

AYES.  
 Hon. G. Bellingham  
 Hon. H. Briggs  
 Hon. T. F. Brimago  
 Hon. C. E. Dempster  
 Hon. J. T. Glowrey  
 Hon. E. S. Haynes  
 Hon. S. J. Haynes  
 Hon. H. Jameson  
 Hon. A. B. Kidson  
 Hon. M. L. Moss  
 Hon. C. A. Piesse  
 Hon. J. E. Richardson  
 Hon. H. J. Saunders  
 Hon. C. Sommers  
 Hon. F. M. Stone  
 Hon. F. Whitcombe  
 Hon. J. W. Hackett.

(Teller).

NOES.  
 Hon. A. P. Matheson  
 Hon. G. Randell  
 Hon. J. M. Speed  
 Hon. J. M. Drew (Teller).

Motion thus passed, and the debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9-24 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 14th November, 1900.

Fire Brigades Board Debenture Bill, first reading—Question: Eight-hours System on Railways—Kalgoorlie Roads Board Tramways Bill (private): Select Committee's Report—Legislative Assembly Buildings, Additions: Select Committee's Report—Customs Duties under Commonwealth Bill, all stages—Post and Telegraph Act Amendment Bill, all stages—Discharge of Orders (2)—Payment of Members Bill, Legislative Council's Suggestions; Appropriation Message (increase)—Annual Estimates, Committee of Supply, Lands and Surveys votes passed; progress—Despatches from Secretary of State (2)—Adjournment.

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

### FIRE BRIGADES BOARD DEBENTURE BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

### QUESTION—EIGHT-HOURS SYSTEM ON RAILWAYS.

MR. GREGORY asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether it was the intention of the Commissioner of Railways to give effect to the resolution recently passed in this House that the

eight-hours system should be adopted upon the Railways. 2, If so, when.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: The whole question had been referred to the General Manager of Railways for report, and as soon as the report was received, it would be placed on the table of the House.

### KALGOORLIE ROADS BOARD TRAMWAYS BILL.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. PIESSE brought up the report of the select committee which had inquired into this private Bill.

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed.

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. ILLINGWORTH brought up the report of the select committee which had inquired into the question of providing additional accommodation in connection with the Assembly buildings.

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed.

### CUSTOMS DUTIES UNDER COMMONWEALTH BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

#### SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: I would like to explain to the House the object the Government have in view in asking hon. members to assent to this Bill. We have agreed to enter the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth will be established on the 1st of January next. It is possible, but not at all probable, that uniform duties will be established some time next year; and it is just possible, though I do not think it is probable, uniform duties might be established before legislation of this sort could be accomplished by the next Western Australian Parliament. However that may be, it seems to me that we are not doing anything to which anyone can take exception in providing that whenever uniform duties are established, the laws in force in this colony at that time in regard to customs shall be continued. Hon. members

will perhaps recollect that in Section 95 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act it is obligatory, when uniform duties are established, for this colony, in order to avail itself of the exceptional provisions of that clause, to impose duties. I think I have on a previous occasion explained to the House that I never understood when I was at the Convention that this was necessary. I had had advice, and I understood that the laws now in force would be continued until altered or amended by the Legislature of the colony, and that though we were not allowed to increase the duties, we might decrease them or alter them in any way. That, however, appears not to be the case; and when uniform duties are established by the Commonwealth, if we have no law of this sort standing in the gateway ready for use, the effect will be that the Commonwealth law will apply to this colony, not only in regard to goods coming from beyond the seas, but also in regard to goods coming from the other colonies. Under the circumstances, no harm can be done by passing this Bill. No one, I think, can give any good reason why this measure should not be passed in order that it may be ready for use whenever uniform duties are established. The Bill will not in any way affect the power of Parliament this session or even during next session, to deal with the customs law as may be thought fit. All the Bill provides is that whatever laws are in force whenever uniform duties are established, those laws shall be continued and have force in the colony until altered, subject of course to the Commonwealth Constitution, with the exceptional provision in our favour in Section 95. One reason that actuates the Government in submitting this Bill for the approval of the House, is that the introduction of such a measure will show the manufacturers and producers of this colony that, so far as the Government and this Parliament are concerned, everything possible is being done with the desire to respect the exceptional provisions in favour of this colony passed by the Convention which framed the Federal Constitution. The Bill will also have the effect of showing that the Government and Parliament desire to keep faith with the manufacturers and producers of this colony; and this will be some

encouragement to them, although there would be no security, because the next Parliament will have complete control over the customs of the colony until uniform duties are established. This Bill will not have any deterrent effect, or need not have, on the action of the Legislature in the future. All the effect it will have will be to continue the customs law in force at the time uniform duties are established, until those customs duties are amended by the Legislature, the duties continuing in force subject only to the provisions of Section 95 of the Commonwealth Act. There will be power during five years for the Legislature to reduce or alter the customs duties in any way, so long as duties are not increased from what they are at the time when uniform duties are established.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Aye.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

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

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

#### POST AND TELEGRAPH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

#### SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: The object of this Bill, I regret to say, is to take away from the people of the colony a little convenience they have had for some years past. But necessity knows no law, it is said, and therefore we are compelled to look after the finances of the country, because under federation we know that the postal revenue will go to the Federal Government, and we want to take care that this colony shall get the revenue from the sale of those stamps which were formerly known as "revenue stamps." At the present time the revenue and postage stamps are interchangeable up to the value of one shilling, and as a consequence many persons use revenue stamps for postage purposes and *vice versa*. More especially do they use revenue stamps for postage purposes because it is found that a larger com-

mission is obtained on the sale of revenue stamps than on the sale of postage stamps; and although one would hardly think that persons would regard this as an object, yet I can assure hon. members that some of the large commercial houses of the colony, particularly banks, use revenue stamps altogether up to the value of a shilling, and I suppose the reason for doing so is as I have stated. However, we have now to separate the postal from the revenue stamps, in order to protect the revenue of the colony. This will cause some inconvenience to people, but the change has become necessary in consequence of the approach of federation. The postal revenue, since we altered the law making the stamps interchangeable, has benefited by the change, because what is postal revenue now is to some extent properly stamp revenue. We have been unable to find, in this colony, how much is stamp revenue and how much is postal revenue: we have not been able to trace the difference clearly, so that the Post Office gets the whole of the benefit of revenue from postal and revenue stamps alike. The object of the Bill is simply to separate these two items of revenue, so that in future the public will not be able to use revenue stamps for postal purposes, nor use postal stamps for revenue purposes. It is regrettable that this has become necessary, but there is no help for it, and the other colonies are doing the same. We must have for this colony the revenue properly derivable from the sale of revenue stamps, and we cannot afford to give away to the Federal Government the revenue that belongs to us from this source. Therefore we ask this House to agree to the repeal of Section 23 of the Post and Telegraph Act of 1893.

**MR. VOSPER:** What other inconvenience will result?

**THE PREMIER:** It is proposed that this Bill shall come into operation on the 1st January next; but some months must elapse before the Post Office in this colony can be taken over by the Federal Government, and in the meantime the people here, having to make the change under this Bill, will get used to it by the time the Post Office is transferred. We must not be too hard on those who make mistakes in the meantime, but attention will have to be called to those

mistakes, and the revenue will not suffer in any way through such mistakes during the period intervening between the passing of this Bill and the taking over of the post and telegraph service by the Federal Government. It is hoped that by making this change come into effect on the 1st January next, before the Post Office is taken over by the Federal Government, the people here will get accustomed to the change.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Will not the post and telegraph service be taken over on the 1st January?

**THE PREMIER:** No; the Commonwealth system will commence only by proclamation. I suppose six months will elapse before the post and telegraph service can be taken over by the Federal Government, and in the meantime the people here will become accustomed to the change which this Bill is intended to enforce, and after the postal service is transferred to the Federal Government the interchange of stamps to which we have been accustomed for some years will not be allowed at all. Therefore it is hoped that by giving notice through the Press and otherwise, the people here will get accustomed to the change before it becomes compulsory under the federal system.

**MR. GREGORY:** I suppose the Government will notify the public with regard to receipt stamps, for instance; that the cannot use the ordinary stamps for giving receipts?

**THE PREMIER:** We shall do all we can by giving notice to the public.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

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

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

#### COTTESLOE, ETC., LIGHTING AND POWER BILL (PRIVATE).

Order read, for consideration of petition.

On motion by the PREMIER, order discharged (the Bill having been previously rejected).

GUANO BILL.

Order read, for second reading.

On motion by the PREMIER, order discharged.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of two amendments made by the Legislative Council, considered; namely (1) to strike out "present" and insert "next," making payment to commence with the next Parliament; and (2) to strike out "one" and insert "two," increasing the amount payable to members of the Council to £200 a year.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This Message from the Legislative Council referred to what might be termed a money Bill exclusively, and of course there were some money Bills which the Legislative Assembly could not permit the Council to interfere with. We all must recognise that the Council had the power of suggestion under the Constitution; but in regard to some Bills, that power, even if exercised by the Council, could not be permitted by this House. He referred particularly to the annual Appropriation Act, and he hoped this House would never allow the other Chamber to interfere with our Appropriation Act. He hoped, also, the Legislative Council would never seek to do so, because this House was the guardian of the public purse, and could not allow any interference in regard to the ordinary appropriations of the Government. This measure, although a money Bill, was of a different nature. It had for its object the payment of members of Parliament, and therefore the opinions of both Chambers were entitled to due consideration. This was certainly a Bill the discussion of which should be entered upon with a desire for mutual concession and good feeling on both sides; and the discussions in this House, at all events, had been marked by a wish to avoid drifting into the vortex of party, and the measure had been dealt with by the House generally, as a whole, rather than from a party point of view. The matters in difference between the two Houses were eminently suitable for mutual concessions. If it were necessary, as it was

possible, to have a conference of the two Houses to discuss the question, such conference would doubtless save all bitterness, and be the means of arriving at a good understanding. It must not be forgotten that to pay hon. members of both Houses at the rate desired by the Legislative Council meant an expenditure of about £14,000 a year—a considerable sum even to this colony, with its large revenue. Though not present when the matter had been discussed in another place, he had read a report in this morning's newspaper, and must say he much regretted the expressions used by some hon. members in that Chamber. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Speaking for himself and for the Government, and he believed for every member of the Assembly, he could truthfully say that in the Bill passed by this House and transmitted to the Upper House for approval, nothing had been inserted with the slightest intention of affronting members of that Chamber. The Bill had been submitted to the Upper House in the ordinary way, and spoken to in the Assembly with the greatest deference and courtesy to hon. members in another place; and it was regrettable that members of the Council should have so far forgotten what was due to this House and to themselves as to say that the Bill contained provisions relating to that House which were insulting to its members.

MR. VOSPER: Such hon. members were following a bad example.

THE PREMIER: Such statements were not only absolutely incorrect, but, he would venture to say, improper; because there was nothing further from our intention than to say anything whatever disrespectful to the Legislative Council, or to its members.

MR. MONGER: In the debate in this House, reference had been made to "knocking off the distinguished title of 'honourable'."

THE PREMIER: Even that matter might be unobjectionably discussed in proper terms. Personally, he believed hon. members of another place had no right to the title "honourable."

MR. VOSPER: Some of them needed it badly enough.

THE PREMIER: Though the title was acknowledged here and in England, still, honours could be conferred only by

the fountain of honour; and unless a person were appointed by the Queen to any distinction, how could he acquire or obtain such title? However, that was by the way; for in all the Australian colonies members of the Upper House, and certain other persons, had the prefix "honourable." Only a few members of another place had departed from that good taste and good feeling which should have characterised the discussion. The general tone of the debate in the Council had been, he believed, unexceptionable; but he strongly objected to any hon. member saying that members of the Assembly had desired to insult another place by any of the provisions of the Bill. That was a reflection upon him, upon the Government, and on this House generally, and was altogether unjust and inaccurate. Hon. members here had not acted on their own responsibility: they took precedents. They were guided by Victoria, where both Houses were elected by the people. From the newspaper report of the discussion in another place, it appeared that members of the Upper House in Victoria had to have a huge property qualification; but, on investigation, it would be found that such members had to have merely landed property to the value of £100 a year. To call that a huge property qualification was a misuse of terms, even though the property might be unencumbered. If a man had a mortgage on his property of £200 or £300, it was easy for him to believe the property to be worth £400, and then to say he had £100 a year over and above encumbrances.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: In Victoria, the property of a member of the Council must be freehold estate.

THE PREMIER: True; but none could say, without misuse of terms, that a value of £100 a year was a huge property qualification. That income would not keep a man in bread-and-butter, not to speak of luxuries. There had at one time been a property qualification here—the possession of £500 worth of landed property. That never kept anyone out of this House, for surely none who had ever been in the Chamber would not have been able to certify he had property which, in his opinion, was worth £500.

MR. MONGER: At that time, hon. members had been their own valuers.

THE PREMIER: However, the Victorian Legislative Council was a House elected on the same qualification as the Council of this colony, and its members received no payment whatever.

MR. A. FORREST: But they were rich people.

THE PREMIER: Surely not.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The choice of electors was restricted there.

THE PREMIER: That might be; but the point was, such hon. members received no pay.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They had been offered payment, and had rejected it.

THE PREMIER: They had refused to pass the Bill for many years; and at last the Lower House had sent up a Bill for payment of members of the Assembly only, which had been passed. In New South Wales and Queensland, members of the nominated Upper Houses had no honorarium, notwithstanding that each member of the Lower House received £300 a year. In New Zealand, members of the Lower House were paid considerably more than those of the Council; and the only colony on the continent in which members of the Upper House were paid was South Australia.

MR. A. FORREST: All this had been discussed before.

THE PREMIER: It was necessary to point out that there was nothing exceptional or contrary to precedent in the course taken by this House in suggesting in the Bill that hon. members of another place should receive a smaller honorarium than those of the Assembly; and therefore it could not fairly be said we wished in any way to reflect on or to insult members of the Legislative Council, as had been alleged. The reasons given for desiring that both Houses be paid alike could be discussed on their merits, without any feeling on the part of anyone. It was said payment would open the door wider to persons without means, and that the Upper House, which represented property, would have a larger number of men of education, intelligence, and ability willing to enter its portals. During the debates on this Bill in both Houses, he had frequently noticed that this desire to throw open the portals in order to obtain men of ability and knowledge had been pretty well threshed out. Judging from speeches made last evening in another

place, and from some of the speeches previously made in this Chamber, one might come to the conclusion that all knowledge and virtue were possessed by people who had very little money.

MR. VOSPER: That was by way of compensation.

THE PREMIER: And that people who had means had not half so much knowledge as people possessing little wealth. Apparently it was a bad thing to be wealthy.

MR. A. FORREST: Surely not.

THE PREMIER: Doubtless, in the opinion of politicians, it was much better to be poor than to have property. However, most people in this colony had been the architects of their own fortunes: few had inherited great wealth. Those who were somewhat affluent now had known the time when they were poor; so it was not obvious that there was much to be said against men who possessed knowledge, ability, carefulness, and thrift, and had acquired a small competence. So far from making their possessor a worse man, such acquisitions made him better: more careful, because he had known the meaning of care; more regardful of the rights of others, because he knew he had rights of his own. The argument to which he had referred might be carried too far, by saying the whole object in view in the Bill was to make it so very easy to get these intelligent people who were absolutely without means, to manage the affairs of the country. It was extraordinary the admiration politicians had for the poor.

MR. A. FORREST: Politicians wanted votes.

THE PREMIER: There seemed to be a desire to have the poor made members of the Council and also of the Assembly. This was quite unusual; and he would like to know how much these great talkers who had so much to say for the poor, really did for the poor. Often they did very little for the poor out of their own pockets, though they were overflowing with good-will towards them, and desired to give them every political advantage.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How did the Premier know these "talkers" did very little for the poor?

THE PREMIER: These persons very often fared sumptuously themselves, but

were not so very regardful of the poor men they talked about on the platform. For persons who were so desirous of looking after people who had nothing, he had coined a name, and he called them "radicals or democrats in kid gloves." He was of opinion that if the poor had no votes, so much would not be heard of opening the doors of Parliament to them. Of course, we would never cease hearing about the claims of these people, but it was time the matter was dealt with in a practical way. Everyone knew he was not in favour of the introduction of this Bill during the present session; because he could not see what reason there was for passing such a measure without giving the people an opportunity of expressing their opinion, seeing the general election was so close at hand. But the majority of the House thought differently, and as he had said before, the matter had been dealt with more from the House point of view than a party point of view. The only reason that occurred to him why the measure should be passed at the present time, rather than defer it till after the general election, was that it seemed to be so much desired by all the people of the colony, especially by "masses" of the people, as they were termed, that the system should come into force at once and be applicable to the present Houses. He could say justly and logically that if the members of the Legislative Assembly were not to be paid for this session, it was impossible for anyone to argue or suggest a reason why the Legislative Council should be paid until the members of the latter had also been before the electors. How could it be said that the members of the Legislative Assembly were voting money for themselves, unless the same were also said of the Legislative Council, who were voting money for themselves, not to-day or to-morrow, but in three or four months' time?

MR. GEORGE: The members of the Legislative Council had no fear of a dissolution.

THE PREMIER: The members of the Legislative Council had not anything to fear, and though they were not voting for pay now, they were certainly voting for pay at a future date for themselves; and for those members to say they were in favour of payment of members beginning next session, could only mean that they

themselves were going to be paid from the commencement of the next session. But why, under the circumstances, should payment of members commence with the opening of next session for the Assembly? If the members of the Legislative Assembly could not be paid before they had been before the electors, then the members of the Council ought not to be paid until they also had been before the electors. That argument was indisputable, and he should very much like to hear what hon. members in another place thought of the matter from this point of view.

MR. VOSPER: Insert a clause in the Bill to that effect.

THE PREMIER: That could not be done, because the Assembly had now only to deal with the suggestions of the Legislative Council. He could not understand the logic or the common sense of the position of the Council, the members of which desired to be paid next May, without going before the electors, and paid for four or five years ahead, while the members of the Assembly, which was about to be dissolved, had not to be paid until the new Legislature had been elected. What had the Legislative Assembly elections to do with the Legislative Council? If a Message had been sent from the other House saying that members here wanted the same honorarium as had to be received by members of the Legislative Assembly—if that had been all the Message sent, it could have been understood, and it would have been competent for the Assembly to say they would reduce the honorarium of the Legislative Assembly to the same as that proposed for the Council. But the Council did not give the Assembly that opportunity, but had said they wanted £200 a year. So far as the Government were concerned, they were willing to concede, or at any rate to fall in with the request of the Legislative Council as to the amount of payment. He regretted for many reasons that this request had been made, and would have been much more pleased if members of the Legislative Council had said they did not want any honorarium at all. But the Government were not prepared to agree to the other proposal, because it would not be just for members of the Legislative Council to insist on the members of the Assembly not being paid, when the members of the Council were

voting money for their own payment. He proposed, therefore, that the Committee agree to increase the honorarium as asked by the members of the Legislative Council, and that the other amendment be not agreed to. In dealing with this matter he had been placed in a somewhat difficult position, something like his friend the Colonial Secretary, in another place, though perhaps the latter gentleman was more awkwardly situated, as he was totally opposed to payment of members. He (the Premier) had been opposed to the system in the past, but he recognised that the people of the colony desired payment of members, and therefore he was not going to set his opinion against that of the whole of the people of Western Australia. But while he thought the matter might have been deferred, and that the system was a mistake, he hoped that hon. members would admit he had carried out the promise made some time ago in regard to this matter. He congratulated hon. members, and the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth), on the fact that the debate had not been disfigured by party conflict—a fact that not only this House but the whole of the colony might be congratulated on. He might tell hon. members and the Speaker, that in his pocket he had a Message from His Excellency the Administrator, authorising an appropriation for the proposed increase in the honorarium for the members of the Legislative Council. He moved that suggestion No. 1 be agreed to.

MR. JAMES said he had objected before to this Bill being made retrospective, but the House by a strong majority had decided that the measure should be carried into operation as it now stood. He did not propose to beat the air, but he agreed entirely with what had been said by the Premier, when the right hon. gentleman pointed to inconsistency on the part of the Upper House in voting payment for themselves, while objecting to give it to the present Legislative Assembly. But the objection did not apply after all to the Upper House, but to the members of the Legislative Assembly; and whatever the members of the Legislative Council might do in the way of paying themselves, the members of the Legislative Assembly ought not to follow the same course.

MR. ILLINGWORTH expressed regret that the Premier had not seen his way clear to accept the suggestion made on a former occasion in regard to uniformity in the amount of payment in each House. Members of the Legislative Assembly were now placed in a somewhat humiliating position in being compelled almost to accept a suggestion from another place.

THE PREMIER: The Legislative Assembly did not then know what the views of the Council were.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier's explanation was worthy of consideration, and seeing that both Houses were interested in the Bill, there was some reason why the Council should have been consulted. It would have been better, however, to consult out of the House rather than in it. Members knew how he had very persistently resisted the acceptance of any suggestion of the Legislative Council under this section of the Constitution; and he had argued, and still argued, that the only way to prevent evil arising out of that section was to steadily resist any amendments made under it. This particular amendment was of a different character from those against which he had previously argued, and although he would rather the present position had not arisen, yet he admitted the objection did not lie to the same extent in this particular matter as in an ordinary money Bill. This was not in the strictest sense a simple money Bill, and therefore he supported the Premier. He had always felt some difficulty about the retrospective operation of the Bill, while recognising there was a good deal to be said on both sides. One member of the other House, who entered it only a few days ago, had joined in this Message apparently, asking this House to increase the amount that was to be paid to members of the Legislative Council, and to make the payment begin in May next. He (Mr. Illingworth) would rather that, as members of the present Parliament had laboured so long without payment, they should continue to do so during the present session. He recognised, however, that on this point he was in a minority, but hoped that those members who yielded to the Council in asking for amendments in a money Bill would not regard this as a precedent for the future.

Question put and passed, MR. JAMES dissenting.

THE PREMIER moved that suggestion No. 2 (increasing £100 to £200 for the Council) be agreed to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH called the attention of the Premier to the fact that the wording of the Message from the Legislative Council appeared to be entirely out of order. The power given in the Constitution Act to the Council was that they might make suggestions, but this Message requested that amendments should be made in the Bill.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE: Last evening, when this Message was received, he was under the same impression as that stated by the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth), that it must be a suggestion by the Council and not a request for an amendment. But he had since looked into the Constitution Act, and found that the Council might request an amendment. This was exactly what they had done.

Question put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved that, in accordance with the request contained in Suggestion No. 2, an amendment should be made in Clause 2 of the Bill, line 5, by striking out the word "one" and inserting "two" in lieu.

Question put and passed, and the amendment made accordingly.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

#### APPROPRIATION MESSAGE.

THE PREMIER (at this stage) presented a Message from the Administrator, recommending that the amount of payment provided in the Bill for members of the Legislative Council be increased from £100 to £200, and that an additional appropriation be made accordingly.

Message transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Bill had been amended in accordance with their Suggestion No. 2, but that this House was unable to agree to the Council's Suggestion No. 1.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

##### IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous day.

LANDS AND SURVEYS DEPARTMENT  
(Commissioner, Hon. G. Throssell).



Vote—*Lands and Surveys*, £50,341 4s. 8d.:

MR. PIESSE, referring to item 37, "Salary of Land Agent at Katanning, £440," said it was proposed to increase the salary of this officer to £440; and although he (Mr. Piesse) did not make it a practice to deal with questions of salary as a private member, yet in this instance the officer had been responsible for the largest amount of land settlement that had taken place in any part of the colony during its history. The settlement which had resulted from the energetic way in which this officer dealt with the question of Crown lands along the Great Southern Railway was well known to most members of this House, and showed that this officer was giving great attention to his work. Of course we expected from officers in responsible positions that they would devote their whole time and energy to their important duties; but it would be some encouragement to officers in such positions if this House further recognised their ability and energy by making some addition to the salary beyond what was now proposed, or by giving some honorarium for the work which had been carried out so well. Those who knew the history of land settlement along the Great Southern Railway would remember what was done by the company which formerly owned the railway and a great area of land in that district; and it would be remembered that only some 80,000 acres of that land was taken up for settlement during the company's administration, as compared with the immense amount of settlement that had taken place during the three and a half years following under the control of the Government. This great difference would show how beneficial had been the change resulting, and how great was the amount of settlement taking place in that district. The enormous amount of settlement this year alone, which meant the taking up of 25,000 acres of land under conditional purchase, showed how successful had been the efforts of this officer in promoting settlement. He had to keep an open house, practically, for the people who came to the district for the purpose of selecting land; and this officer's hospitality was proverbial, and had done much in assisting the settlement of land in that

district. It was to be hoped the Minister would take into consideration the question of some further increase of the officer's salary, in the Supplementary Estimates or from some other source. If the salary could not be increased, there should be a further honorarium or some district allowance.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: This officer deserved all that had been said of him by the last speaker. He (the Commissioner) would note the remarks of the hon. member, with a view to action. So highly did he think of the officer that he had made a special recommendation in his favour; and he hoped if there were Supplementary Estimates to carry out the hon. member's desire for the officer had given satisfaction, not only to Parliament but to the general public.

MR. GEORGE, referring to item "Surveyor (three months at 35s. per day £161)," asked why the distinction between the remuneration of this and other officers.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: This was a surveyor at Beag Bay, at 35s. per diem. In the course of a few days his service would cease.

MR. GEORGE, referring to item "Incidental Expenses, £1,000," said last year the estimate was £4,500, and the expenditure £3,900. For several years past the expenditure had never been less than £3,000. Why was the item so palpably understated this year?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The two following items "Advertising" and "Travelling Expenses," which were now shown separately had previously been classed under "Incidental"; hence the difference.

MR. GEORGE, referring to item "Margaret River Caves Improvement £250," asked who was the owner of the caves, and what were the improvements?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The caves belonged to the Government, and all the land along the coast where caves were known to exist had been reserved. The caves, beautiful spots, were worthy of maintenance and improvement. A caretaker had been appointed at £50 a year, and the caves would be explored by an officer, and improvements made, such as the erection of gates. From information gathered

appeared that these caves were equal, if not superior, to the far-famed Jenolan Caves in New South Wales.

Vote put and passed.

*Fisheries, £2,192 10s. :*

MR. GEORGE, referring to item "Chief Inspector, £300," said many people at Mandurah had had their livelihood interfered with by the department. Petitions and appeals had been of no avail. Some two years ago, the Murray river had been closed, ostensibly to leave the fish undisturbed in the spawning season, and it had been understood that probably in a year's time the waters would be reopened. To the consternation of the fishermen, a notice had been gazetted absolutely closing these waters for ever, and thus the livelihood of 30 or 40 men had been taken away. In a moribund Parliament it was useless to appeal to a sense of right and sympathy, but he moved that the item be reduced by £25.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The hon. member's remarks were somewhat too rough and extravagant. While there had been complaints from certain quarters, it was clear the department must be guided by officers appointed to give consideration to the subject. Whether these waters should be closed was a vexed question. He (the Commissioner) was not an authority on fishing, and must therefore be guided by experts. He denied *in toto* that no consideration had been shown to complainants. All representations coming to him, whether from rich or poor, and especially from the poor, were fully considered. It had been alleged that fish factories had been closed in consequence of the prohibition of fishing in certain waters, and one man had made a claim on the Government for £2,000 compensation. That was going too far. Canning factories, whether for fish, fruit, or jam, could only exist where there was abundance of raw material; and as fish was now retailed at four times the price ruling a few years ago, owing to the increased population, it was now impossible for canning factories to flourish. If the hon. member could establish the fact that there had been want of consideration for any man, the wrong would be righted; but an officer who tried to please everybody would find himself in the posi-

tion of the old man in the fable, who finally carried his own donkey.

MR. KINGSMILL: The explanation of the Minister was absolutely correct, and the gentleman in question, in enclosing the Mandurah estuary, was only acting on the advice of his predecessor, who had a salary of £1,100 a year or thereabouts. This was a question not only of importance to the Murray, but of national importance, and it was necessary the estuaries should be preserved as breeding grounds; because if it were possible to erect canning factories, these should be as far as possible on the open coast, and he believed it was proposed that when the fish had spawned the estuary should be opened. In Mr. Gale they had a conscientious man who did his duty well, and the salary proposed was only what this gentleman had previously been getting as District Inspector at Sharks Bay. It was only within the last few years that the Government had recognised the importance of fish as a food supply for the colony, and it was absolutely necessary the estuaries should be protected. His regret was that the Government had not seen their way to still further increase the salary of this officer.

MR. GEORGE: Protecting the estuaries in the spawning season was not objected to, but it was felt cruel that this estuary two years ago should have been closed presumably for twelve months, and had remained closed ever since. If the estuary had to be closed permanently, then the people there would give up their vocation; but, under the circumstances, they had all made shift for the time being, only to find now that their livelihood was absolutely taken away from them. No doubt the Commissioner had to be guided by his officers, but when there was an interference with the livelihood of thirty or forty people, it became a serious matter. The motion had been submitted with no idea of attacking the Chief Inspector, but simply as a protest, though, of course, he would not press the matter to a division.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS explained that last year Mr. Gale was retrenched and brought from Sharks Bay, where he was receiving £300 a year with house accommodation, and had his salary reduced to £200 a year.

It was now thought that Mr. Gale ought to be paid £300, and hence the item on the Estimates. Mention had been made that some launches should be provided, but while such provision should be made in justice to the inspectors, money was not available, and the Chief Inspector was not to blame. This question was, as the member for Pilbarra had said, one of national importance; and if regulations were made, there ought to be means for carrying them out, which would necessitate at least a couple of launches. As to the closing of various waters, only the other day it was proposed to throw open the estuary at Bunbury, but a protest came from the townspeople, which very properly was listened to.

MR. KINGSMILL: The omission of launches rendered the Fishing Act and Regulations a farce, because it was absolutely ridiculous to expect inspectors to arrest men if there were absolutely no means of making arrests. These fishing boats, especially in the neighbourhood of Safety Bay, where there was schnapper fishing, could out sail the inspector's craft every time.

THE PREMIER: It would cost a lot of money to keep launches going.

MR. KINGSMILL: If there had to be a Fisheries Department, that department must be made perfect or it would be just as well to have none at all. The department at present was absolutely starved.

MR. GEORGE: There was no possibility of carrying the amendment, and therefore he asked leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. GEORGE, referring to item, "Inspector, Bunbury, £87 10s.," said that on looking up the Estimates last year he found a start was made with £25 a year, and apparently £12 10s. had been spent. This year the item was £87 10s., and he would ask what necessity there was for an inspector, and who the person was?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: A new inspector had been appointed at Bunbury and at Albany. In Albany the amount spent last year was £22 6s., whereas this year it was £150; but the planting of oysters and the opening of the fisheries rendered it necessary to have a properly qualified officer. He was assured by Mr. Gale, that the work there was going forward satisfac-

torily, and it was hoped that oysters would soon be sent to the Perth market, some samples having already been sent up from Albany.

MR. KINGSMILL: Were the Government taking any means for distributing the oysters? He was informed that the oysters were simply dying from their own weight, the accumulation going on so largely that the oysters underneath were perishing from the pressure of those on the top.

THE PREMIER: What was the Inspector about?

MR. KINGSMILL: The Inspector had only been appointed a month or two.

At 6-30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. WALLACE, referring to item 12, "Acclimatisation of fish, birds, and animals, £250," asked whether the Minister had noticed a statement in the report of the president of the Acclimatisation Society, suggesting that the £250 granted to this society annually was insufficient for effective work to be done. If there was any one thing of which this colony had to be proud, it was the action of the Government, assisted by Mr. Hackett, in making grants of money for beautifying the various parts of Perth. In reference to the work of the Acclimatisation Society and the importing of fish and some new species of birds and animals, perhaps the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) would refer to this part of the report; but if the Government considered it wise to give any sum in aid of the work carried on by this society, they should increase the grant, because no one would be inclined to complain of money granted to help the work of this society. The report of Mr. Le Scœuf pointed to the increase of animals and birds in the Zoological Gardens; and he (Mr. Wallace) called attention to the fact that this society had been distributing the dingo to persons outside the Zoological Gardens. Seeing that a resolution was passed in Parliament a short time ago for increase of the reward for destruction of wild dogs, it did seem strange that this society should actually be distributing dingoes to various persons. Regarding the work of the

society, it was gratifying to see they were able to produce so splendid a report of work done, with so meagre a grant of money from Parliament. He wished to express his appreciation of the efforts of the Government and this society in endeavouring to make Perth an attractive place, and he hoped that Parliament would in future be more liberal in granting money in this direction, not forgetting the valuable work done by the Acclimatisation Society.

MR. KINGSMILL: One was inclined to borrow a phrase used last evening by the member for Yalgoo (Mr. Wallace), and ask the Government if they could really spare this £250. To grant so small a sum to a society of this character was absolutely ridiculous, and the marvel was that the society was able to do anything effectual with so small a grant. In a letter accompanying the annual report, the president made an appeal to the Government to double the amount to the society. That would be fair enough. Referring to the acclimatisation of fish, we had now plenty of reservoirs in the colony suitable for this purpose, and we would soon have the magnificent sheet of water at Mundaring which might with advantage be stocked; but how the society could do anything with this meagre sum he could not see. The acclimatisation of fish was not a scientific fad, but there was money in it—money for the colony. The acclimatisation of fish had been carried out profitably in other colonies, and it might be so here. The Premier would perhaps spare some money for this purpose by economising from grants to exhibitions.

MR. GEORGE: What about the dingoes?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Though in accord with the remarks of previous speakers, he remembered no special appeals for an increased grant, and with the small allowance of £250, good results would doubtless be obtained in the Avon Valley and elsewhere. That dingoes were distributed from the Zoological Gardens was hardly credible; however, he would make inquiries, and take action if necessary.

MR. PHILLIPS: There was great mortality among native West Australian animals at the Zoo, which pointed to some mismanagement.

MR. LOCKE: The acclimatisation grant was well spent, and should be doubled next year.

MR. KINGSMILL: Would the Premier give some assurance that the grant would be increased?

MR. A. FORREST: There was £14,000 to provide for payment of members.

THE PREMIER: As various societies throughout Australia assisted the local society, at small expense, the amount went a long way. Considering the society had been in existence for years, some result should be visible. Whether attempts to acclimatise fish had succeeded, there was no evidence to show. How long did the ova take to mature?

MR. KINGSMILL: Four or five years.

THE PREMIER: Well, there were no fish in our rivers. Without depreciating the efforts of the societies concerned, it must be said they had not been very successful, or the results were not apparent. It was regrettable there was so great a mortality in the Zoo.

MR. PHILLIPS: Amongst animals indigenous to this colony.

THE PREMIER: These could be replaced. He had just learned that all the opossums in the Eastern Districts had died, which was news indeed.

MR. KINGSMILL: The failure to acclimatise river fish was easily explained. In any other country the ova would have some attention paid them, but the funds at the disposal of the local society would not permit of this.

THE PREMIER: Where was the Inspector of Fisheries?

MR. KINGSMILL: The matter was under the control of the Acclimatisation Committee, who could not afford to employ men to attend to the fish in their early stages of development; consequently the young fish were killed by their natural enemies.

THE PREMIER: A caretaker could not prevent that.

MR. KINGSMILL: There should be a proper hatchery.

THE PREMIER: There was one on the Canning.

MR. KINGSMILL: It could not be properly conducted for £250. According to the report, salmon trout and brown trout were now to be found in the Canning; but the Premier wanted results too soon, seeing that fish were slow-

growing animals. The grant should be doubled.

MR. PHILLIPS : During the last five years opossums, tamars, and other varieties of wild animals, had died out from some unknown disease, which should be inquired into. The mortality at the Zoological Gardens ought not to be so great as it was at present, and the matter needed inquiry.

MR. GEORGE : There had been only about half a dozen deaths at the Zoological Gardens, and those were from unavoidable causes.

MR. KINGSMILL, referring to item, "Incidental expenses (including travelling expenses), £200" said he had always given the Commissioner of Crown Lands credit for a good deal of ingenuity, but how to make this amount cover incidental expenses of the Fisheries Department would tax the hon. gentleman's ingenuity to the utmost. Three or four inspectors had been appointed, and proper boats would cost £50 or £60 each, while the travelling expenses of the unfortunate Chief Inspector of Stock would have to come out of the balance. Last year this item was confined to travelling expenses, and amounted to £267 3s., and supposing the same amount were spent in travelling this year, a sum of £32 17s. would be left for the purchase of four boats for the four inspectors.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : The remarks of hon. members showed that if any mistake had been made by the department, it was on the side of economy. No doubt £200 was a small sum, and very little would be left after paying travelling expenses. This matter had been brought under his notice several times by Mr. Gale, and it was only on the score of economy that the amount had not been made larger. Should, however, occasion arise he would be prepared, if not to "overrun the constable," to apply for moneys to carry on the work. It was satisfactory that members were complaining of the small amounts on the Estimates, and it was not the first time similar remarks had been made during the last few years.

Vote put and passed.

*Woods and Forests, £2,790 :*

MR. GEORGE, referring to the item, "Acting Conservator of Forests, £275," asked when it was proposed to make a

permanent appointment, and how it was that the salary, which was formerly £475, was this year only £275.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : A good number of applications had been received from this and the other colonies for the position of Conservator of Forests, in the place of the late Mr. Ednie Brown, but the Government had not regarded these applications as suitable, and were waiting till a good man presented himself worthy of the salary and importance of the position. Meanwhile, the man who had been in the position under the late Conservator of Forests had been acting Conservator, and though he was a worthy man, there was no intention of his taking up the appointment permanently. The work, the foundations of which were laid by the late Conservator, was being carried on well and intelligently.

MR. GEORGE : The salary which appeared on the Estimates was hardly likely to attract any person possessing the merits a Conservator of Forests should possess, and there was not much possibility of getting a good man, if proper provision were not made for payment.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : It was not expected to get a first-class man for the amount which appeared on the Estimates, but when the right man came along, the question of salary would be considered.

MR. A. FORREST : This ought to be one of the most important posts in the colony, and it was quite right to hold it over until a thoroughly qualified man presented himself. It would be a very easy matter, if an acceptable person were appointed, to pay him a salary and afterwards ask Parliament to confirm the expenditure.

MR. GEORGE : Were the Government taking any steps at present to obtain a Conservator of Forests ?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : The Government had not advertised, but the number of applications that had already come in showed it was well-known the position was open.

MR. GEORGE asked for some explanation of the item "Advertising of Western Australian timber, £75."

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS explained that the £75 pro-

vided for the advertising of timbers was not necessarily spent in advertising through newspapers, but the usual practice was for samples of timber from this colony to be sent to other countries in return for samples received from other countries.

Vote put and passed.

Stock, £4,424 8s. 4d. :

MR. WALLACE referred to the niggardly manner in which the Stock Department was being run by the present Minister. The Chief Inspector received a salary of only £350 a year.

MR. A. FORREST: With £200 more for allowances.

MR. WALLACE: This officer had been in the service of the colony for at least 14 years, to his knowledge, and was not only a capable officer, but his salary had not been increased during the last four years, at any rate. For instances of the ill effects caused by this niggardly administration, there was the rabbit scare, which the Minister had treated lightly, and the Premier backed him up by saying he was not an alarmist in regard to the rabbit invasion. The actual cost of working this department up to last year was £1,756, and the Chief Inspector stated in his report that this was a satisfactory result. But it should not be satisfactory to the members of this House, and the Minister should be stirred up to a better appreciation of the importance of the Stock Department. There were other inspectors holding responsible positions in various parts of the colony, receiving only small salaries for the work done; one at Albany receiving £50, one at Coolgardie receiving £50, and several more at various places receiving smaller sums. These were responsible positions, and it would be shameful to pass these Estimates without comment. The item of "Consulting Veterinary Surgeon, £250," was for an office that should be abolished, for there was practically no reason why the Government veterinary surgeon stationed at Fremantle should not do this work, and travel to any point where his services might be required as a consulting veterinary surgeon. It was to be regretted the Minister was let down so lightly in regard to the excessive economy he was practising; and if officers in various parts of the colony

were not encouraged to work as they ought to do, the result must be injurious to the interests of the colony.

MR. MORAN: There was no use in trying to improve the condition of the settlers in the colony, by providing assistance from the Agricultural Bank and in other ways, unless we took proper precautions to protect the stock of the settlers from disease and pests. The colony had been guilty of gross neglect in regard to the incursion of rabbits, and this House would be guilty if no allusion were made to the items for the Stock Department in these Estimates. This Department should be made of great use in helping the settlers, especially in the South-West Division of the colony, where mixed farming with summer growth of feed might be carried on beneficially to all concerned, so that this colony might be able to compete with the Eastern colonies in some degree in the raising of stock. We might well spare some money which would otherwise be spent on public buildings, and devote a portion to making this Stock Department more useful to the colony. In many parts of the colony we were spending too much in public buildings, which were non-productive, while this was a department which would be very productive in assisting mixed farming. Referring to the veterinary surgeon at Coolgardie (Mr. Nathan), that officer had a grievance, for he was receiving only £50 a year from the Government; and when a rabbit inspector was appointed recently, although Mr. Nathan was an applicant for the office and an enthusiast in his work, his claim was not recognised, and a stranger was appointed over his head. This vote for the Stock Department should be kept well up to the mark.

MR. A. FORREST, referring also to the item "Inspector of Stock at Coolgardie," said this officer had been in the service many years, and was one of the most competent officers in the department. The new position of inspector of rabbits was given away the other day at a fairly high salary, but Mr. Nathan, although applying, did not obtain it. This officer received a retaining fee of £50 from the Government, and he inspected all the stock that came from Kimberley districts to Coolgardie. He certainly took great care in assisting

those interested in the stock by pointing out places where water could be obtained, and assisting them in other ways. It was to be regretted that when a good appointment was recently available, the claim of this officer was not sufficiently recognised. He (Mr. Forrest) had spoken to the Minister on the matter, and the Minister said he would see what could be done. This officer was a scientific man and respected in the trade in which he was engaged, and he certainly deserved a substantial increase in his salary.

MR. PHILLIPS: It was well known the Government were seriously to blame in not dealing with the rabbit question more energetically, and in these Estimates only a miserable sum was put down for contending against this dreadful scourge, which was approaching the settled districts every day, and meant the practical extinction of pastoral and agricultural pursuits in those parts of colony where the rabbits might become numerous. We wanted live men to deal with this serious subject.

MR. PLESSE: Now that the attention of the Minister had been drawn to this serious question of the rabbit invasion, the Minister might inform the Committee what the Government intended to do on this question; and if the information were not satisfactory to hon. members, they would have an opportunity of expressing their opinions. When this matter was before the Government two or three years ago, the present Minister expressed his earnest intention of dealing with it in a proper manner. But the reports that were now reaching us showed that the rabbits were making serious incursions into the settled districts, and those who knew the great damage that would be caused to the pastoral and agricultural industries from this pest would agree there was no more serious question that had to be faced in this colony. Those persons who had had experience of this pest in other parts of Australia, and knew the great losses inflicted and the great expenditure incurred without bringing about any practical result, would agree that we had now an opportunity of dealing with this question in its early stage, and stringent measures were required which might involve much expenditure; but whatever might be the cost, it would be money well spent,

because if this pest were taken in its early stage, the result would be probably to save many thousands of pounds in the future.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: As to the necessity of making complete provision for coping with rabbits, he was altogether at one with the last speaker. It was the duty of hon. members to advise the Government what to do, and how to do it. Possibly natives of the colony, who were unfamiliar with the pest, were not fully seized of the position. Some contended that rabbits could not be acclimatised here. Thirty years ago a colony of rabbits had been established by an old settler, but they had died out, and similar attempts in the neighbourhood of Perth and Fremantle had been unsuccessful. However, there was evidence that rabbits had crossed the eastern border of the colony to the older settled parts. That the incursion was dangerous might be inferred from the example of Broken Hill, the climate of which was somewhat similar to that in our Eastern goldfields. All reports from inspectors had been published in the Press, and hon. members knew as much about the rabbits as he. Some experts condemned and others recommended fencing. Mr. White, who had had considerable experience, advised the immediate construction of 1,000 miles of fencing at a cost of £80,000 or £100,000. —[MR. MORAN: That was cheap]—but if fencing were the remedy, we should have fenced five or six years ago, when the former Minister recommended that £20,000 or £30,000 be thus spent. Now it was almost too late. A practical man whom he (the Commissioner) had consulted had written in reply: "Do not attempt to waste money in fencing off these rabbits." He had heard that afternoon of instances of men discovering isolated colonies of rabbits and carrying the young for several miles, then liberating them in some suitable place, with the deliberate intention of encouraging the pest. A fence would be powerless against such people, and would, moreover, require an army of inspectors to make it effective. Expert bushmen, accompanied by natives with guns, dogs, and poison, would be sent out to exterminate the rabbit colonies wherever found. The present inspector had been

highly recommended by Mr. Conolly, the member for Dundas, and upon inquiry it has been found the inspector had had large experience of rabbits in the other colonies, and was a thorough bushman. After all, there was danger of running to extremes. Though he (the Commissioner) had offered a reward of a sovereign, it was only to-day that he had succeeded in obtaining the skin of a rabbit killed in this colony; and though a reward of 2s. 6d. per scalp had been offered in the district within 50 miles of Dundas, no claimants had yet appeared, and there was no evidence to show that rabbits existed in large numbers. Hon. members complained of the small sum of money available for extermination, but if more were required it would be forthcoming. The member for Yalgoo (Mr. Wallace) had referred to the niggardliness with which this department was conducted. True, the inspector was poorly paid at £350, but even that represented an advance of £50 on his previous salary, and the officer had a fixed travelling allowance of £200, though the cost of travelling was less than in years past. All old West Australians owed a debt of gratitude to this officer, who, when the country was overrun with scab, exterminated the disease and absolved the settlers from the tax of 30s. per thousand sheep. In view of the remarks of hon. members, if the Estimates next year came down with increases, he hoped they would pass without unfavourable comment.

MR. MITCHELL: There was danger in disturbing a rabbit colony without first fencing it in to prevent the escape of any of the occupants to other localities.

MR. WALLACE: The Minister, as he had done last year, attempted to excuse niggardliness by stating he would have spent larger amounts if he had had power. The Premier had apparently cut down the Estimates. For the last two sessions he (Mr. Wallace) had been expecting reform in the administration of the Brands Act. The registration of brands should be controlled by the Chief Inspector of Stock, and some distinctive system of registration, together with periodical publication of lists, as in New South Wales and Queensland, introduced. But the Minister, unfortunately, paid little attention to any branch of his department, excepting the lands. In

future these excuses should cease. Later on members should insist on striking out unnecessary items.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The last speaker made a sensible suggestion when he said the Brands Act should be administered by the Stock Department. Inquiries would be made, and action taken if possible. He (the Commissioner) did not admire his own administration of his department outside the Land Act, and he was well aware of deficiencies; nevertheless, he did his best, and he thanked hon. members for criticism.

MR. MORAN: One of the strongest things in the way of brands which had come under his notice was a case in which the letter "U," with certain characteristics, had been adapted with slight variations by other than the original owner. To allow such proceedings was simply offering a premium on cattle "duffing," and he instanced another case where the letter "H" had been manipulated in a similar way.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Government had had this question of a new Brands Bill under consideration for many years past. In 1894 an excellent Bill was introduced by the then Attorney General, providing that each person should adopt a brand of three letters; keeping in view the fact that in Queensland the brand consisted of two letters and a numeral, and in South Australia of two numerals and a letter. But when the Bill was introduced, there was a great deal of opposition on the part of stock-owners, and the measure had to be withdrawn by the Government. Settlers objected to the destruction of a brand with which their stock had been associated for a large number of years, and among the brands at present in use were pictures of spectacles, scissors, and wine glasses, and it had been found impossible for the department or the Registrar General to publish all the brands in the way they ought to be published. Since 1894 the question had been considered by the Government, and he had been asked by the Premier to take charge of a Bill, but that measure had to be dropped owing to pressure of business. There was no doubt a new Act was wanted very badly indeed, but this, like a Dog Act Amendment Bill, was one of those questions



which raised so much debate as to make it almost impossible to pass a measure. No doubt these matters ought to be in charge of the Stock Department, and as he had said, there was a good Bill prepared ready to bring before the House at any time, and when that measure did come up for discussion, he hoped hon. members would put aside their prejudices and deal with it on common ground.

MR. GEORGE asked what were the special circumstances which necessitated an inspector at Esperance for two months at the rate of £260 per annum, the amount on the Estimates under this head being £43 6s. 8d.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The inspector was retrenched, and it was felt he had not been quite justly treated.

MR. GEORGE: If this item referred to an officer who had been retrenched, how was it that he did not appear on last year's Estimates?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The officer was retrenched, and allowed a year to elapse before he made any appeal. This man did not receive the consideration which was afterwards shown to retrenched officers, and on the case being represented, one of these officers received two months' salary and another officer got three months' salary; and the only way of providing for this expenditure was in this year's Estimates, although the money had been paid some months ago.

MR. GEORGE: But these officers did not appear on the Estimates of the year before last. How long was it since these individuals left the service?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The officer mentioned in the item referred to left the service in 1898.

MR. GEORGE: But the item did not appear on the Estimates 1898-9.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: These officers had been retrenched rather suddenly, and it was considered reasonable to allow them some compensation for loss of office.

MR. GEORGE: No doubt there was a perfect explanation, but the Committee ought to be in possession of it.

MR. MITCHELL: When these officers were retrenched there was a deficit in the exchequer, and no compensation could be given until that deficit had been wiped off.

MR. GEORGE: The question was not whether these men should have had the money, but whether the items of expenditure should not have appeared on the Estimates. Surely this £43 had not been held back for three years.

MR. MORAN: These men were no doubt dismissed in 1898, before the Estimates were made up.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: These men were retrenched in 1898, and did not appear on the Estimates 1898-9 because they had been dismissed.

MR. GEORGE: In 1898-9, £65 was provided as three months' salary for these men referred to, and yet the Committee were now asked to provide another sum.

MR. MITCHELL: No doubt the £65 was for the work done while these men were actually in the service, whereas the present item was compensation for retrenchment.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: These officers' services were dispensed with three months after the commencement of the financial year 1898-9, and they received three months' salary up to the time they were retrenched. Two years afterwards they made application to the Government for compensation, and hence this sum had been placed on the Estimates.

MR. GEORGE: The Mount Magnet item was similar, and there was nothing in the Estimates of 1898 or 1899 to explain it. If the claims of these two officers for compensation had been held over until someone spoke strongly enough for them, this might account for the two years which had elapsed since they were said to have left the service.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The only explanation he could give was that which had been supplied to him; but if the hon. member was not satisfied with it, he would endeavour to get further information as soon as possible.

MR. GEORGE: Could the Estimates be postponed, constitutionally, until that information was forthcoming?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member might take the Minister's assurance that an explanation would be obtained and be given to him.

MR. GEORGE: But if the explanation was not satisfactory when given, he would have no means of bringing up the matter again in the House.

**THE CHAIRMAN :** It could be done only by reporting progress.

**MR. GEORGE :** Then he would move that progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

**MR. GEORGE :** Then we were simply bringing it to a deadlock. [From this point, the member for the Murray went on to speak in reference to the two items, from 9.25 until 9.35 o'clock.]

**THE PREMIER** (having entered the Chamber in the meantime) said he knew all about these two cases of Inspector Williams and Inspector McPherson. When retrenchment generally was going on in 1898, these two officers were retrenched without notice, or scarcely any. It had been the custom in the Works Department to give notice three or six months before dispensing with officers whose services were intended to be cut off; but in the case of these two officers it was not practicable to give them notice, and their services were dispensed with almost without notice. Both these men had been in the service for some years as inspectors, and were in the Victoria District when scab was prevalent there. The member for the Murchison (Mr. Mitchell) and the member for the Irwin (Mr. Phillips) would know all about the circumstances. Both these inspectors did good work for the colony in clearing the Victoria District of scab, and it was largely due to their assistance that this trouble was removed. They were retrenched, and were allowed payment for one month's service in lieu of longer notice. They appealed on several occasions, saying they had not been well treated and had not received the same notice as other public servants, also that the sum allowed them was a scanty recognition of their past services. Eventually the Government agreed that they had received only scanty consideration, and the Government approved of two months' salary being paid to one officer and three months' to the other in lieu of notice. That was the whole case, and even with this payment these officers were not well treated.

**MR. GEORGE :** But their names did not appear on the Estimates for 1898.

**THE PREMIER :** They were certainly employed in 1898, and if their names did not appear, they were included in a lump sum. We could not go into that now.

**MR. GEORGE :** These items should appear in the Estimates for the year 1898, but were not there.

**MR. MITCHELL :** These two officers had worked themselves practically out of employment as inspectors in the Victoria District, by eradicating the scab there, and in doing that they did more good than all the talk in this House on the subject, and certainly they did more good than the member for the Murray (Mr. George) had done by saying so much about these items—a lot of talk about nothing.

**MR. HUTCHINSON**, referring to item "Inspector, Geraldton, £25," asked why had this amount been reduced one-half?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS :** The Chief Inspector of Stock had signified that the expenditure of £50 was no longer necessary.

**MR. WALLACE**, referring to "Consulting Veterinary Surgeon," said this officer was not required. He moved that the item be struck out.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS :** This officer, prior to his appointment, had been feed to treat the horses of the Public Works, the Police, and other public departments, and had given satisfaction. He now received this salary in lieu of fees, and his services were still available to all the departments mentioned.

**MR. WALLACE :** Then the greater part of the expenditure should be charged to the departments benefited; and as the quarantine regulations were not now being strictly enforced, the services of Mr. Weir were available for this purpose. From a resident near Gingiu he (Mr. Wallace) had heard that the officer receiving this salary had visited that district, and the department had had to send another veterinary surgeon to the same place to repair his bungles.

**MR. A. FORREST :** The hon. member should not damage a man's character in that way. Who gave that information?

**MR. WALLACE** declined to say who. This inspector was unnecessary, and had been appointed by family influence. If the Minister had made inquiries of the Chief Inspector of Stock, he would be informed the officer was not required.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS :** It was true the Chief Inspector was not favourably impressed with the

Consulting Veterinary Surgeon, but nevertheless the latter had a good reputation. Possibly it was a case of doctors disagreeing. Great pressure had been brought to bear on the department to appoint this officer by residents in the country districts, who maintained that he was the only man who could successfully treat rickets in cattle. There was nothing but good to be said of Mr. Weir, the veterinary surgeon at Fremantle, who had won the confidence of the people, and who held a Scotch diploma; but the services of the consulting surgeon were also necessary. If the Chief Inspector of Stock had thought otherwise, it would have been his duty to report accordingly to the Minister. No such intimation had been received.

MR. WALLACE: This appointment was the result of undue influence. The officer had been appointed for Bunbury, to satisfy the clamour of the people of that place, and had been permitted to remove from Bunbury to Perth.

MR. A. FORREST: For many years he had known the officer mentioned, and had never heard a word against him in his professional capacity. The remarks made to-night would seriously injure the officer's reputation, and it was most unjustifiable for hon. members to use their positions for such a purpose. The hon. member (Mr. Wallace) might have said the officer was not required, but it was wrong and improper to attack a man's reputation, and practically to ruin him by the publication of the parliamentary report in the Press. He (Mr. Forrest) had never brought pressure to bear in connection with the appointment, and if the Chief Inspector of Stock disapproved of the officer he should have reported accordingly to the Minister. He (Mr. Forrest) considered it very unlikely that the Chief Inspector, without reporting to the Minister, would complain to a member of Parliament.

MR. WALLACE: The Minister had admitted the Chief Inspector said the officer was unnecessary.

MR. MONGER: If the hon. member (Mr. Wallace) were inspired by the Chief Inspector of Stock, that was a standing disgrace to the Chief Inspector, who should have gone direct to the Minister. Did the hon. member represent the Stock Department? If not, why should he

unnecessarily throw stones at respected officials? If he (Mr. Wallace) knew this gentleman, he would not have used the arguments he had used, and it was to be hoped hon. members would allow Ministers and heads of departments to deal with such questions in future. The information supplied to the hon. member must have emanated from some person who was unworthy of fulfilling his duty in the public service, and it was to be hoped the members would yet learn from whom the member for Yalgoo had gleaned the information on which he challenged this item.

MR. GEORGE: The question was as to whether there was any necessity for this office, and the qualifications of the gentleman might be left out of consideration. As to the explanation of the Minister that the £200 was for a veterinary surgeon for the police horses, it was curious the amount did not appear under the vote for the Police Department.

MR. MORAN: The gentleman in question was a thoroughly well-trained veterinary surgeon, but there appeared to be a little difference between him and the untrained Chief Inspector of Stock. It would be a pity to strike out the item, notwithstanding the earnestness of the member for Yalgoo, who knew as much about stock as perhaps the member for York (Mr. Monger) did. The member for Yalgoo was possibly overrating some little stories he had heard, but, at any rate, he must be thanked for evoking some discussion on the vote.

MR. LOCKE: If any items in this vote had to be struck out, they should be those of the Chief Inspector of Stock and his chief clerk. With the exception of Mr. Weir in Fremantle, and the consulting veterinary surgeon in Perth, he (Mr. Locke) did not know there was any other veterinary surgeon either in the Government employment or practising privately; and if the country could do without the veterinary surgeons, we could do without the department. It would appear as if the department had been created to make a position for a man who desired to get rid of the only qualified veterinary surgeon in the service. There was some difference between the qualified man of the department and the man not qualified, and it was to be regretted these differences should have come up in an inspired way

in the Committee. If the Chief Inspector had any fault to find with his officers, he should have gone straight to his Minister, because the round-about way which had been adopted was not creditable, and might be most damaging to one of the ablest men who had ever been in the colony in this particular profession. He (Mr. Locke) had known this officer personally as a man who had proved satisfactory to the settlers wherever he had practised.

MR. WALLACE : It took a brave man to carry out his duties in the House, because immediately a member attacked a vote, the other members attacked that member. He had said nothing against the character of the veterinary surgeon, except what he (Mr. Wallace) believed to be true. The Chief Inspector of Stock did not give him the information which he had used to-night, and yet the member for York (Mr. Monger) and others got up and attacked the Chief Inspector.

MR. MONGER : That was not so.

MR. WALLACE : The member for York said that the Chief Inspector had been giving information to members of the House.

MR. MONGER : No.

MR. WALLACE said he was pleased to hear from the Minister that the Chief Inspector of Stock had told him the appointment had not his approval and that the officer was not necessary. In moving to strike out the item, he had done so as a protest against positions being made for men by influence. This appointment was made for Bunbury through the influence of certain persons, and on the top of that this officer was permitted to transfer his office from Bunbury to Perth. One was inclined to think this department was not wanted at all, for the Government had permitted a lot of tick cattle to be removed from the quarantine grounds at Fremantle contrary to the reports of inspectors.

MR. GEORGE asked for an explanation from the Minister in regard to the last statement, that tick cattle had been removed from the quarantine grounds at Fremantle to other parts of the colony.

MR. MITCHELL : The statement had been denied in this House a few nights ago.

MR. GEORGE said he wanted a denial from the Minister.

MR. DARLOT : It would be regrettable to cut off the salary of the Consulting Veterinary Surgeon, who was one of the most highly educated men in his profession in Australasia. His father was a practical veterinary surgeon in Victoria of very high standing, and the son had been brought up under his care, and had taken degrees at the University. His opinion as a veterinary surgeon in this colony was always sought first when any serious necessity arose; and if he were retained in his present position only for the purpose of being available to racehorse owners and to those carrying on the dairying business in the Perth district, that in itself would be a protection and an advantage to the colony, for it was painful to contemplate the results which might ensue from the population being brought up on milk supplied from cattle afflicted with tuberculosis. The department was to be congratulated in having the services of such a highly qualified veterinary surgeon for so small a sum of money, and he hoped the amendment to strike out the item would be withdrawn. This department was really starved for money, although it was one of the greatest importance. It was commonly remarked that the world was running short of cattle, caused by the spread of rinderpest in India, China, South Africa, and Mexico. Fortunately Australia was not affected, and it was the only great cattle-producing country that was free from this terrible disease. And if we did not keep professional men of high standing within call, the results to the colony might be disastrous. Too much economy had not protected us in this way previously, as some hon. members would remember by the results when cattle became infected with pleuro-pneumonia.

Amendment (to strike out the item) put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Agriculture, £8,978 :

MR. GEORGE : Speaking generally on this vote, attention should be called to a matter affecting orchardists in the colony, and which had been especially brought under his notice by constituents in the Murray district during the last few days, consequent on certain action which

had been taken by the Bureau of Agriculture. There was considerable difference of opinion with regard to the value of this department, and of various of its officers, but on these points he was not in a position to speak as an authority. There were orchardists in the Murray District who had for years been endeavouring to carry out all the instructions and directions given by the Bureau of Agriculture for keeping their orchards free from disease. Mr. J. M. Cox, who had been carrying on an orchard near Pinjarra for nearly five years, and had gone to considerable expense in complying with the directions of the Bureau of Agriculture for keeping down insect pests, now found that he had been told his trees had got the San José scale, and he must exterminate the whole of his trees or go through the hydro-cyanic process, which was absolutely beyond his means. The statement made by Mr. Cox, and confirmed by other orchardists in the district, was that the action of the authorities of the Bureau of Agriculture was absolutely cruel; for, after carrying out all the directions which had been given, the orchardists were reduced to the necessity of telling the officers that they might come in and do what they liked, as the orchardists could do no more. Mr. Cox was urged to root up his fruit trees or go to the expense of a process which was beyond his means. The department had been sending first one expert and then another to the orchards in various districts, and were carrying this system to such an excess that soon the people in the colony would scarcely be allowed to breathe or to live without the permission of some official expert. A conference had been called in reference to the Contagious Diseases (Bees) Act, but the bee-keepers were not in sympathy with the officers of the Bureau, knowing that the latter were not practical men. Certain insect pests were common to fruit trees and to the native trees and bushes, and therefore could not be permanently eradicated. Did the Government consider they were getting their money's worth from this Bureau, or was it not better to allow free importation of fruit, scale or no scale, rather than destroy men's hopes and homes by insisting on compulsory eradication?

MR. DARLOT: If, as the last speaker stated, the Bureau had pointed out insect pests indigenous to the bush, a service had been done to the orchardist, who would thus be prevented from wasting time.

MR. GEORGE: If the pests were common in the bush, why destroy the orchard?

MR. DARLOT: It was apparent such orchard would be of no value, and but for the Bureau the orchardist might have ruined himself in the vain attempt to make it successful.

MR. GEORGE: But, disease or no disease, the district would nevertheless grow fruit. When practical orchardists complained of the Bureau's operations, there must be some cause.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Rightly enough, the hon. member liked to bring forward complaints from his constituents. On the other hand, letters had been received from vigneron and orchardists, thanking the department for the compulsory regulations for eradicating insect pests. Naturally, some complained, but it was no longer an accepted principle that a man could do what he liked with his own. With the particular case to which the hon. member referred, he (the Commissioner) sympathised; but the department and its officers were doing their level best to help growers by giving the necessary ingredients for treatment of pests, and by practical help in applying the same. Moreover, the time was approaching when fruit would be grown on a large scale for export, and we must consider the case of the man who had spent thousands of pounds to keep a clean orchard, and whose orchard might be endangered by the carelessness of one neglectful cultivator. It was impossible to put compulsory conditions into force without complaints, and these were not the first complaints which had been received, and he did not suppose they would be the last. But in this department from the secretary downwards, all were moved with the desire to keep our orchards and vineyards clean, and the result had been satisfactory to the whole of the country. He had long since ceased to think that the money was ill-spent on this department, because, having been brought daily into contact with its administration, he knew there

was no money more wisely used for the benefit of Western Australia. There were hundreds of thousands of pounds invested in the industry, and the whole expense of the department, after necessary deductions, did not reach more than £6,000; and he invited criticism because he desired to hear any reasonable complaints, which would at once receive attention. In the meantime it was his duty to defend the department when it was unfairly attacked.

MR. GEORGE: Care had been taken on his part not to attack any person.

MR. WALLACE: It was pleasant to hear that the officers of this department were giving their time to the work, but after the terrible display at the Royal Agricultural Show a week ago, one could only come to the conclusion that the efforts of the officers had not received the reward sought. The dairy expert, according to his report, was a sort of travelling showman, who went round with some appliances for manufacturing and preparing butter. The expert reported that there was one butter factory in the colony, but that factory was not working owing to scarcity of cream. Under the circumstances, if the Government were consistent, they should, as in the case of public batteries, remove this butter factory to some other district; and if this department had to be carried on with similar results, the people were not deserving of the encouragement the Government desired to give them. It should be the aim of the Government to educate the people and to use language which the people could understand; but there was an item in the Estimates for the eradication of noxious weeds, and only that day he had read a newspaper cutting giving a copy of a statement which had been sent out as a warning to settlers. The newspaper extract was as follows:—

1. *Parentucellia* (or *Bartsia*) *latifolia*, an introduced weed already known in the colonies, and a native of Southern Europe, Great Britain, South-West Asia, and North Africa. It is suspected of being deleterious to stock, but proof is required. Appears to be becoming very prevalent in this and other colonies. 2. *Echium plantagineum*, "Purple Echium," a species of Viper's Bugloss, indigenous in south of Europe, and extending to the Channel Islands and Cornwall. *Echium vulgare*, "Common Viper's Bugloss," used to be employed as a medicine to purify the blood, and in cases of snakebite. No. 1 appears to be causing some trouble to cultivators, and

should be destroyed before it has a chance to scatter its plentiful seed. The best remedy will be, in the case of both plants, to pull them up early and burn them.

It was open to question how many settlers knew what this language meant. Would the Minister inform the Committee why the Noxious Weeds Act had not been enforced, and why the Government had allowed these weeds to grow up all along the railway lines?

MR. GEORGE, referring to item 9, "Viticultural and Horticultural Expert and Chief Inspector under the Insect Pests Act, £450," said this expert might probably be able to suggest some remedy less drastic than the absolute destroying of an orchard that had taken years to bring to its present condition, and it would be desirable that he should try to provide some remedy.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: As to an orchardist being in danger of being ruined by the action of the department, if such a case were brought under his notice as Minister, showing that a poor man had spent his all and had not the means of complying with the instructions of the Agricultural Department, he (the Minister) would endeavour to see that the requirements of the department were carried out in such a manner that an orchardist should not be ruined. No man should be ruined by the action of the department.

MR. GEORGE: The Minister had given an assurance which was welcome; and seeing that Parliament was desirous of settling people on the land, it was also desirable this department should provide appliances and experts to go into the orchards and apply remedies, at a minimum of expense to the owners of the orchards. Where the hydro-cyanic process was necessary, the greatest expense was in obtaining the apparatus, and the department might provide this instead of requiring the orchardist to do it. He (Mr. George) would try to hold the Minister to his promise.

MR. MITCHELL, referring to item 10, "Dairy Expert, £300," asked whether this expert resided in the colony and what were his duties. There were places where butter was made besides the districts south of Perth; and so far as the Northern districts were concerned, he had never heard of such an officer visiting

those parts. Surely this officer, and another expert of the same kind who was provided for in the Estimates, should have time to spare for visiting districts they had not yet inspected, particularly when there was not a creamery in the whole colony requiring their attention.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS:** The dairy expert did reside in the colony, and his duties were to go about the various districts and particularly to agricultural shows, and instruct the people in the management of bees and the making of butter. He was also an expert in cattle, and had been instrumental in starting butter factories and creameries in Victoria in the early days of that industry. He was doing good work in this colony, although the progress appeared to be slow.

**MR. DARLOT:** Having known this gentleman for seventeen years, he could say that seventeen years ago this expert, Mr. Crawford, did not know how to bail up a milking cow on the Murchison. He was called a "dairy expert" here, but it was desirable that the Minister should lay on the table papers showing that this gentleman was really an expert in dairying. This gentleman lived on the Murchison many years ago; he left the colony and went to Ireland, then to England; there saw the Agent General for Western Australia, and came back to Eucla as the head of an exploring party, having somewhere learned a little about exploring. The way in which he got his knowledge of exploring was that he tracked up a perambulator 25 miles on the Murchison. The history of this expert did not go to prove that he assisted in educating people in Victoria in the early days to understand the dairying business; for after this gentleman's trip to Eucla, he went to Victoria, and he (Mr. Darlot) was told that this gentleman established there a dairy farm. A Mr. Alexander Crawford, who was then a Victorian expert, died; and since then he (Mr. Darlot) found out and saw the gentleman on the show ground the other day, and then became aware that he was the same Mr. Alexander Crawford who had learned his first experience of bailing up a milking cow on the Murchison by pulling off the hoof.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS:** The department, hon. members

might rest assured, would not pass an amount of £300 a year without making inquiries. Though not setting up as Solomons, responsible officers were not fools. This officer had excellent credentials from Victoria, and had proved to be a thoroughly good man. He went about the country giving instruction regarding bees, butter, and poultry, and he (the Commissioner) had confidence in his work. It was hardly fair to put a man in a pillory who was in a responsible position. The hon. member (Mr. Darlot) talked about what the officer knew seventeen years ago? What was the hon. member seventeen years ago? The secretary of the department was one of the most intelligent men in the Government service, and, though sometimes accused of extravagance, had never undertaken anything in which he had not thoroughly succeeded. The department was now being carried on more cheaply than before the secretary had been appointed, and hon. members would live to see that full value had been obtained for expenditure in the shape of knowledge gained throughout the country by agriculturists and viticulturists. It was right the department should take credit for such results.

**MR. GREGORY:** Ten or twelve years ago he had met a Mr. Crawford in Victoria, who was then a Government dairy expert, and was considered a very capable man.

**MR. MITCHELL:** That man had since died.

**MR. GREGORY:** Apparently there had been a resurrection, for, according to the member for the DeGrey, the Mr. Crawford now under consideration was posing as being identical with the dead man.

**MR. DARLOT** said he had not made any such statement.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The statement made was very nearly to that effect.

**MR. GREGORY:** From the hon. member's remarks, it appeared that some fraud had been perpetrated on the department. Though nothing could be more pleasing to the House than to find a dairy expert at work educating the farmers of the colony, this officer must be too modest, because little was heard about his operations. The Government ought to send this officer into the country,

so that it might be known what work he was carrying out.

MR. DABLOT said he was quite serious in his remarks about this gentleman. Alexander Crawford was the dairy expert in Victoria, and the man he knew under that name in Victoria was not the dairy expert in Western Australia.

Vote put and passed.

*Agricultural Bank*, £1,420—agreed to.

This completed the votes for the department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### DESPATCHES FROM SECRETARY OF STATE.

Despatches from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Administrator were read as follow:—

(1.) In acknowledgment of Address of Sympathy from the Legislative Assembly to the Queen, on the death of H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha.

(2.) In acknowledgment of Address passed by the two Houses of Legislature, praying that Western Australia might be admitted as an original State of the Commonwealth of Australia.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at seven minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 15th November, 1900.

Paper presented—Land Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Post and Telegraph Act Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, third reading—Customs Duties under Commonwealth Bill, second reading, in Committee, third reading—Brown Hill Loop Kalgoolie-Gnamballa Lake Railway Bill, first reading—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, in Committee, Clause 2 (interpretation of "worker," etc.), progress—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

Prayers.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: By-laws of Municipality of Fremantle.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

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

#### POST AND TELEGRAPH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the second reading, said: This is merely a formal Bill, rendered necessary by our having entered the Commonwealth. For some considerable time past people have had the privilege of attaching revenue stamps or postage stamps to letters or receipts. It is necessary now that the law enabling that to be done, in Section 23 of the Act of 1893, should be repealed. Persons will no longer be able to use revenue stamps for the purpose of postage stamps, nor postage stamps for the purpose of revenue stamps. This Bill will not be carried out strictly until such time as the Federal Government take over the Post Office; but it is desirable that people shall be prepared for the change when it comes. Members will understand that if this section were not repealed, there would be a considerable loss to the revenue from the sale of revenue stamps, which is undesirable; for favourably disposed as we may be towards the Commonwealth, we want all the revenue we can get for this colony; therefore it is absolutely necessary that change shall be made. I move the second reading of the Bill.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West): This affords me an opportunity to bring under the notice of the Government a matter which has been brought under my notice many times, and by which the Government are losing hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds annually. This is the only colony in which it is allowable for parties to a document to be allowed to stamp their own document. In the other colonies this has to be done by an officer, some time prior to the execution of the document, or within a month after its execution. I am satisfied, and my experience leads me to come to the conclusion, that every document which should be stamped is not