general opinion was that emoluments

were not intended to include forage or travelling allowance, it was not at all likely or probable that in future any occasion would ever arise for a declaratory measure of this kind. No doubt the hon. member had brought it forward with the best intention of assisting the Government in the interpretation which ought to be placed upon the existing Act, but seeing that if the bill passed into law it would only add a short but superfluous and wholly unnecessary bill to the statute book, he could not, under the circumstances, do otherwise than move that the bill be read a second time that day six months.

MR. CROWTHER said he felt it his duty to support the bill. The hon. gentleman said they might trust the Government. Perhaps so. He had a distinct recollection of that House passing two resolutions, stating as clearly as the English language could do so, that, in the opinion of the Legislature, forage allowance should not be treated as part of an officer's emoluments for the purpose of calculating his pension. Yet the Government of the day quietly put those resolutions on one side, and in computing a certain officer's pension allowed his forage allowance to count. During the same Administration,—with the same Governor, the same Executive, the same Attorney General—another officer came forward with a similar claim; he came not from the East this time, nor yet from the West, but from the North, and—“they knew not Joseph.” The Government, it seemed to him, in interpreting the resolutions of that House, and in interpreting some of the Acts of that House, were like an analytical chemist, who could arrive at almost any conclusion, by submitting an ingredient to a different test or treatment. For his own part, he never could see why civil servants should be pensioned at all. The moment a man entered the public service he became quite a different animal from ordinary mortals: he was neither expected to take care of himself nor to provide for his family, hereafter. A paternal Government was called upon to do that for him which every man ought to do for himself. He would pay our civil servants well, even handsomely if they deserved it, and let them look to their own hereafter, both in this world and the next. If they did not think

their pay large enough, the world was wide—let them go.

The amendment—that the bill be read a second time that day six months—was then put, and a division being called for, there appeared—

Ayes 6

Noes 15

Majority against ... 9

AYES.
Hon. A. P. Hensman
Hon. J. Forrest
Hon. J. A. Wright
Mr. Burges
Mr. Randell
Hon. M. Fraser
(Teller.)

NOES.
Mr. Brockman
Mr. Brown
Sir T. C. Campbell
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Grant
Mr. Harper
Mr. Layman
Mr. McRae
Mr. Parker
Mr. Pearse
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Steere
Mr. Venn
Mr. Wittenoom
Mr. Burt (Teller.)

The amendment was therefore negatived.

Bill read a second time.

EASTERN RAILWAY FURTHER EXTENSION BILL.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright), in moving the second reading of this bill, said its object was merely to authorise the extension of the line, then in course of construction, from York to Beverley.

The motion was agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to ten o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 4th September, 1885.

Papers—Colonial Storekeeper's Travelling Expenses—Appropriation Bill (Supplementary), 1885: first reading—Explosives Bill: further considered in committee—Law and Parliamentary Library Amendment Bill: third reading—Municipal Councils Titles Bill: further considered in committee—Superannuation Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Eastern Railway Further Extension Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

MANDURAH BREAKWATER; ECCLESIASTICAL GRANT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) laid on the table the correspondence relating to the extension of the Mandurah breakwater, together with Sir John Coode's opinion on the subject. Also, the return asked for by Mr. Grant relating to the expenditure of the ecclesiastical vote, in different parts of the colony.

TRAVELLING EXPENSES, COLONIAL STOREKEEPER.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser), at Mr. Steere's request, laid on the table a statement of the travelling expenses of the Colonial Storekeeper between the 30th of June, 1884, and the 30th June, 1885.

APPROPRIATION BILL (SUPPLEMENTARY), 1885.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) moved the first reading of a bill to provide for the payment of certain additional and unforeseen expenses in the year 1885, over and above the Estimates for that year.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

EXPLOSIVES BILL.

This bill, which was referred to a select committee after twenty-one of its clauses had been passed, was now further considered in committee of the whole House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman), in pursuance of the recommendation of the select committee, moved that the 22nd clause of the bill be