

MR. GEORGE said he had been chairman of the Sanitary Committee of the City Council for a few weeks, and it was then stated by the Superintendent of the Sanitary Department that at the hospital no distinction was made between the excreta and the refuse of fever patients and those of other patients. In private houses the pans used by fever patients were kept quite separate. He would like an assurance from the Minister that the refuse from fever patients would be dealt with in such a way as to cause no danger of infection.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The Public Works Department had nothing to do with the disposal of refuse. All the department had to do was to provide the drains, and the Hospital Board had to deal with the refuse. The department met the board in every possible way.

MR. QUINLAN: This matter had been before the Hospital Board, who had made special provision for removing the excreta of typhoid patients. The surface drain from the hospital might tend to contaminate the river, but the fact remained that refuse equally as bad from hotels and restaurants, found its way into the main drain.

Item passed.

Item—Perth Hospital, new wing, operating theatre, and laundry:

MR. WILSON asked for some explanation of the expenditure of £10,000 on this work.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This was the expenditure on the new wing of the hospital.

MR. WILSON: There were decided objections to increasing hospital accommodation on the present site. The hospital for contagious and infectious diseases should be removed outside the city, leaving the present building to serve as an accident ward. When smallpox broke out in the hospital a few years ago, the disease spread all through the streets at the foot of the hill.

Item passed.

Other items passed, and the vote agreed to.

Vote—Public Buildings, £553,664:

Item—Additions and repairs to existing Buildings:

MR. LEAKE asked for an explanation of the fact that votes under this head

amounting to about £40,000 were scattered up and down the Estimates.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The votes for additions and repairs to a great many buildings throughout the country had this year been split up instead of put down in one amount. "A stitch in time saves nine," and much money had been saved by attending to the repair of existing buildings. If the money was not required, it would not be expended.

Progress reported and leave given to sit again.

EXTRA SITTING DAY.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until half-past two o'clock on the following day. The House would sit until six o'clock in the evening.

Put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:45 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 17th December, 1897.

Petition: Collie Coal-mine Leasing—Annual Estimates: Public Works votes further considered; Division (Estimates concluded)—Motion: Gratuity to Widow of Dr. Barnett—Motion: Annuity to Widow of Sir F. N. Broome—Lavly Broome Annuity Bill: first reading—Sharks Bay Pearlshell Fishery Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Bunbury Racecourse Railway Bill: first reading—Collie Quarry Railway Bill: first reading—Kalgoorlie-Gnamballa Lake and Boulder Townsite Loop Railways Bill: first reading—Paper presented—Orders of the Day and Sudan Alterations (Speaker's remarks)—Police Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—COLLIE COAL-MINE
LEASING.

HON. H. W. VENN presented a petition from residents and others connected with the Collie coalfield district and Bunbury, requesting that tenders be invited immediately for leasing the Government coal-mine at the Collie.

Petition received, read, and ordered to be printed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

Consideration resumed in Committee of Supply.

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

Vote—*Public Buildings*, £553,664 :

Item—Wyndham police buildings :

MR. GEORGE said £958 7s. 11d. had already been expended on the work, and it was proposed to spend £3,500 more, making £4,500. He thought there were only one white man, one Chinese cook, and a blackfellow up at Wyndham. He wanted to know what the police station buildings were required for.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This £3,500 was required to build a police station.

MR. SIMPSON: More money was being spent in Wyndham and that part of the colony than in any other part.

THE PREMIER said he did not think so.

MR. SIMPSON: The population was very small, and the revenue received from the district was also small. The Government proposed to spend large amounts in this district.

THE PREMIER: Name any item.

MR. SIMPSON: From one end of the Estimates to the other there were items for this district. The amount to be expended was out of proportion to any other part of the colony. This was a part of the colony which did not pay us.

THE PREMIER: A lot of cattle had been shipped from there.

MR. SIMPSON: The expenditure in this district was unwarranted.

THE PREMIER: Name the items.

MR. SIMPSON said he saw no hope of any return from this district.

THE PREMIER: This item seemed large, but would the hon. member name any other item.

MR. GEORGE: There was an item just above, of £300 for police temporary quarters.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: These police buildings had been inquired into and were found to be necessary. The work had been put off for two years, and now the Government were forced to do the work.

THE PREMIER: Let hon. members point out the large expenditure for this district, except the items for providing facilities for stock. At Derby a good deal of money had been spent, but a good deal of money had been obtained from there for the sale of Crown lands.

MR. SIMPSON said he spoke about Wyndham.

THE PREMIER said he did not think there would be any large expenditure at Wyndham. There was a wharf there. Any work in the North cost more than down here. There was a good wharf for the shipment of cattle, and he had shown the other evening that during three years 12,000 head of cattle had been shipped there. There was a small, paltry building of wood for the Resident Magistrate, the police, and customs official. So long as the Government owned that country they must protect those who settled there. The natives were troublesome there. Hon. members knew the trouble the natives gave over the telegraph lines in breaking the insulators. The Government had to keep police at Wyndham, and we must house them. These murderous natives escaped, and the Government must provide a place to keep them secure in. The expenditure in this district could not go on.

MR. VOSPER: The blacks would be exterminated soon.

THE PREMIER said he did not think so. The blacks were hardy fellows in that part of the country. There must be a post office, he supposed, at Wyndham. Unless the Government were prepared to abandon this country to the natives, the Government must do what was necessary. There was a goldfield up there, although it was not prospering just now; not because there was no gold, but because people did not like living in the tropics. It was nonsense to think that the Government were trying to favour this place. The Government believed in giving facilities to all parts of the country.

MR. GEORGE: On the Estimates there were Wyndham road, £260; Wyndham new jetty, £6,000; Wyndham gaol,

£2,200; Wyndham town water supply, £1,200; and another amount for the water supply for cattle.

MR. SIMPSON: The Premier implied that he (Mr. Simpson) had no right to make a statement about this matter. There was an item of £1,200 for the Wyndham town water supply. Where was the town of Wyndham? It would take a black tracker to find the town. When hon. members looked at all the items for Wyndham they would see that these were enormous. A large part of the expenditure was a political sop.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was an honest man.

MR. SIMPSON said he tried to be, and he thought the Premier was honest.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had implied that he (the Premier) was dishonest, when the hon. member talked about a political sop.

HON. H. W. VENN: There was no occasion to import any heat into this question. He knew something about Wyndham. The expenditure for this district looked large, but he did not think it could be said to be a political sop. There was no better territory in Western Australia than that in the Wyndham district as a cattle-producing country.

MR. VOSPER: And none more empty.

HON. H. W. VENN: It always would be sparsely populated. Queensland stock breeders had told him that the country in the Wyndham district was better than the best Barcoo country. In the near future large freezing works would have to be erected in that district.

MR. SIMPSON: Could not private enterprise do that?

HON. H. W. VENN: Probably the work would be carried out by private enterprise, and then Wyndham would become a place for the export of frozen meat. The expenditure for the jetty and for providing water supply were absolutely essential and justifiable. He would not express an opinion as to the advisability of building a police station. Wyndham was one of the last places on earth a man should live in, and if he did live there he should be at least comfortably housed, as there was nothing to make life pleasant. It was like living under a burning glass. The quarters for the resident magistrate had for a long time been miserable. The amount on

the Estimates seemed large, but the expenditure was absolutely justifiable. In the cause of humanity the House should not object to provide reasonable and decent quarters for the Government servants who had to reside there.

THE PREMIER said he was obliged to the member for Wellington (Mr. Venn) for the remarks he had made. There was no occasion for any display of feeling. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) had complained of his interjections, but the hon. member had distinctly stated that the Government, in building a police station or some other work, were actuated by a desire to give a sop to a constituency. This was not a nice thing to say, either of an individual or a Government. If he had said anything offensive to the hon. member, he apologised; but it was not justifiable to say that the Government were trying to buy votes.

MR. SIMPSON said he could assure the Premier that the term had been used to nearly every Premier in the colonies.

THE PREMIER: It was not a nice term to use.

MR. SIMPSON said he was glad to hear the right hon. gentleman say that in this case at any rate the term was not justified. The sum expended on the district in question, namely £19,000 odd, was very large, although there were features in connection with it, perhaps, which rendered necessary a larger expenditure than usual. As, however, the member for the district was not in his place, he would defer his remarks.

MR. GEORGE said he had reckoned up the various items, and they came to £18,785.

MR. VOSPER: The goldfields members had a right to complain when this vast expenditure was made in out-of-the-way and very seldom heard of districts, and the two districts represented by the member for North Coolgardie and himself were only down on the Estimates for about £17,000. His district had a population of 8,000 people, which had been increased since the Kanowna rush, and yet only £9,200 was down on the Estimates for his electorate.

THE PREMIER: What about the Loan Estimates?

MR. VOSPER said whatever they got out of loans they would have to replace sooner or later. The amount on the

Estimates for his electorate was only about 25s. per head of the population, whereas it was proposed to spend £190 per head on the population at Wyndham, assuming that that place had a population of one hundred, which the member for Wellington seemed to doubt.

THE PREMIER : It was encouraging an industry.

MR. VOSPER : An industry which gave nothing to the revenue.

THE PREMIER : It contributed £30,000 or £40,000 a year to the revenue.

MR. VOSPER : The goldfields contributed very heavily to the customs and far more towards the prosperity of the colony than Wyndham. The land sales in his electorate amounted to £25 per head of the entire population, out of which they only got back about a shilling in the £. It meant that the Government were giving the men a heavy subsidy for living at Wyndham.

MR. GREGORY said he was obliged to the member for North-East Coolgardie for having drawn attention to the matter, as the few requests he had made on behalf of his constituency had been refused. He considered the sum proposed to be expended on the Wyndham police buildings too large, and that the item should be considerably reduced, as it was in excess of the amount proposed to be spent on districts which contributed larger sums to the revenue. He thought it was most disgraceful to have allowed the blacks to be treated as they had been.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : The police buildings at Wyndham were not suitable to the climate, and unless better accommodation were provided for the men they would not stay. As the member for Wellington had pointed out, Wyndham was a most objectionable place to live in, and it was for that reason that we had to spend so much on buildings. A temporary seven-roomed house with a detached kitchen had been made of wood and iron in Perth, and erected up there for the sub-inspector. This was an expensive and not a satisfactory plan, and it was now proposed in every instance to have the material taken there and the building constructed on the spot. The item of £3,500 was for police buildings to accommodate the staff. The men had lived for a number of years in tents. The present system would be more

economical, as it certainly would be more comfortable. The work would be commenced in earnest as soon as the railway reached the spot, which would probably be in April, when it would be very much cheaper to get the material and carry out the work than it would be now.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : There were a number of places in his electorate carrying a much greater population than Wyndham, which did not appear on the Estimates at all. Why was Wyndham specially selected for such favours?

THE PREMIER : Wyndham contributed £40,000 to the revenue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said it was so unjust that he was surprised that the Director of Public Works could do such a thing. If this item were passed, it would stop half a dozen different places from having anything.

MR. GEORGE asked of what material the Wyndham police buildings were to be constructed.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : Wood and iron.

MR. GEORGE said the accommodation proposed to be provided was much in excess of what was required.

MR. MONGER : If members knew the hardships the residents at Wyndham had to undergo, they would not object to this item. He would support it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved, as an amendment, that the item, Wyndham Police buildings, £3,500, be reduced by £2,000.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : The reason for the erection of these buildings had already been given. The work had been placed on the Estimates for several years; the first amount having been £8,000, and it was put down no less than four times before he recommended that it should be expended. The member for Wellington (Mr. Venn) would bear him out in this. At the time this year's statement was made up four-fifths of the work had been completed; and if the committee cut down the item it would place the Government in an awkward position. The work had been carried over from last year, and some portions of it even from the year before. It was only after repeated requests on his part that it was cut down to the present amount.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Last year the Government asked the House for £800 for a gaol at Wyndham, and now it transpired that contracts had been accepted for an amount of £3,500. The House would never have voted that sum ; and it was unjust and unfair that the Government should, time after time, ask a certain sum of money for a particular work, and then report that it had cost four or five times more than the estimate to build it. The same system obtained all through the Estimates, and it was not a fair way of dealing with the public funds. In this case £800 had been asked for ; £958 7s. 11d. had been spent without authority, and, in the face of this, the committee was told that a tender had been let for £3,500.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS : It was a good thing that the hon. member had drawn attention to this matter, and he was fully in accord with him ; but there was no one more responsible than members themselves for this sort of thing. Possibly in this instance no individual member was responsible, but in many instances they were. It frequently happened that a member asked for a certain building in his district, and stated that it would cost so much—perhaps £500 or £1,000—and it was subsequently found that it could not be erected for the money. Now, however, the department were discountenancing that sort of thing and, if such a request were made, an estimate was prepared, so that we knew exactly what the building would cost, and the amount was placed upon the Estimates. In this year's Estimates, in every instance where such a sum as £1,000 was asked for and the building was expected to cost £3,000, the balance was stated in another column headed " Probable cost of work when completed." He could assure hon. members that the old system had been discontinued. In this year's Estimates he hoped to see cleared up all the work that had been hanging over for some years past ; and that next year would be started with a clean sheet, and that they would have something to go upon to enable them to carry out public works at a cost as near as possible to the amount estimated.

MR. A. FORREST : It was strange that hon. members should pick this item out of so many. If hon. members would

only read the papers, they would find there was no protection at Wyndham for the white inhabitants. The town was surrounded by wild blacks, and, like the town of Derby, must be either handed over to the blacks or held with a strong hand. There was a large industry being carried on in the Kimberley district, and it was absolutely necessary that aboriginal prisoners should be held in safe keeping.

MR. SIMPSON : Was it not absurd to erect all these public buildings for a white population of 39 males and 17 females, as appeared from last year's return ? The amount expended per head of population on this town was altogether unprecedented in the colony.

MR. A. FORREST : It made no difference if there were only five white people there.

MR. SIMPSON : It would be better to take the five away from the district and pay them pensions. There was no doubt the place was going back, and that the country was losing money by it every year.

MR. A. FORREST : The returns of stock would show that the district was not going back.

MR. LEAKE : The amendment would have his support, particularly after the observations of the Director of Public Works, who claimed as an excuse for the existence of this vote that members themselves were responsible for such excesses, because they went to Ministers and demanded that buildings should be erected ; and so the expenditure was incurred without the authority of Parliament. This policy would go on till Parliament protested against it. The item in question was a glaring instance of the incompetence of the department. Last year, £800 was voted ; £958 was expended ; and now the Minister came down with a request for £3,500 more. It was lamentable to think that the departmental estimate should be less than 25 per cent. of the actual cost. As to the Minister's statement that to reduce this item would put the Government in a difficulty, he (Mr. Leake) was delighted to hear it ; for until the Government got into difficulties they would not learn anything. It would be better to put the Government in a difficulty, than to put the country in a difficulty.

THE PREMIER : Hon. members must recollect—of course he did not expect that the two hon. members opposite who had

spoken on this item would recollect anything—that six months of the year had gone; that, in the ordinary course, these Estimates would have been considered by Parliament months ago.

MR. LEAKE: The same thing was done last year.

THE PREMIER: There had been such a hurry-scurry and such pressure of business during the last few years that a great deal of money had to be spent without Parliamentary sanction. But hitherto the House had not censured the Government, or even tried to censure them. Ministers knew the theory of Responsible Government as well as the hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). The amount spent seemed to be large; but the cost of building in the North-Western districts was very great; and the lack of proper gaol accommodation at Wyndham had been a public scandal for years past. The police had been employed all over the district in catching natives—murderers and cattle-stealers—who had found scarcely any difficulty in escaping in a day or two from the wretched lock-up which had hitherto done duty at Wyndham. Several times he had ordered all the prisoners there to be brought down to Rottneest for safe keeping; but for all that the escapes from Wyndham still continued. These were dangerous natives, altogether unlike those with whom hon. gentlemen from the eastern colonies were familiar. They lived on good things; for there was any quantity of fish and game all over the country. They were all fine, upstanding men; and no bushman, however experienced he might be, would think of travelling through that country without taking the greatest care to guard against surprises. They speared the police, they killed travellers, and thousands of pounds had been expended in recapturing escapees for the second and third time. The sum in question seemed a lot of money for a lock-up, but the course taken by the department would be cheaper in the end, in spite of the high wages and the heavy cost of building material in the tropics. He agreed with his colleague (the Director of Public Works) that it was a bad thing to spend money without authority, but for the future they would be more likely to keep within bounds.

MR. GEORGE: As another instance of how estimates grew, he might mention the lunatic asylum, which it was first intended to erect at Fremantle, but which was now to be built at Whitby Falls. This building figured on the Estimates for several years at £30,000; then the cost rose to £35,000, and last year it was stated at some £55,000. In another part of this year's Estimates there appeared an item of £8,000 for the purchase of a site for it. Therefore the building would cost £63,000, if the estimate were not exceeded.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would be exceeded.

MR. GEORGE: Probably it would. The Government had no right to ask this House to give them a white-washing for spending money without authority, if they knew in their own minds that the amounts they had asked for were insufficient. He hoped the Director of Public Works would purge his department as it ought to be purged, and would let his officers see that they could not hoodwink him.

HON. H. W. VENN: The Director of Public Works had several times this afternoon emphasised the word "inherited."

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Only once.

HON. H. W. VENN: The hon. gentleman had promised that in future the probable cost of buildings would appear on the Estimates in a column set apart for the purpose. The column in question, however, was no new device, but had been introduced when he (Mr. Venn) was Commissioner of Railways, in compliance with a strong recommendation from the Engineer-in-Chief and himself, with the intention of carrying out the very course desired by the hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). In the case of all large works the probable future expenditure did appear in that column; and as for the smaller items, hon. members did not take exception to them. At no time since the first Forrest Government was formed had there been any desire to hoodwink Parliament in regard to future expenditure; but it was the larger items for which this special column was intended, and not for amounts like £1,000.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: In remarks previously made,

he had no intention whatever of reflecting on the administration of the hon. member (Mr. Venn), who would recollect the difficulties he had to face when he held office, and who also knew the difficulties which still confronted the Minister in charge of this department.

HON. H. W. VENN: That was so.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: There was no desire to cast any reflections on the administration of the hon. member. The work had been carried on under very great difficulties during the last few years; and he hoped the column spoken of would enable hon. members to see the cost of the buildings and not a fictitious cost, to which he objected most seriously.

Amendment (Mr. Illingworth's) put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	9
Noes	15

Majority against 6

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Gregory	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Kenny	Mr. Higham
Mr. Lenke	Mr. Holmes
Mr. Oats	Mr. Hubble
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Vosper	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Wallace	Mr. Monger
Mr. Illingworth (Teller).	Mr. Oldham
	Mr. Peenefather
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Sholl
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. A. Forrest (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived, and the item passed.

Item—Mount Magnet Court-house:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS moved, as an amendment, that the word "court-house" be struck out and "post-office" inserted in lieu thereof.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked for some reason for the amendment.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: It was found that the erection of the court-house could stand over until next year, and that a post-office, for which tenders had been invited some time ago, was more necessary.

Amendment put and passed, and the item agreed to.

Item—Port Hedland post-office:

MR. LEAKE: The Estimates provided for an expenditure in this locality of £24,000 or £25,000, which seemed a huge sum of money.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This was the port for the gold-fields of Pilbarra and Marble Bar.

MR. LEAKE: This was £25,000 for the representative of the DeGrey (Mr. Hooley).

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This was a post office to replace that destroyed by fire at Bularri. The new post office was intended to be the post office for the district. The work had not yet been commenced.

MR. KINGSMILL: Port Hedland must be considered, not in itself, but as the port for the Pilbarra goldfield, to which district it belonged more than to the DeGrey. In order to cope with the willy-willies in the district, it was necessary the building should be durable and of strong construction.

Item passed.

Item—Ten portable post-offices for the Goldfields:

MR. WALLACE: These portable post-offices had to be erected in Perth, then taken to pieces and sent to their destination, along with workmen to re-erect them. This was an expensive system, and the buildings were too low for a warm climate. Tenders ought to be called, and local contractors and workmen given a chance.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The Government intended, in the future, to have post-offices constructed in the localities in which they were required. The present system was very expensive, and the material suffered deterioration in erection, transit, and re-erection. The post-offices referred to in the Estimates had already been constructed, and would be utilised for places near to Perth. The walls were too low for a hot climate.

MR. GREGORY: Would local tenders be called for?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Local tenders were being called now.

Item passed.

Item—Cue, quarters and offices for Inspector of Mines:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS moved, as an amendment, that the word "Mines" be struck out and "Surveys" inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and passed, and the item agreed to.

Item — Menzies, Inspector of Mines, offices and quarters :

MR. GREGORY asked what was the object of this item, against which no sum appeared.

THE PREMIER: It was an error; the item ought not to be there.

Item struck out.

Item — Doodlekine School :

MR. VOSPER: What was the population of Doodlekine?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said he did not know, but Doodlekine was a convenient place at which to locate a central school, to which the children of the district were carried free on the railway.

Item passed.

Item — Southern Cross Mechanics' Institute :

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS moved, as an amendment, that the words "Mechanics' Institute" be struck out and "Municipal Buildings" inserted in lieu thereof.

MR. VOSPER asked whether it was customary for the Government to give grants for municipal buildings.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Municipalities on goldfields and other places had been granted small sums for municipal buildings. Southern Cross was promised £500 for this purpose, and on the strength of that promise had borrowed money with which to carry on the work. The money had not been advanced yet.

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

Item — Furniture for Public Offices :

MR. QUINLAN: A considerable amount of money might be saved if the Government workshop were abolished and tenders called for the manufacture of furniture for the public offices. He was informed there was a gross waste of money in that workshop, and that the men very often scarcely knew what to do to put in their time. Attention had been called to this matter by tradesmen in the city; and he might take the opportunity of referring to the engaging of bricklayers by the Government. It would be cheaper to call for tenders, no matter what the work might be.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said he was pleased to inform hon. members that standard specifications

for furniture were now being prepared, and Government hoped in a few days to be able to call for tenders for furniture for the public offices. This matter had been under the consideration of the Government for some time, and an opportunity was presented of saving a lot of money under this head. The employees in the workshop had been reduced in number, but some men must be kept on to carry out work which could not be done under contract.

Item passed.

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

The Annual Estimates having been completed, the resolutions passed in Committee of Supply were reported.

MOTION — GRATUITY TO WIDOW OF DR. BARNETT.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Governor's Message, recommending an appropriation of £500 as a gratuity to the widow of the late Dr. H. C. Barnett (Fremantle Lunatic Asylum), was considered.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think hon. members will agree with me that, when a very old and tried officer of the Government dies, and his widow is not well provided for, it is a matter that this House may fairly take into consideration. I think it is better to deal with these cases on their merits, rather than we should stick to some fetish, which some of us may have, as to the wives of the officers not having any right to consideration. I myself think that in many positions in the service of the Government, the wives of the officers tend much to the success of the officer's administration. Whatever views hon. members may have of the abstract question, they must agree with me there can be no objection to this House taking into consideration any special or particular case. It is somewhat sad, I admit, that we should have to bring matters of this sort into the House. It would be much more pleasant for those interested that they should do away with the necessity of asking the Government to grant some honorarium or assistance, and we should always bear in mind that it is naturally somewhat distasteful for any representative to have to come to this House and ask for consideration. Dr. Barnett was a

servant of the Government for 30 years—I think more than 30 years. He occupied a prominent position as superintending officer of the lunatic asylum at Fremantle. He was receiving £500 a year at the time of his death, and £100 house allowance, and he was granted leave of absence on account of ill-health for 6 months, and if he had gone away on that leave of absence he would have received full pay for the first 3 months, and half pay for the remaining 3 months. The letter containing the notification to the doctor of the granting of his leave of absence reached his residence just after his death. The letter, which informed him that his leave had been approved of, also stated that on his return he would be at liberty to retire from the service on a pension of £400 a year, and that the Government would recommend such a vote; but these facts reached his residence just after he had passed away. I am informed his widow is left very ill-provided for. She has some little property, but even the high rates of rent which now prevail would leave her scarcely enough to subsist upon, and if the rents come down, which I am sure they will, because they are now out of all proportion to the value of the property, her income will be less than sufficient for her to live upon. When an officer has served his country for so long—over 30 years—and has occupied an important, responsible, and irksome position, which I think controlling a lunatic asylum is, when he dies and leaves a widow ill-provided for, I think a case is made out for the consideration of hon. members. I should be very glad if hon. members approved of this small grant of money to the widow of this old officer. It always seems to be strange that countries, especially the old country, are willing to pay large pensions to officers; but if an officer dies in the prime of life and the Government of that country is saved a considerable amount of money by that death, the Government reluctantly make small provision for his widow. I do not think it can be said of this country that it has ever turned a deaf ear to any appeal made to us in any case of a deserving person who was ill provided for. It is with confidence that I ask the House to agree to the Message sent to this

House by His Excellency the Governor, recommending that a gratuity of £500 be granted to the widow of this very old officer. For my part I am sorry to be in a position to ask for it. I should be much better pleased if the widow had been well provided for, and that there had been no necessity to ask for assistance. Believing that there is the necessity, and believing that the services rendered by the late officer warrant this provision, I have much pleasure in moving that this recommendation be agreed to. It is not altogether without precedent. We have many instances in which small honorariums have been given of £200 or £300, and we have more important officers who have died and left widows unprovided for where £500 has been granted. Hon. members will therefore not be acting without precedent in voting for this motion. I move that this House agrees to the recommendation contained in His Excellency's Message No. 11.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): It is my intention to support the motion before the committee. It was an unfortunate thing that the letter sent by the Government reached the deceased gentleman's residence just after his death. Had the letter reached his residence earlier, I believe we should have had the old gentleman alive and well now. I knew Dr. Barnett privately, and I know that his widow is not well off. I hope hon. members will not oppose this motion. If we have to give, it is better to give with a gracious and free hand, rather than reluctantly. I must express my regret that it is necessary to bring forward this motion, but I most certainly support it.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): I am very thankful to the Premier for having brought forward this matter, and I feel sure the House will graciously grant the vote, more especially as Dr. Barnett's services were appreciated in whatever position he held in the public service. I feel sure that the late Dr. Barnett had an intense desire to do his duty to the State, and in some measure perhaps this lessened the years of his life. In the asylum he devoted the best part of his life, and it is known that many men occupying a similar capacity have been brought to an early grave through the duties which appertain to such a posi-

tion. I am sure that the late Dr. Barnett did not have years added to his life by the performance of his duties. The late doctor had endeared himself to all sections of the community in Fremantle. He associated himself at all times with the progress of the town, and he did all that he could to advance the interests, not only of Fremantle, but the whole of the colony. I feel sure that the House will generously give their sanction to the motion before the committee.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): Although I had not the honour and pleasure of knowing the late Dr. Barnett, I have heard a great deal of the valuable services he performed to this colony during the period he held office; and although some objection might be raised as to the question of grants to widows of late officers, after very careful inquiries into the merits of this case, I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion. Dr. Barnett was in the service of the Government for a great many years, and I understand his widow is not particularly well off; but, whether she is or not, the merits of the case whether he, as a public servant, deserved a pension from the House have to be considered. As a goldfields member, I am glad to give the motion my support.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I deeply regret that this vote is before us. I would rather have seen our old friend the doctor alive. I am sure those who knew the late doctor respected him as a good, honest servant of the Crown, and the least we can do is to unanimously agree to the small gratuity which we intend to give to the widow of our late friend. Speaking of Dr. Barnett as one of his oldest and best friends, I could not allow this motion to pass without paying a tribute to his memory. I hope no one will get up in the House to object to the motion. When we find that a man has devoted the whole of his services for something like 30 years, and that at the time of his death he had received from the Government six months leave of absence, which would nearly have taken this amount to cover, and that he would have received a pension if he had resigned, under those circumstances I believe in giving to those who deserve it.

MR. HUBBLE (the Gascoyne): I indorse the remarks of the hon. member

in reference to this particular vote for the widow of the deceased gentleman, who was one of our faithful and good servants for thirty years. He was a gentleman respected not only by the people of Fremantle, but by the whole of the people of Western Australia, more particularly by the old residents of the colony. I am very pleased indeed to think that the grant, which it is proposed to give to the widow of this gentleman will be agreed to, and I hope no member of the House will stand up and oppose this particular grant. I have much pleasure in supporting it.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and report adopted.

MOTION—ANNUITY TO LADY BROOME.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Governor's Message, recommending an annuity of £150 to Lady Broome in recognition of services rendered by her late husband, Sir Frederick Napier Broome, while Governor of the colony, was considered.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In rising to move that the recommendation contained in His Excellency's Message be agreed to, I may say that I regret it should be necessary to ask the House to consent to this recommendation, because under ordinary circumstances one would have thought it should not be necessary. However, I can assure hon. members, from all the information I have received, that the Government are not acting in this matter, except under information which justifies them in thinking that the action recommended is necessary. We all know that Sir Frederick Broome was Governor of the colony for six years, at a critical and important period of its history. Everyone will admit that, owing to his influence and exertions, Responsible Government was granted to the colony some considerable time sooner than it would have been had he opposed it. From the time he came to the colony until he left it he seemed to be satisfied that the days when Government as it existed were passing away, and that the people of the colony were fitted and prepared to carry out what is known as Responsible Government in this colony of the Empire. That being so, we shall all give him credit for having done his very best

to meet the wishes of the people in regard to the introduction of Responsible Government. I am quite certain that if it had not been for his advocacy, it would have been two or three years later before we obtained self-government. We all know that he was cut off in the prime of life unexpectedly, when a long career of usefulness was before him, and it shows us how uncertain life is—if anything was wanting to show that—and how the strongest, men of good constitution, may be overtaken by death at a time when it is altogether unexpected. We all regret to know that his widow is left in very poor circumstances indeed.

MR. A. FORREST: Why does not the British Government provide for her?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member can speak afterwards.

MR. A. FORREST: But I object to the amount.

THE PREMIER: That will not affect the principle. I know his widow is left in very poor circumstances. As she has pointed out, it was never expected that the late Governor would be the first to be taken away, she being considerably older than he was. The Imperial Government, we know, are very close-fisted in regard to grants of this sort, but they have seen fit to grant from the royal bounty fund a sum of £100 a year to this lady. Although I am prepared to admit she has no legal claim on this colony, I think it is a matter we might take into consideration, whether some provision should not be made to her in consideration of her husband's services to the country. I say I fully admit that this lady has no legal claim on this colony, but that does not prevent me from bringing this motion before hon. members. It does not prevent me pointing out to hon. members that Lady Broome has arrived at a time of life when it is difficult for her to begin life again. She is 65 years of age. It is an extraordinary thing that at the present time no ex-Governor of Western Australia is living. The other colonies have ex-Governors in the metropolis of London, exercising their influence for good, always in the direction of the colony they have represented; but in regard to Western Australia it is sad to think that at the present time no ex-Governor is living. There are three widows of ex-Governors living—Lady

Barlee, Lady Robinson, and Lady Broome. The two first, I am glad to say, are left well provided for, and it is not necessary for them to make any appeal to the Governments over whom their husbands have been governing. With regard to Lady Broome, the case is somewhat different. There is no doubt she has been left very badly off, and requires some assistance from someone. She has arrived at that time of life when she cannot well help herself. I cannot but feel, in moving that this recommendation of His Excellency be agreed to, what great changes the whirligig of time brings about! It is eight years since Sir Frederick Broome left the colony, then full of life and vigour, and in the strength of manhood. Everyone who saw him go away with *éclat* from this metropolis must have thought he had a long career of useful life before him. I remember the day very well, because I did not join in the demonstration to see the Governor off. A bitter controversy had existed between the late Governor and myself for many years. I am glad to say that, after he had gone away, he wrote to me expressing a wish that we should be friends again; and we corresponded regularly from that time to the time of his death. No one would have thought—I never thought, and I am sure he never thought—that in a few years after we were in such bitter controversy, each trying to do his best (I think I am bound to say so) to injure the other, in a few years I should be standing up in the Parliament of the country asking for some support to his widow. I think that shows the changes and vicissitudes of life. I hope this motion will be carried without opposition. If we are not very rich, we are, at any rate, a generous and liberal-minded people. There is no doubt about it—I say it, having known a great deal about the late Sir Frederick Broome—that he did work hard in the interests of the colony. He hastened the advent of Responsible Government by some years; and although there is a lot to be said on the other side—no doubt I could say a great deal on the other side, yet I am not going to tell anything, because all recollection of what happened between myself and the late Sir Frederick Broome leaves only one impression in my mind, that I regret it. His widow is 65 or 66 years

of age. This small contribution, which this colony can well afford, will be for the purpose of assisting her in the decline of life; and I feel certain that we will never regret having acted in this generous manner towards one who has no legal claim upon us, but who is in need. It will not only show to her, but also to the English Government and to people generally, that if a man serves this country well, as we think the late Governor did, upon the whole—leaving out of sight those episodes in which many of us did not quite agree—if he assisted the country in its development, if he did something to promote our interests and to hasten the advent of Responsible Government, then when an opportunity offers, when the grave separates him from us, we are not altogether unmindful of those belonging to him who are in want. I beg to move the motion.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): It is my intention to support the motion, and to recommend it to the favourable consideration of the House. In doing so I cannot help expressing my admiration of the manner in which the right hon. gentleman opposite introduced this subject. It is one of considerable delicacy, and the manner in which he expressed himself did credit to his very generous instincts. We all join with the right hon. gentleman in his expressions of regret concerning certain episodes in the joint careers of the late Governor and the right hon. gentleman opposite, expressions which do him honour as a public man; and while we should respect and revere the memory of the dead, we may also acknowledge and pay a tribute of respect to those who are left behind. The late Sir Frederick Napier Broome was a benefactor to this colony. [MR. HUBBLE: In what way?] In this way. For many years we—and perhaps the hon. member was one of them—struggled and strove for Responsible Government. We all saw the advantages that would accrue to the country if we were governed under a freer constitution. For many years we clamoured for it, for many years we fought for it, and for many years we did not get it; and we should not have had it at so early a date and at such an opportune time, had it not been for the personal efforts of the late Sir Frederick Napier Broome. It was through his recommen-

dations, through his despatches, and through his personal advocacy in the Colonial Office, that the Imperial authorities were led to recognise the necessity for the change. It will be remembered that the deceased gentleman was authorised by this colony to go to England for the purpose of advocating our claims for self-government, and that he did so and furthered the movement to the utmost of his power. I had an opportunity of seeing the correspondence between the deceased and people in this colony, and on every occasion he expressed the warmest sympathy with this country, and delight in its present prosperity. I have also had an opportunity of reading certain correspondence which led up to the introduction of this recommendation, and I can tell hon. members that the money is well deserved, and if granted will reflect credit upon ourselves. I trust that no hon. members in this House will have the questionable taste to oppose the vote, which is only for the small annuity of £150 a year. I support it with the greatest possible pleasure, and hope that the House will approve of it.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): In speaking to this question, on which so much feeling has been exhibited by the Premier—we never heard a speech before in which the leader of the Government was so moved—I wish to say that the hon. members on this side of the House—for the majority of whom I can speak, as I tested their feelings on the matter before coming to this House—do not wish to address the House on this question, but they wish to show their appreciation of the service rendered to this colony by the late Governor Broome by voting an annuity to his widow of £100 per annum. It is the same amount which the great country to which the late Governor belonged has voted for the same purpose. They ought to have given him a larger sum than that, because he had been in their service for a great number of years, and had been in receipt of a large salary. This country had the benefit of his services for some years, and no doubt they were good services in the direction in which they went; and as far as Responsible Government is concerned, I have not the slightest doubt that Responsible Government was hastened by the action he took. I recollect the time very well

when the right hon. gentleman and I were engaged side by side in a fight with the deceased gentleman, in which our reputation, our business, and everything we had in this colony were at stake. We were fighting for the rights of the people of this country, and I do not know to this day which was in the wrong. The deceased left this colony after a term of office for which he received a large salary. He went to England at the expense of the colony, to advocate Responsible Government. He helped to a large extent to obtain it; but why, after eight or nine years have elapsed, this country should be called upon to give a pension for services rendered and well paid for at that particular time—because the office of Governor of the colony was one of the best in the colonies in those days—I cannot understand. If the Premier had taken the advice of hon. members on this side of the House, this discussion would never have taken place. I fail to see on what grounds this country ought to be taxed for perhaps 15 to 25 years at the rate of £150 a year, for someone who left it eight years ago; and a great difference of opinion exists in the minds of the people of this country whether the deceased Governor did the good work that has been attributed to him by the head of the Opposition, and by the right hon. gentleman in a speech that almost made me shed tears.

MR. HUBBLE (the Gascoyne): I beg to move, as an amendment, "That the item be reduced by £50 a year." I am not hard-hearted, but why we should be called upon to pay anything I do not understand, especially when we consider that we have others in our own colony who are in need.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): This subject is one that I hope will be discussed purely on its merits. It is a question as to whether or not this country shall show its appreciation towards the widow of one of its Governors who, while he was here, readily and willingly did his best according to his lights. I do not agree with the proposal that the House should either reduce the vote or not recognise the vote, because the Imperial Government has chosen to estimate the amount of its sympathy at £100 a year. I hope, if there is a spark of manly feeling left in the breast of any

hon. member of this Chamber, he will remember that the deceased Governor has passed away, and that it is not commendable to the better nature of those who survive him to say anything that will reflect against his memory. I do not understand how such an amendment could be moved, after the manner in which this motion has been introduced by the Premier, who has had the manliness, while acknowledging that he and Sir Frederick Broome were bitter opponents, to show a true and honourable feeling which will commend itself to the majority of this House, if I am not greatly mistaken, irrespective of side or party.

MR. GEORGE (the Murray): I shall certainly not support the amendment; and I am exceedingly sorry to see such a spectacle as this in the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia. If there is one man in this Assembly more strongly opposed to the principle of pensions than the others, it is I.

MR. A. FORREST: You vote for them now.

MR. GEORGE: No; I do not. I always oppose pensions. But in this instance we have before us the fact that the Premier of the colony has been generous enough, and manly enough, to stand up here and plead for the widow of a man to whom, years ago, he was bitterly opposed. Since this colony obtained Responsible Government, we have seen the Premier in many aspects; but we have never seen him in a more favourable and manly aspect than on this occasion; and it ill becomes any member of this House, at such a time, to move an amendment with a view of reducing this vote by £50 a year. If Governor Broome did assist in establishing responsible Government, then he is entitled to a large share of credit for the prosperity we have enjoyed during the last five or six years. Yet, after a speech which does the Premier credit, here we are quibbling over a paltry £50 a year. I hope the House will indignantly reject the amendment.

MR. MONGER (York): If I express my surprise at such an amendment emanating from such a gentleman, I think I am only echoing the general voice of this House. I am indeed still more surprised that the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) should have gone to the trouble of interviewing members on this

side of the House last night with a view of obtaining their support to such a paltry amendment.

MR. A. FORREST: I rise to a point of order. The paper which I put before hon. members read—"Are you in favour of £150 or £100, or against the vote?"

MR. MONGER: The hon. member's explanation does not make the slightest difference. I am surprised that such a suggestion should have fallen from a gentleman who I am certain would be the first to assist other people in similar circumstances.

MR. A. FORREST: Where they deserve it.

MR. MONGER: But what I personally take exception to in the hon. member's remarks, and in the speech of the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Hubble), is the suggestion that we on this side of the House ought to fall in with their ideas. I hope that, on the contrary, our feelings will be in entire accord with the Government on this matter.

MR. HUBBLE: I think there are a good many members of this House who did not know the late Governor Broome. Having heard the expression of the feelings of several hon. members on this subject, and in view of the fact that the Premier himself has brought this motion forward, and which I was pleased to see, having regard to the relations which existed between the right hon. gentleman and the deceased, I intend to withdraw my amendment, so as to save discussion on this subject.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell): I will ask hon. members to carry this vote cheerfully and unanimously. As an old colonist who knew Governor Broome, I suppose it becomes me to say a few words on behalf of his widow. Whatever his faults may have been, there was no truer friend to the colony than the late Governor Broome. The widow is unexpectedly left in adverse circumstances. It is a very sad case; and, as we are approaching Christmas, let me point out what a pleasure it will be to her to learn by wire that this House has unanimously agreed to this small pension. Personally, I think it a very small reward to give to the widow in recognition of her husband's services, and I should have liked to see it increased to

£250. I am glad to hear that there will be no division on the question. The great interest which the Premier has taken in this matter has given me much pleasure; and I feel that I am not making any improper disclosure when I recall the fact that my colleague had just cause for resentment against Governor Broome; and he has advanced very highly in my estimation when I find him foremost in bringing up this matter. I have had an opportunity of reading the widow's letter, and it is pitiable to think that this good lady, who is over sixty years of age, should be reduced to poverty, and be compelled to earn her own living if assistance is not forthcoming. I am saying that which I do know; and old Western Australians can recall, I am sure with pleasure, the great services that Governor Broome rendered to this colony in training us up and fitting us to enjoy the great privilege of Responsible Government, which would not have been granted to us as early as it was had it not been for his efforts. I hope the motion will not only be carried unanimously, but carried by acclamation.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): I regret I was not here when the right hon. gentleman spoke. If I had been here I should not have been surprised; for I am told that the speech was in many ways characteristic of the man himself. I think we all realise his sterling qualities. But I want to enter my protest—and a very strong and emphatic protest—against the discussion which the proposal has raised, begun by the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Hubble) and continued by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), who I think will bear me out when I say that I hold very strong opinions in regard to another gratuity which has already been dealt with. But I expressed those opinions privately, and refrained from mentioning them in the House, in order that the act might be done courteously. I think that the hon. gentleman, when he knew that, might, at the very least, have extended the same courtesy towards us in regard to this motion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I desire to say one word on this question, which I regret it should be necessary to say at this stage. I hope this vote will be passed with the

dignity that is befitting a deliberative assembly. I regret that such feelings should have been imported into the discussion. I am with the member for East Perth (Mr. James) on this matter; and I think the House knows very well that I have upon all occasions steadfastly opposed pensions; and had I not been perfectly satisfied that the case to which that hon. member referred, and this one, came under the category of distinct exceptions to the general rule, I should have opposed them on principle. But I hope I should not have been found opposing them upon the question of a difference between £100 and £150 a year. If the principle is a bad one, it is just as bad in the case of a pension of £100 as in that of £150, and it is certainly undignified to cavil over a matter of £50 a year. I have no personal knowledge of the late Governor Broome or his widow, or of the past history which has been referred to in this House. I only know this, that when any member rises in his place and makes a motion in the terms and with the feeling that was manifested by the Premier in this House to-day, that act alone—that simple act by which the right hon. gentleman sacrificed his own personal feelings—is sufficient to prove to this House the genuineness of the application which has been made. When he can stand in his place as Treasurer of this country and propose a vote like this, sinking his strong, deep feelings, which are no doubt well grounded, we may take it for granted that there are good and sound reasons for voting the pension. I am prepared, without discussion, to accept those reasons as sufficient to satisfy me. If hon. members had objected to this on principle, if they had said, "We object to the pension system," I, perhaps, would have been with them. But, for the sake of a miserable reduction from £150 to £100 a year, leaving the principle precisely where it was, the House has, I think, been placed in a very painful and undignified position; and I, for one, must enter my protest against it. I intend to vote for the motion.

MR. SIMPSON (Geraldton): I think the Premier has honoured the House and the country by the splendidly magnanimous way in which he has made this proposal. I have very little idea of sup-

porting an insignificant minority by reviving the bitterness of past years. That there should have been any such trespass on the dignity of the debate is very regrettable.

Motion put and passed.

Resolution reported to the House, and report adopted.

LADY BROOME ANNUITY BILL.

In accordance with the foregoing resolution:

Bill introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

SHARKS BAY PEARLSHELL FISHERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

BUNBURY RACECOURSE RAILWAY BILL.

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

COLLIE QUARRY RAILWAY BILL.

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

KALGOORLIE-GNUMBALLA LAKE AND BOULDER TOWNSITE LOOP RAILWAYS BILL.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Reports by the Government Geologist *re* water supply of various goldfields.

Ordered to lie on the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY AND SUDDEN ALTERATIONS.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): As the House will be rising in a short time, I shall prefer to postpone the second reading of this Bill to some other occasion.

MR. LEAKE moved that Orders of the Day Nos. 4 to 14, inclusive, be postponed until after Order No. 15.

THE SPEAKER: Next year I intend to carry out the Parliamentary practice of not allowing the Orders of the Day to be transposed at the last moment. The utility of putting the business that is

proposed to be transacted down on the paper is to give hon. members an idea when motions are likely to come on, so that they may make their arrangements accordingly. The practice of transposing the notices and motions is an entirely unparliamentary one which, I am sorry to say, I have permitted for the convenience of hon. members. An Order of the Day has been sometimes transposed, with the result that a Bill has come on very early, when the members who were particularly interested in it were not present. That has occurred on more than one occasion, as I am informed by hon. members who have complained to me; and therefore next session, with the support of the House, I intend to carry out the proper Parliamentary practice as laid down in *May*. The business paper must be taken in order; and, if any Order of the Day be postponed, it must be postponed till the next day.

MR. GEORGE said if a guarantee were given that the Public Education Bill would be the first Order of the Day on Monday, he had no objection to its postponement. If the Bill were shelved for the session, it would be a scandal. Free education was a passion with him, and with numbers of other people. The children of Western Australia should receive what they had a right to, namely free education.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could give no such assurance as that asked for by the member for the Murray. He would, however, be willing to assist the hon. member in getting the Public Education Bill forward after the financial business had been concluded. The Government could not carry on the business of the country without an Appropriation Act. The first Order of the Day on Monday would, he hoped, be the Loan Estimates, which he did not think would occupy much time, and then the Education Bill might be brought on.

Motion—to postpone Orders Nos. 4 to 14—put and passed.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. LEAKE, in moving the second reading, said: This Bill has come down from the Legislative Council, and I have

been asked to take charge of it in this House. It is a short Bill dealing with the subject of betting. By the Police Act of 1892, certain restrictions were placed upon the use of certain instruments of gaming, and subsequently there was the amending Act of 1894. The present Bill consists of two effective clauses. Clause 2 repeals Section 2 of the Police Act Amendment Act of 1894. That clause deals with persons betting in public places, and makes them punishable as rogues and vagabonds under the Police Act of 1892. The chief object of the amending Act of 1894 was to prevent betting in public places, and having the bookmakers crying the odds and making themselves objectionable. Attempts have been made to apply this Act of 1894. Summonses have been issued against bookmakers, who have been threatened with arrest, and a certain class of persons have been harassed a good deal; but the public have received no compensating benefit from the change. It is found that the amending Act of 1894 is too harsh a measure. It treats every man who makes a bet on a racecourse as a rogue and vagabond liable to arrest. By the Bill it is proposed to revert to the old state of affairs, and practically to allow the control of betting and betting men to be in the hands of recognised clubs. If this Bill is passed, that control can be exercised by *boni fide* racing clubs, and betting will be kept within such reasonable limits as not to be a public nuisance. Clause 3 of the Bill adds a proviso to the end of Sub-section 6 of Section 66 of the original Act of 1892. That section makes it penal for any person to play a game with a certain instrument known as a wheel totalisator, and the proviso added by the Bill to that section protects the instrument when used under the auspices of any club registered with the Western Australian Turf Club. Every man knows that where there is horse racing there is betting, which cannot possibly be prohibited, but may be controlled. This is a reasonable Bill, and it is in the interests of the public that it should be passed. The Bill can certainly do no harm, and it puts the control of betting under the control of a responsible body of public men. The committee of the Western Australian Turf Club will take care, in the interests of public sport

—and, I hope, of public morality—that there is no abuse of the system which this Bill proposes to recognise and to regulate.

Mr. JAMES (East Perth): I hope the House will unanimously, or by a substantial majority, reject this Bill. There have been no arguments adduced in favour of it. I heard an occasional attempt to throw dust in the eyes of hon. members by talking about regulating betting by placing it under the care of a "responsible body of public men." But this Bill has nothing whatever to do with placing betting under the Turf Club or anybody else. It is introduced, not in the interests of the public, but in the interests of the betting ring, who are the only persons anxious for the measure, or who will benefit by it. In 1894, when an Act was passed dealing with this matter—the Act which it is now sought to repeal—it was supported by arguments from members who ought to know something about betting. The amending Act of 1894 was put forward on the ground that we ought to discourage as far as possible the loud-mouthed and blatant "bookie," and I see no reason for departing from the principle of that Act. No one can say that the Bill of 1894 has had any evil effect on racing. On the contrary, we find that racing has kept pace with other progress and improvements in the community. There is no falling off in the number of bookmakers, although they threatened to leave the colony if the Bill of 1894 were passed. Bookmakers are now carrying on with apparent success, with the advantage to the public that the business is conducted quietly. Those who do not approve of betting do not have their ears affected or their feelings shocked by too much blatant row. What reason is there for asking us in 1897 to repeal an Act passed in 1894? It is not in the public interests to allow extended privileges or opportunities to bookmakers, who have the right to stand on a box on a racecourse and bet. Even if the Act of 1894 did interfere with the vested interests and *bona fide* business of the energetic bookmakers, would that be any argument in favour of the repeal of the Act? Is it suggested that this Parliament should legislate for the assistance of the bookmaker? The hon. member who introduced the Bill talked

about the interests of the public; but I challenge him to tell how the interests of the public have suffered since the Bill of 1894 was passed. I am not myself a racing man, and therefore not competent to judge; but it does seem to me that the law as it stands has the advantage of keeping the evils of betting from becoming too prominent. At present, if men want to bet, they know where to go. Those who are fond of racing and object to betting ought not to have their ears assailed by rowdy gentlemen calling the odds all over the course. Unless betting is restricted the number of welshers will increase, and those who make the greatest noise perhaps do the greatest evil. I cannot see what objection there can be raised to the present law by the bookmakers, who are now allowed to carry on their trade in a quiet manner. How is it that, if this class has suffered, the evil of betting seems to multiply and thrive? I think the time has arrived when we ought to have some legislation for the purpose of preventing "consultations" and "sweeps." During the last twelve months Perth has been overrun with tobacco shops carried on by gentlemen as a cloak to betting, and, I suppose, a certain amount of private "tote" work. These people need suppressing. I have thought more than once during this session of introducing some legislation, not for the purpose of giving these gentlemen wider privileges, but of suppressing evils which I think are becoming rampant in the city of Perth. Clause 3 proposes to enable the "wheel tote" to be worked at any meeting held under the auspices of the Western Australian Turf Club, or any club registered under its rules and regulations. I ask some of the older members here, do they think the time has arrived for us to legalise "Robert Maggs," with his intimation that "if you do not put money down you cannot pick it up, and if you do not speculate you cannot win?" The power desired for the Western Australian Turf Club is not for the purpose of improving betting, but for the purpose of making money out of those to whom they will give the privilege of using the "wheel tote." That privilege would only be given for the highest price, and this Bill really enables the club to thrive on betting.

MR. MONGER: They have it in every other colony in Australia.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, no.

MR. JAMES: I was under the impression that they have not such a law in every other colony. Three years ago the Act now sought to be repealed was introduced by the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger), who has had some experience in connection with racing matters. In speaking of the Bill in 1894, that hon. member said:—

And though the other colonies have not yet thought fit to go in for it—for what reason I can hardly say—I think if we in Western Australia adopt such a law, and exclude the professional bookmaker from our racecourses and other places of public resort, we shall be doing a kindness to the rising generation, and doing no injury to any class of the community.

Absolutely no injury has been done by existing legislation on gaming. Are we so much afraid of public opinion, backed up by some members of the Turf Club, that we are going to introduce legislation for the purpose of removing restrictions which, I say fearlessly, have been of great advantage to the public? Bookmakers are a class that ought not to be encouraged. All the betting that a man wants can be got in Perth, where there are any number of persons willing to give him the odds.

THE SPEAKER: The hour fixed for the adjournment of the House has now arrived.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6 o'clock, p.m., until the next Monday evening.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 20th December, 1897.

Motion: Standing Orders Suspension (remainder of session)—Immigration Restriction Bill: Message re Council's Amendments—New Houses of Parliament: Message, Assembly's Resolution—Early Closing Bill: first reading (debate)—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: second reading (moved and deferred)—Metropolitan Waterworks Bill: further report presented—Lady Broome Annuity Bill: first reading—Sharks Bay Pearlsell Fishery Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Bunbury Racecourse Railway Bill: first reading—Collie Quarry Railway Bill: first reading—Kalgoorlie-Gamullalla Lake and Boulder Townsite Loop Railways Bill: first reading—Public Health Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Papers presented—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom), in accordance with notice, moved:—

That, in order to expedite business, the Standing Orders relating to the passing of public Bills, and the consideration of Messages from the Legislative Assembly, be suspended during the remainder of the session.

The object of this motion, he said, was to further the business of the House. Every time a motion to suspend the Standing Orders was made, it was necessary there should be a majority of members in the House to sanction the motion. Unless notice was given of the intention to move the suspension of Standing Orders, and unless the motion was carried at once, there might be great delay in business. The present motion was not submitted with the intention of jumping surprises on members, or of trying to pass objectionable Bills. What he meant in using the term "objectionable" was that there were no Bills before Parliament likely to be strongly opposed by hon. members. There was little time now before Parliament prorogued, and there were several Bills which might be unimportant from a certain point of view, and could go through the various stages without trouble. Under these circumstances, he was induced to submit the present motion, purely with the object of expediting business.