

revenue. There was a feeling among some of them that the proceeds of these land sales should be kept apart from the ordinary land revenue, and this return would show what the receipts were last year from these sales.

Motion—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past four o'clock, p.m., until Monday, 15th February.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 15th February, 1892.

Survey of Agricultural lands and appointment of District Land Agents—Railway Expenditure for 1891: Return of—W. A. Turf Club Bill: third reading—Married Women's Property Bill: in committee—Estimates, 1892: further considered in Committee of Supply—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7 p.m.

PRAYERS.

SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT LAND AGENTS.

MR. THROSSELL: I beg to move the motion standing in my name,—“That, in the opinion of this House it is desirable, in the interests of settlement, that the Government take steps, as early as possible, to provide for the survey and mapping of all available lands in the Eastern Districts suitable for agriculture, within a radius of 25 miles from townships; and also for the appointment of District Government Agents, to whom persons seeking land could apply for information.” I think this is a motion that will commend itself to this House, without many words from me, as one which must prove beneficial in the interests of agricultural settlement, if adopted, especially at this time when our public works policy is attracting a number of people to

the colony. Many of these people come here with the intention of going into agriculture, and the first thing they want is some reliable information as to where they can get land suitable for their object. If they go to the Survey Office they can get little or no information as to where they can get what they want. I know it is so with regard to land in the Eastern districts. Last year we had a number of would-be settlers who visited us from the other colonies, and who had been told that there was good agricultural land available in these districts, particularly about York, Beverley, and Northam. No doubt we have plenty of Government land of this kind in existence; I believe it is literally true that we have in these districts plenty of such land, in isolated patches of from a hundred up to a thousand and two thousand acres, but the difficulty is to point out to these men where they can find this land. If they go to the Survey Office, they are simply pointed to a map, and, as the land is not surveyed, they get no information from that. These men generally find their way into the districts, to make inquiries on the spot, but we are not able to give them any definite information, in the absence of surveys. If my memory serves me, I have myself had letters brought by intending settlers from three different members of the Ministry in Perth, during the last twelve months, asking me to do what I can to put these people in the way of obtaining what they require. There are plenty of others who come here with the same intention—all good men; but they have to go away disappointed, simply because it is nobody's business to give them the information they want, and to direct them to the exact locality where good land may be found, open for selection. If they go to the settlers of the district, these men have not the time to go all over the country to point out the different localities, and, if they had the time, they could give no definite information unless the lands were surveyed and mapped, and the locations numbered. We can tell them where there is good country generally, and give them a fair idea as to the quality and capabilities of the land; but when these men go back to their friends in their own colony they are not in a position to say that they

actually saw good Government land open for selection, although we know there is plenty of such land about York, Northam, and Beverley. At any rate, I am so informed as regards York and Beverley; and I know, from my own personal knowledge, that such is the case in my own district. These men come here with capital and are willing to spend it, if we can only show them where they can get what they want; but, for the want of this information, they simply come and go away again, and tell their friends it is no use coming here—that nobody can show them where they can get the land they want, although there is plenty of it. The result of this want of information is that we lose many valuable settlers, who were ready to cast in their lot with us in these districts, and who would have become useful and valuable colonists. I do not think we secured one outside settler last year, though we had many who came to visit us, inquiring for land. Seeing that we actually possess what these men are in want of, it seems to me a lamentable thing that we should lose these intending settlers simply for the want of surveys and maps to show them where they can get what they require, or go and see for themselves. I may be met with the assertion that this means a lot of money expended in surveys. But, if we want our land settled, we must make these surveys some time or the other. I think if I had this land, or any private person had it, and I wanted to dispose of it, my first duty would be to have it surveyed and mapped, so that strangers coming to inquire for land could go and see for themselves, and satisfy themselves that the land was there, and that it was what they were looking for. I think it is the duty of the Government to do the same in regard to the public lands of the colony. The motion also suggests the appointment of district agents, to whom persons in search of land could go and obtain any information they required. To my mind this would be a very simple matter to carry out. I would deal with these agents as Life Insurance companies do in establishing local agents in country places; I would give them no fixed salary, but pay them by results, in the shape of commission for any business they did in the way of disposing of the land. I am in a position to know that in the three

districts I have named—York, Beverley, and Northam (and, I believe, Newcastle as well)—there are respectable men well acquainted with the country who would be prepared to take up these Government agencies upon some such system as I have indicated. I would give them (say) $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. commission upon any sales of Government lands that they made. That would not be a very expensive item. The price of Government land is 10s. an acre, and this would give a commission of 3d. per acre to these district agents, which I think would not be a ruinous expenditure. If an expenditure of 3d. an acre would enable us to secure good settlers of this class, I am sure members will agree with me that it would be 3d. well spent. It is clear to me that in the districts I have referred to we cannot hope to secure these men unless we can supply them with this information, and show them where they can get exactly what they want, without having to wander all over the country in search of it, and then be unable to obtain any definite information. As I have said, I would allow these agents a commission on all absolute sales effected through them, at the rate of 3d. per acre. With regard to sales on the deferred payment system, I would allow them 10 per cent. commission on the first year's payment, and nothing afterwards. That would be considerably less than the commission on absolute sales. Say a man took up 500 acres on the deferred payment system, 6d. an acre, for twenty years; the commission on that would be 10 per cent. on the first year's purchase money; 500 acres at 6d. would come to £12 10s., and the commission on that transaction would be 25s. If it was an absolute sale, and the purchase money (£250) laid down, the commission on those 500 acres would be £3 2s. 6d., I think this would be a fair way of remunerating these agents, and I do not think it would ruin the Government. I am sure it would do the colony a vast amount of good, and give us many excellent settlers, of the very best class we want, but who are now lost to the colony simply for the want of some machinery of this kind. It was only last week that a respectable gentleman visited our district from New South Wales, bringing letters of introduction from Sir

Henry Parkes, and he was most anxious to settle in the Northam district, or York. He could get no satisfactory information at the Survey Office in Perth, and he was advised to come on to Northam, and get what information he could on the spot. My hon. friends who sit on the Ministerial benches are equally anxious with us to encourage agricultural settlement, but they are very glad at the same time to shunt off their responsibility in the matter on to country members. They generally send these anxious inquirers up the country with letters of introduction to those who, like myself, take an interest in the settlement of the land, and having done that, they think they have done all that can be expected of them. Of course I am always very glad to show these visitors round the district, and to show them the country generally, but when they say to me, "Take me to some piece of Government land that is at the present moment open for selection, in your Northam district of which we have heard so much; let us see the exact spot where this land is to be got, so that we may judge for ourselves as to its capabilities, and we will come to business at once." What can I do? I must confess my inability to do so. I know there is land to be had, but, in the absence of surveys and definite information, I cannot tell these people what they want to know. It may be said there are plenty of young colonials about the district who, if asked, could show these men where they can get what they want. No doubt there are. But they know, probably, that if they did so they would have to interfere with some of their neighbors' runs, and that the land would have to be taken out of somebody's lease, and they would naturally say to themselves, "Why should I do this? Why should I injure my neighbor? I should not like anybody else to serve me in the same way, and I do not see why I should do it." You cannot blame them. Let the Government provide their own agents to do this work. These visitors, as a rule, have only a few days at their disposal, and it is not to be expected that the settlers can neglect their own business to go all over the country, however well disposed and anxious they may be to do a good turn to the visitors. I leave it to the good sense of members whether we are likely to secure first-rate men like

these unless we are in a position to afford them all the information they require, and put them on the very spot where they can get what they want. I have brought forward the motion at the present time for this reason: it may be very properly replied that this motion, if carried, will involve an increase of the survey vote—I hope it will; that is why I have introduced it, before we come to deal with that vote on the Estimates. This is one of the grants which I think may well be increased, in the best interests of the country. It is quite insufficient for the large amount of work required from this department, and I hope my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands will see his way clear to support this motion, and that if more money is wanted he will at the proper time vote for its being placed on the Estimates. I believe that possibly one or two surveyors would be able to do the whole of this work in the Eastern districts. If all this Government land that we have in these districts about Northam and York and Beverley were in the hands of private owners, the system I am advocating would have been carried out years ago, and this land, instead of lying idle, would be settled upon and cultivated, and help to add to the wealth of the country. But at present we are entirely in the dark as to the extent and value of this land; whereas if we had it all surveyed and mapped out—even if we did not dispose of it immediately—we would at any rate know what the national estate available in these districts was worth, and what extent there was of it. With these few remarks I commend the motion to the good sense of my fellow-members.

MR. PIESSE: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion of my hon. friend. I can in a great measure bear out the remarks he has made with regard to the necessity for these surveys. I think it is most desirable and quite necessary that something should be done in this direction, so as to define, as far as possible, the areas that are suitable for agricultural selection in the districts he has named. We all know the difficulties now in the way of the would-be selector, owing to the absence of reliable information as to the situation of lands that are suitable for agriculture. I also think the hon. member's idea as to the appointment

of district agents is a very good one indeed, although the question of remuneration might, perhaps, be somewhat difficult to adjust, as to whether these agents should be paid a fixed salary or be paid by commission. But this is a question of detail which the Government could settle. I think it is our duty to offer every inducement and every facility we can to enable people to settle on our lands, and I hope the Government will see their way to carry out the wishes of the hon. member in this matter.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I may say, speaking for myself as the Minister at the head of the Lands Department, and for Ministers generally, that we have no objection whatever to the passing of this motion. But I may remind the hon. member and other members also, that very considerable sums of money are now being spent by the Government in the way of laying out agricultural areas. The greatest possible activity has been shown by the department over which I have control in surveying and mapping out these lands. Right along from Beverley to Albany areas have been selected for agricultural purposes, and they are being surveyed as fast as possible. With regard to lands in the vicinity of Northam, York, and Newcastle, I am very pleased to learn from the hon. member who brought forward this motion that there are large areas of agricultural land still available in those localities, because I certainly doubted the fact before. I can only say, if these large areas are there, I am only sorry that he and others who were aware of it did not bring it to my notice. If it had been brought to my notice, and the hon. member had pointed out that in that part of the colony there were areas of agricultural land that required surveying, I would have taken care that a portion of the money now available for surveying and mapping out lands along lines of railways should have been devoted to these particular areas. However, I can promise him that his motion, so far as I am concerned, will not be lost sight of—that is, with regard to the surveying and mapping of these lands; and I believe the step that will be adopted will be to send out one of the staff surveyors acquainted with that locality, and let him

seek out these areas of good agricultural land alluded to, and, as far as possible, gain such information as to enable them to be surveyed and mapped out. With regard to the appointment of agents, I have not the slightest objection—I never had the slightest objection—to this; but it has always seemed to me that it would be undesirable to adopt the principle of paying these agents by commission. I do not believe in the idea of Government land agents travelling about the country touting for customers and selling land on commission. I think, if we appoint these agents at all, that if possible the agent should be a surveyor, a gentleman well acquainted with the country, and that he should be held directly responsible to the Government for all his acts. Such an agent would be in an independent position, and would not be in the position referred to by the hon. member for Northam of being afraid to annoy his neighbors, or injure his neighbors' runs, by putting intending settlers on his neighbors' leasehold blocks. This is a matter worthy of consideration in connection with these appointments. Persons residing in the district, and being runholders themselves, would be very unlikely to take people who were seeking for land, on to the runs of their neighbors, with the probability of doing them an injury. I can only say that I shall be pleased to bring the subject before the Cabinet, and I have not the slightest doubt that something will be done which will afford satisfaction to the hon. member, in both the directions indicated in his motion.

MR. A. FORREST: Before this resolution is passed I just wish to say that I was very pleased to hear from the hon. member for Northam that there is such an amount of good land outside the town of Northam available for selection. I know that district very well indeed, and I think my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands would have had surveyors there long ago if he knew where to find this good land. We certainly know they have the Meekering Area, and that has been surveyed; but we know that very few blocks have been selected there. I am also glad to hear that the Government are laying out agricultural areas all along the Great Southern Railway; but I think more care should

have been taken in selecting these areas. I am afraid that a large portion of these areas will never be taken up for agriculture. I believe that.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, no!

MR. A. FORREST: He says "No, no!" I say yes, yes. You can see it yourself as you go along the railway line, without going back at all, that a lot of this land will never be taken up for agriculture; and I hope that in future the Government will lay out these agricultural areas where people are likely to take them up, and not, as they have done, spend a large amount of money where there is not the slightest chance of the greater portion of the land being taken up at all.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You will see it will.

MR. LOTON: I have always, for a long time past, been in favor of survey before selection, for purposes of agricultural settlement, and that when the land is suitable for the purpose it should be declared as an agricultural area. We have had several of these areas set apart, and one at all events has been surveyed, and others, I believe, are in course of being surveyed. With regard to this particular resolution and the survey of the lands which it is supposed to embrace, my view is—knowing somewhat of the land, but not having the general experience that some members have of it—that it should not be surveyed and mapped out in small blocks of 50 or 60, or 100 acres; and for the simple reason that the land is not good enough. The land that has remained unselected in these districts up to the present is not land that can be utilised with advantage in such small blocks. No doubt it is desirable that people who want to take up land should have every information available, but I do not think that any material advantage will be gained, so far as these particular localities are concerned, by having them surveyed and mapped out, for the simple reason that the greater portion of the land in these districts, within reasonable distance of the Avon valley, has already been selected and purchased. With regard to the agricultural areas set apart along the Great Southern line, I should like to express my disapproval, to a certain

extent, of the way that at all events one of those areas, Katanning, has been laid out. I think the blocks are considerably too small, ranging, as they do, to less than 100 acres side by side, and these drawn for by lots. It will be found that in a very short time very bad results will accrue from this system.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The land is not disposed of by lots now. It was only done when the area was first thrown open, and in view of the large number of applicants. It will not be resorted to again.

MR. LOTON: What I wish distinctly to point out is that the blocks are too small. No man can make a living upon one of these blocks.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He can take two or three.

MR. LOTON: He cannot get them, in all cases. People who wanted two or three contiguous blocks could not get them when they were disposed of by lot. I think that in laying out these areas care should be taken that each block should include some second-rate land, in connection with the better class of land; and this can only be done by making the blocks larger in the first instance. It would be better still to reserve every alternate lot, so that a man who selects one lot may have an opportunity of taking up the adjoining lot afterwards. Unless something is done in this direction we shall find a number of men holding small blocks of land which can be of little or no use to them. A man cannot live by farming alone in this country; he must have a bit of land for running his stock. I shall not oppose the motion before the House; at the same time, I do not see that much good is likely to come out of it so far as these districts are concerned.

MR. CLARKSON: I think the motion is a very important one. I have always been of opinion that survey before selection would greatly encourage the purchase of land. A man who buys a horse, or a cow, or a pig, generally likes to know what he is buying, and you cannot expect a man to buy land without knowing what he is going to buy. At present, very often, he does not know what he is buying. He is shown a lot of leasehold lands, marked out in large blocks, with imaginary lines as boundaries, and he

simply takes a leap in the dark. Not long ago, I happened to be in the Survey Office, and saw three gentlemen there who had just arrived from the Eastern colonies, looking for land. They wanted to know what description of land it was that was shown to them on the map, but they could not tell them at the office. It was somewhere in the Blackwood district, I think, and all the information they could get was that some of the land in the district was good and some of it bad. As I happened to be in the office at the time, and I was known to be an old colonist and might know something about the land, I was appealed to; but, unfortunately, I did not know much of that district, and I could not give them any definite information. These gentlemen wanted something like 30,000 acres, which they told me they were prepared to purchase, if it suited them. I asked them if they expected to find 30,000 acres of good agricultural land in one block, and they said "no, not all agricultural land, but a certain portion of it." If they had expected to get 30,000 acres of good agricultural land in one block, I should have told them I did not think they could get it. But I believe that in the Blackwood district they could get 30,000 acres fit for agriculture and grazing combined. As it was, these people could get no satisfactory information. That is very annoying. If we want to attract population and to settle that population on the soil, we must be prepared to give intending settlers every facility and every information they want, so far as we possibly can; and I see no other way of doing it except by having surveys before selection. But I would go a little further than the hon. member for Northam in this direction. I should suggest that some system of classifying the land should be adopted. I have heard it said that it would be very difficult and very expensive to do this. I cannot see it. I cannot see that it would be so difficult as some people imagine. In fact, I would undertake, with two other practical men, to classify all the land in my district in a month; and, I believe, there are other members in this House who could say the same for their respective districts. What is the difficulty after all? Any practical man who has been in the colony all his life, and who

knows the country, would have no difficulty in classifying the land, in a rough way. In my opinion it is simply absurd to ask the same price for land in this colony all round; and that is where classification would come in. It is simply absurd, when we have land that is worth 50s. an acre and land that is not worth 5s. an acre, to charge one uniform price for it; and, until we are in a position to sell it at something like its fair value, we cannot expect it to be taken up and occupied. The motion is a very good one, but I think it ought to have gone a little further, and not limit it to the Eastern Districts, for nearly every district in the colony is similarly situated.

MR. TRAYLEN: The only phase of the subject I wish to address myself to is the appointment of district agents, and I must give my preference to the suggestion of the hon. member for Northam rather than to that of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and for this reason: it is of the utmost importance that the officer, whoever he may be, should be available and accessible to strangers almost at any time they choose to go to him for information; and it must be obvious to members that a surveyor cannot be in the field surveying the land and, at the same time, be in the town ready to receive strangers, and to furnish them with the required information.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): A man may be a surveyor, and not necessarily engaged in the field. I did not say that this officer was to be engaged in the field surveying.

MR. TRAYLEN: That would mean that we should have to pay him a considerable salary for doing nothing else than indicating to strangers where they could get any land for sale. I do not think we need employ professional surveyors for that, and do nothing else. I hope the suggestion of the hon. member for Northam will be adopted as to the appointment of these agents.

MR. DE HAMEL: I think the most important part of the motion is that relating to the appointment of land agents; and I think it would be better they should be paid a fixed salary rather than work on commission. But I do not think this motion goes far enough. We not only want these agents at Northam, York, and Beverley; we want them

all over the colony. We want them at Albany, at Katanning—

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): You have one at Albany.

MR. DE HAMEL: The Government should appoint an agent at Fremantle and at other important ports of the colony, so that people arriving here, wishing to know where to find land, might be able to obtain the information at once. What does Canada do? Canada is a country that has carried on its colonisation policy more thoroughly than almost any other country in the world. I find that up to two years ago there were no less than seventeen towns at which there were eighteen agents appointed simply for furnishing every possible information to intending settlers as to lands available for settlement in their respective districts. That is what is wanted here. We want to start some systematic system of colonisation. I shall support the motion before the House, but I only regard it as the thin end of the wedge, and I hope before many sessions are over we shall have a good sound colonisation policy, with agents in every district to give intending settlers every information they require, and to point out to them where they can obtain the land they require.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Without dealing with the merits of the motion, I would like to suggest that it is hardly fair to the Government to bind them to the terms of the motion as it has been put forward. I think it should be left to the Government to deal with the matter as they think fit, and not restrict them to the lines proposed in this resolution. I do not think we should tie them down to do all that is set forth here, and to do it in this particular way. I think it should be understood that the Government are not bound to do all these things at once, as proposed in this motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): "As early as possible," it says.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I don't think we should bind them to the terms of this motion in every particular. The hon. member for Northam is a very good authority as to the quantity of land in his own district perhaps, but I noticed—and it is rather significant—that when he was applied to by these visitors to his

district, he was unable to show them any great quantity of land available for selection. However, it is not my intention to oppose the motion, so long as it is understood that it does not bind the Government to adopt these measures, in these very terms, and nothing else.

MR. CANNING: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion as an abstract proposition; but it seems to me that, unless we go further we shall be very much in the position of the ingenuous youth who having bought a saddle, or managed to take a saddle, considered himself fully equipped, the question of obtaining a horse being a matter of no consideration at all. Our first consideration should be to get people to come out here anxious to settle on the land. Now we are asked to provide means to enable people to select land and to provide every facility for settling them on the land, when as a matter of fact we have not the people here to settle on the land. The first thing we require is population to settle on our lands. When we get that population, in considerable numbers, I think these other questions will be found to be simply mere matters of detail, and there will be no difficulty whatever in dealing with them,—whether we shall have survey before selection or survey after selection, or whether we shall have paid agents or agents working on commission. We shall soon settle that. What is wanted now is some systematic and sustained effort for bringing out people here, who will settle on the land.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I merely wish to make one or two remarks in reference to the agricultural areas that have already been declared by the Government, and which some hon. members think have not been laid out in the best way they could have been laid out. From my experience, I do not think it is worth while for a surveyor, when surveying large areas of land, to go picking and choosing the land here and there; at any rate, no great saving would be effected in the cost of surveying. I think the best way is to lay out all the land likely to be taken up, without picking and choosing bits here and bits there. Of course, you would not lay out very barren sand plain or worthless land; but I do not think anything would be

saved by leaving out small pieces here and there, because you may not consider them quite good enough. With reference to what the hon. member for the Swan said about the size of the blocks, I would point out that the Land Regulations provide that the blocks shall not be less than 100 acres; therefore, any applicant may ask for that quantity at least, and we would be almost bound to let him have it. There is nothing to prevent him applying for and taking up several blocks at the same time. He may apply for ten blocks of 100 acres, which would give him 1,000 acres. There is no restriction as to the number of blocks he may take up, provided none of them are less than 100 acres. With regard to Katanning, although what the hon. member said about what occurred at the first start did take place, when there were a great many applicants requiring the same block, and we had to resort to letting them decide it by lot, that system of dealing with the land will not occur in the future; there will be no necessity for it. As to what the hon. member for Toodyay said about classifying land, it must be borne in mind that the whole of our lands are sold very cheap; and although the man who gets a good piece of land gets a very good bargain indeed, still the man who only gets a piece of inferior quality land cannot say that he has made a bad bargain, looking at the low price we charge for our land, 6d. an acre, extending over twenty years. Some people must, under any circumstances, get their land cheaper than others, but, in any case, they all get it cheap enough, whether a man gets the best or the worst. This motion may be a useful one, but I do know that any great good will result from it. The Government already are doing what they can in the way of surveying these areas, and they also have under consideration the best way of giving facilities to persons to go on the land. But it is not a very easy matter. I very much question whether this commission system suggested by the hon. member for Northam would work. You would have to find persons willing to do the work, and they would not do so unless it was remunerative. Then you would want competent persons. Everyone is not a surveyor, and everyone would not understand where the

localities were even when furnished with a map; and I believe that in the present circumstances of the colony it would be a complete failure, speaking generally. If you tried to get persons to do the work on commission, they might not be available; and, if available, they might not be competent. You want a man to be a bit of an enthusiast to deal with this question, and, at the same time, one who is thoroughly competent to give the information required. You also want a man with some knowledge of surveying and a knowledge of maps, so as to be able to furnish inquirers with all the information they wanted. I believe the best plan would be to survey these areas, and to furnish good maps, cheap, all over the colony. If you did that I believe there would be no difficulty whatever in finding land. The difficulty now experienced by persons going to Northam and York is because the land there is not surveyed and mapped out. If these lands had been surveyed, and we had maps of them, inquirers for land would soon know where the available Government land was to be found, in the same way as they do in the Meekering Area, or at Katanning, or Jandacot. You do not hear any complaints of people not being able to find land in those areas. It would be the same with these other lands about York and Northam. If they could get a map of the locality for 6d. or 1s., and the land was surveyed and the boundary posts all numbered, they could easily ascertain whether any piece of land suited them or not. The difficulty the hon. member refers to arises from the land not yet being surveyed. We are doing all we can with the money available, and, as time goes on, we shall have more surveys completed. At the same time, I am quite aware that if there was a sufficient demand for land, it would be a good thing to have capable and experienced persons to show intending settlers where to go for the land best suited for their requirements. But I do not think that at the present time there is sufficient demand, though I hope that very soon there may be, when members may rest assured that the Government will be quite alive to the necessity for supplying all the information they can to all inquirers for land.

MR. THROSSELL: All I can say is, if the Government do not take some

steps to furnish this information, they should give up all idea of getting strangers to settle in these districts. We shall simply go on in our old-fashioned way, slowly but surely. There will be no great progress made in the way of settlement. With the Yilgarn railway passing through one of these districts, I think every possible inducement and facility should be offered to induce settlement along that line. All I can say is, if the Government will not take any steps in the direction I have indicated, I hope they will not send any more visitors to me. Last year, my hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands sent a number of these strangers to me, and my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways did the same. All are sent to Northam. But if the Government will not survey the land, how can I give these people the information they require? Only three days ago I received another letter of introduction with another visitor, from my hon. friend the Premier, who said he knew I recognised the importance of settling good men on the soil, and therefore he sent this gentleman to me. I do my best with these strangers, trotting about the country with them, but I can give them no definite information, and I tell the Government now it is useless their sending any more to me, unless they get these lands surveyed and mapped out.

Motion—put and passed.

EXPENDITURE ON RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid on the table showing the respective amounts expended in connection with the working and upkeep, during the year 1891, of the—

1. Eastern Railway.
2. Northern Railway.
3. Bunbury-Boyanup Railway.
4. Roebourne-Cossack Tramway.

He said the hon. member for York had moved for a return the other day showing the revenue derived from these lines, but that return was robbed of a great deal of its utility, in the absence of any return showing the expenditure in connection with the same lines. Therefore he moved for the present return. He did not want the details under the different

heads of expenditure, but simply the total connected with each line.

Motion—put and passed.

W. A. TURF CLUB BILL.

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

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

On the motion of Mr. Parker, the House went into committee on this bill.

Clause 1—Married women to be capable of holding property, and of contracting as a *feme sole*:

Put and passed.

Clause 2—"Every woman who marries "after the commencement of this Act shall "be entitled to have and to hold as her "separate property and to dispose of in "manner aforesaid all real and personal "property which shall belong to her at the "time of marriage, or shall be acquired "by, or devolve upon her, after marriage, "including any wages, earnings, money, "and property gained or acquired by her "in any employment, trade, or occupation in which she is engaged, or which "she carries on separately from her husband, or by the exercise of any literary, "artistic, or scientific skill":

MR. DE HAMEL moved to strike out the first nine lines, down to the word "wages" inclusive, and substitute in lieu thereof the words following:—"Every married woman, whether married before or after the commencement of this Act, shall be entitled to have and to hold as her separate property, and to dispose of in manner aforesaid, all real and personal property which did or shall belong to her at the time of marriage, or which has devolved upon or been acquired by or which shall devolve upon or be acquired by her after marriage, including any wages." He hoped the committee would accept this amendment. The clause at present only applied to women who married after the bill became law, and afforded no relief to those who had the misfortune to marry before it became law. He thought that was a hardship. Why should they not confer this great blessing on women who were already married, as well as on those who married hereafter? He did not see why the woman who happened to marry the day after this bill became law should have the benefit of the bill, and

the woman who married the day before it became law be deprived of the benefit of it. Why should the woman who marries to-morrow have her property protected against an idle and dissolute husband, while the woman who married yesterday should have no such protection? Why should the drunken husband of one be prevented by law from spending her earnings, while the drunken husband of the other was allowed to spend all his wife had?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Suppose it is already all spent?

MR. DE HAMEL: If it's gone, it's gone.

MR. PARKER was afraid the hon. member was not quite conversant with the bill when he said it would only confer a benefit upon women who married after the commencement of the Act. If he had read the 5th clause, the hon. member would have seen that such was not the case. That clause provided that "every woman married before the commencement of this Act shall be entitled to have and to hold and to dispose of in manner aforesaid as her separate property all real and personal property, her title to which, whether vested or continued, and whether in possession, reversion, or remainder, shall accrue after the commencement of this Act, including any wages, earnings, money and property so gained or acquired by her as aforesaid." It would be seen from this clause that any woman, whether she married before the Act became law or afterwards, was entitled to hold, as her separate property, everything that accrued to her after the bill became law. It seemed to him that was all that any married woman could possibly expect. Of course we had to consider husbands as well as wives. A husband who was already married might fairly say that he married his wife under the law as it stood at the time they were married, and at that time all her property became his by law; and it would be very unjust for the Legislature now to pass a law compelling him to give up all this property which he had acquired years ago under the law of the land. Supposing the husband were a farmer, and his wife, when they were married, ten or twenty years ago, had brought him some cows, could they now fairly ask this man to account to his wife for those cows and

all their progeny; or, if he had sold them, could they now fairly ask him to refund the proceeds, and, if he did not do so, let his wife take him into court, and take proceedings against him? It was ridiculous on the face of it. The husband would say: "I married her under certain circumstances, according to the law of the land at the time: I married that woman because of her cows; I would not have married her at all if it hadn't been for those cows; why should I now be called upon to give up those cows to her, after all these years, or account for the proceeds, when they have virtually been my own property ever since we married?" A husband might fairly ask that. Although they were all desirous of doing all they could to benefit married women, still they must have some little consideration for the married man. The hon. member must be aware that, under the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act, a trustee in bankruptcy took all the estate of the bankrupt, in the same way as the husband under the law at present took the property of his wife (unless there was a settlement); and, if a husband became a bankrupt, the trustee would take the whole of the property, both the husband's and the wife's. No doubt, in some cases, this had been done, and the property had been distributed among the creditors years ago. Were they now going to come upon the husband in that case and call upon him to refund to his wife all this property of hers? Those cows that his wife brought him when they were married may have been taken by the trustee and sold, and the proceeds distributed among the husband's creditors; were they now going to let the wife take her husband into court and make him account to her for the proceeds of those cows, without which he probably would not have married her at all? It was preposterous to think so. He did not think they could be fairly asked to do for women who were already married any more than this bill proposed to do for them, and that was to allow them to hold and dispose of, as their own separate property, any property or earnings that accrued to them after this Act became law. This applied to any property that might be devised to her, and to any earnings she might gain, which would be as much her own property as if she had re-

mained a single woman. They could not reasonably be expected to go back and say to the wife that the property she brought her husband twenty years ago, and which perhaps had been spent or lost in business, must now be returned to her. It would create no end of trouble. This bill, as he had already said when introducing it, went on the lines of the English Act of 1882. That Act was not first brought in, in the Imperial Parliament, in 1882; it was the outcome of two previous bills dealing with the same subject, one passed in 1870 and the other in 1874; and he had not the slightest doubt that the whole question of the rights of women already married and about to be married were fully considered by the Imperial Parliament, and it was not considered wise there to make the law retrospective; nor did he think it would be wise to do so here.

MR. DE HAMEL said it seemed to him that the hon. member's argument was a false one, that, because a husband was married before this bill became law, they were not to protect his wife. The hon. member had put his argument on very low ground indeed when he talked about a man marrying a woman for the sake of her cows. If a man was base enough to do that, he thought the Legislature might fairly step in and protect the wife from such a wretch of a husband as that, and give her the benefit of this bill. He saw nothing in the bill, as suggested by the hon. member, to enable a woman to follow any property that had already been spent or lost. If the property was gone, there was an end of it, and nothing could be done in that case. All he asked was that the property that remained should be protected.

Amendment—put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—"Any money or other estate of the wife lent or entrusted by her to her husband for the purpose of any trade or business carried on by him, or otherwise, shall be treated as assets of her husband's estate in case of his bankruptcy, under reservation of the wife's claim to a dividend as a creditor for the amount or value of such money or other estate after, but not before, all claims of the other creditors of the husband for valuable consideration in money or money's worth have been satisfied";

MR. TRAYLEN moved that this clause be struck out. The whole scope and purport of the bill, as he understood it, was to give a married woman all that belonged to her, but this one clause stood out in direct antagonism to the general scope of the bill. Suppose the case of the cows (referred to by the hon. member for York) occurring after the passing of this bill. A woman possessed of cows in her own right married a farmer who had other cows. Obviously the most profitable thing she could do with her cows was to let her husband use them in connection with his own, and make the farm profitable. But, if by some misfortune or calamity, the husband became a bankrupt, the wife's cows would be lost to her, and this bill would be no protection to her. The only safe way for her would be to sell her cows when she married, and invest the proceeds in shares or debentures, or some other way as provided in the bill. It would not be safe for her, under this clause, to allow her husband to trade with them, and work them on the farm with his own cows, which obviously would be the most profitable and advantageous way of dealing with them.

MR. PARKER said he agreed it did seem to bear somewhat harshly on a married woman; but they must also bear in mind that they had to look after the interests of creditors as well as the interests of married women. This bill provided that if a married woman entrusted her husband with any money or property for the purpose of trading with it, and the husband became a bankrupt, the wife could only come in and claim against the estate after all the other creditors' claims had been satisfied. Of course, the other creditors might be satisfied with a composition, and she would have a right to come in and make her claim. The principle upon which this clause was drawn was analogous to the principle that related to the law of partnership. By the 28th and 29th Vict., cap. 86, a partner was not allowed to prove his claims in competition with other creditors; and the same principle was introduced here in the case of the life-partnership between husband and wife. To strike out this clause would be subversive of that established principle of law. So far as he was concerned,

standing there as he did in the interests of married women, he should not object, if the committee should think proper to strike the clause out; but it seemed to him it would be doubtful whether it would not open the door to—he would not say fraud, but collusion, and to a considerable amount of injury to creditors in cases of bankruptcy.

MR. TRAYLEN said that under clause 6 the door was left quite as wide open to fraud as it would be if this clause were struck out. According to clause 6, all the wife had to do to protect her property was to realise upon it and put the money in the bank. If the husband knew that financially he was on shaky ground, and that bankruptcy was looming ahead, all he had to do was to give his wife all the cash he had and let her put it in the bank in her own name, and it would be protected as her own property.

MR. PARKER: No, it could be followed. Under clause 10 any fraudulent investment by the wife of her husband's money could be followed as if this Act had not passed.

MR. TRAYLEN said that only applied to cases where the wife invested the money without her husband's consent. In the case he referred to, it would not be without the husband's consent, but with his consent. He repeated, if the husband felt himself at all shaky, in a financial sense, he had plenty of ways provided for putting his money away safely under this bill, by giving it to his wife, and letting her invest it in her own name. All he (Mr. Traylen) wished was to extend to the married woman with the cows the same degree of protection as was provided throughout the bill in other cases.

MR. RICHARDSON could not help thinking that to strike out this clause would be to open the door to fraud. After all, a married woman was fairly well protected under the bill, if she had any property in cows or anything else. The best thing she could do if she considered there was any risk in allowing her husband to trade with her cows was to sell them, and put the money in the bank, or invest the proceeds in some other way. If she preferred to run the risk, on the chance of being able to make more money by letting her husband trade with her property, and speculate with it,

that was her own lookout. She must be prepared to take the risk. It appeared to him it would be a very dangerous thing to take away this clause. If they did so, all a bankrupt husband would have to do would be to say that the whole of the property was his wife's, and nobody could touch it. He believed there were many doors open to fraud in this bill, and he thought it would be as well to shut some of them at any rate.

MR. MOLLOY said he had understood that the main object of the bill was to protect married women from idle and dissolute husbands; but now it appeared to him it was proposed to go to the other extreme, and protect the husbands as well, if engaged in business, and make two separate and distinct individuals of the husband and wife. If this clause were struck out, a married woman could lend her husband money to trade with or speculate with, and, if her husband failed, she could come in and prove against his estate like any other person outside, the greatest stranger in the world. He did not understand that the bill was to go that length in separating husband and wife, but it would do so if this clause were expunged, and create an independent business between the wife and the husband. He agreed that married women required protection in many cases, but the protection intended to be afforded was protection against idle and drunken husbands who squandered their wives' earnings, when these women were working hard to support themselves and their families. He very much objected to this clause being expunged.

MR. CLARKSON said he had no doubt this clause would open the door to fraud; he thought the whole bill would open the door to fraud, and altogether upset the existing order of things in matrimonial life. He had opposed the bill on its second reading, and he intended to oppose it now, right through. He was sorry his hon. friend the Attorney General, who was also strongly opposed to the bill, was not in his place that evening. He felt, however, that the feeling of the majority of members was in favor of the bill, so that it would be almost waste of time to oppose it. As the Attorney General pointed out the other day, the whole bill would open the door to fraud in many ways.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must now confine himself to the 3rd clause.

MR. CLARKSON: Well, I am opposed to the 3rd clause, and every other clause.

Question put—That the clause be struck out—and negatived.

Clauses 4 to 22:

Put and passed.

Clause 23: Act to come into operation on 1st April, 1892.

MR. RICHARDSON asked if there was any particular object in postponing the coming into operation of the Act until the 1st April. If not, why not let it become law at once?

MR. PARKER was not aware that there was any particular object in postponing the operation of the Act, except perhaps that it might be desirable to give due notice to ladies about to marry. The 1st of April was not far off, and as the bill had yet to pass through the other House it would probably be the middle of March before it became law. He had no objection, however, to alter the date, or to strike out the clause altogether.

MR. RICHARDSON saw no object in postponing the date for bringing the Act into force. The sooner the better it came into operation. There might be several marriages between this and the 1st of April, and he saw no reason why the women who contracted marriages before that date should not get the benefit of the bill. He moved that the clause be struck out.

MR. CLARKSON said he was opposed to striking out this clause. He thought they could not fix upon a more appropriate date than the 1st of April for bringing the bill into operation.

Question—put and passed, and clause struck out.

Clause 24—Short title:

Put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported.

ESTIMATES, 1892.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 1892:

His Excellency the Governor, £735:

Item put and passed.

Legislative Council, £1,150:

Item put and passed.

Legislative Assembly, £2,170:

MR. A. FORREST said he would like to ask the Treasurer whether the Government intended to make any increase in the salary of the Clerk of the Assembly. The salary was very small, and the duties were very large. They all knew how well those duties were carried out. It was impossible for this gentleman to keep up the position he occupied on the salary he now received, and he hoped the Government would see their way, when the Estimates were recommitted, to make some increase in the salary of this officer.

MR. R. F. SHOLL would like some little information with regard to the item "Reporters for *Hansard*, £500," which he noticed had been increased from £300. Would the Premier give them some information as to the necessity for this increase?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the present arrangements, as members were aware, were temporary, the matter being now under the consideration of the Joint Standing Orders Committee. Under the present arrangement there were two reporters employed in that House; one was the old *Hansard* reporter, who received £400, and the other got £100, which made up this £500. The arrangements, as he had said, were temporary, but of course in any new arrangements that might be made by the Joint Standing Orders Committee, the Government would have to consider the position of these gentlemen. He thought that, so far, the arrangements made by the Government were working very well. So far as he could judge, the reports seemed to be very good, and they were supplied to the Government Printer weekly. He did not know what the Standing Orders Committee would suggest, but he had no doubt that whatever they did suggest would be with the view of placing the reporting even on a better footing than it was at the present time. He should like perhaps to see the *Hansard* reports come out more frequently than weekly; still, of course, if they went in for daily reports it would mean great expense.

MR. RICHARDSON: Once a week is quite enough.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the present arrangements for the reporting were certainly economical, and the Government did all the printing for the weekly issue without any large excess of expenditure.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he did not know, of course, if what one heard was correct, but he thought it was inadvisable that anyone connected with the Press of this colony should be a *Hansard* reporter. He believed the reporter he referred to was a very capable reporter; in fact, everyone knew he was, and with the exception that he was connected with the Press, and wrote for the Press, he would not have any objection to this gentleman reporting for *Hansard*. But he thought that, on principle, it was inadvisable for anyone connected with the Press of this colony, in any way whatever, to be reporting for *Hansard*. Whether the paper he was connected with was supporting the Government or supporting the Opposition, he thought it would be inadvisable that anyone connected with the Press should in future be connected with *Hansard*. It mattered very little at the present time, but in the future he thought it would be very unwise. This matter of the *Hansard* reporting had been left, he believed, to the Joint Committee, and he hoped that committee would consider this matter, and that there would be a decision that no one should be engaged reporting for *Hansard* who was not an independent reporter connected with no newspaper in the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he knew there was a general impression—he had heard it more than once, and he thought it prevailed in that House to some extent; he could not say to what extent—that a gentleman engaged on the Press was not a reliable reporter for *Hansard*. He never could understand that objection. He knew that in South Australia the whole of the reporting for *Hansard* was done by the newspapers.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: But it does not answer, and they are doing away with it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not think that was because the reports were not well done. It seemed to him that the only question at issue was this,—did the person engaged to do the work do it properly? Members themselves were the best judges of that, by

reading their own speeches. If they were not satisfied with the reports as presented to them by the *Hansard* reporters, it seemed to him they had a very easy way of saying so. But because a gentleman happened to be on the staff of a newspaper, it seemed to him that was no disqualification to his being an accurate reporter for *Hansard*. As he said before, the only question was the accuracy of the reports. If the reporter did not do his work properly, depend upon it some means would be found to get rid of him. Of course, in the other colonies the *Hansard* reporting cost an immense sum of money. In Queensland he did not know what it did not cost. There they had a large staff of reporters, and the work was turned out daily. The other colonies had their *Hansard* published weekly, as we did here; and he thought, himself, that the present arrangement was certainly an economical one, very economical indeed. Whether it was satisfactory, rested with members to say. They had had some experience of it now; they had seen these debates which now appeared weekly, and each one could judge whether he was fairly reported or not. He thought there was an advantage even in having reporters connected with the Press to report for that House, because very often they gave very much better reports in the daily press, and the speeches of members were thus presented to all parts of the country. He knew that last session—he had not paid much attention to this session—the *Hansard* reporter for the Upper House gave the reports of the speeches there almost in full in the newspaper he was connected with, and they were thus presented to the people of the colony. That, he thought, was distinctly an advantage. Even now he believed members were more fully reported in the newspaper with which this gentleman was connected than they otherwise would be. If that was not an advantage he should like to know why. The desire of members, no doubt, was that their speeches should be printed and sent forth to the world; and it seemed to him that the gentlemen connected with the Press were the only persons who could facilitate the object in view. However, what the opinion of members might be, he wished to state for himself that he saw no disadvantage, in the

present circumstances of the colony, in having gentlemen connected with the Press reporting for *Hansard*, so long as they reported properly and correctly.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that so far as the *Hansard* reporting was concerned he had no fault to find. It was only on the matter of principle that he objected. He thought the principle was a wrong one, that anyone connected with the newspaper Press should also be connected with *Hansard*. He knew that this gentleman was a very capable reporter, and, so far as he knew, the reports were accurate, and it was only the matter of principle that he objected to.

MR. A. FORREST said perhaps the hon. member would tell them in which way his principle was affected. It was amusing to hear hon. gentlemen sometimes say they objected to this and that on principle. Surely, so long as the men who were engaged reporting for *Hansard* did their work in a satisfactory manner, members had nothing to complain of. He was certain that members were very pleased with the way their speeches had been reported this session; and if for no other reason than what was said a few days ago, that the newspapers objected to the very long speeches of some hon. members, he thought they should not begrudge this extra £100 a year to these *Hansard* reporters, when they knew they had to sit there till 12 o'clock at night sometimes. They could not expect one reporter to do it; it would be impossible for one man to do it; his brains could never stand it. After taking all the speeches down in shorthand, he had to copy it all out again for the Government Printer. He should like the hon. member to see what *Hansard* costs in the other colonies; he would not object to this paltry £500. It would not pay one of the *Hansard* reporters in the other colonies.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I didn't object to the £500. I objected to the principle.

MR. A. FORREST said he noticed when he was in Sydney attending the Federal Conference there must have been at least eight reporters there; they went out every five minutes, one after the other, like a lot of sheep. Here we found two solitary reporters sitting there for four or five hours. He considered the work was well done. Whether

the reporters were newspaper men or independent men was a matter that did not concern anyone there, so long as the work was done well, and he hoped that the vote would pass. Even if it was larger, he would be prepared to support it.

MR. MOLLOY said that what he understood the hon. member for the Gascoyne to object to was the principle, and the principle he objected to (as he understood the hon. member) was, that proprietors of newspapers should not have the absolute control of the *Hansard* reporting. It struck him that was a very forcible objection, especially when they considered that there might be connected with these newspapers certain persons who were large shareholders. He thought that in that light the argument of the hon. member for the Gascoyne was a very effective one. He did not understand the hon. member to object to the additional cost of the *Hansard* reporting staff, but to the reporting getting into the hands or under the control of any newspaper.

Vote put and passed.

Colonial Secretary's Office, £1,475:

Put and passed.

Audit Department, £1,665:

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether the work of this department had increased so much as to necessitate two extra clerks, and also that the incidental clerical expenses should be increased from £5 to £100?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the work in the Audit Department had increased, and he was afraid they would have to ask for more another year. Auditing, unless it was complete and satisfactory, was of course worthless, and they hoped to make the audit a real audit now, and not as it had been in the past—a sort of half-and-half business. Some departments never audited at all, or, at all events, in a very superficial way, while others received the whole attention of the department. He thought there was great room for improvement still in the Audit Office, but they were doing what they could to make it as complete as possible. Members could easily realise that when every department of the Government required to be audited it took a good many people to do the work, besides the ordinary business connected with the

receipt and payment of money in the Treasury.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked if this vote included the auditing of the railway accounts; did the Auditor General audit the accounts of the Railway Department?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes.

Vote—put and passed.

Medical Department, £43,109 11s.:

MR. RICHARDSON said there was a great discrepancy between the salaries of the Principal Medical Officer and the Resident Medical Officer at Perth; one received £475 and £50 forage allowance, while the other only received £200. What he should like to know was who did the work?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Principal Medical Officer was also the Colonial Surgeon, and the head of the Medical Department of the colony. The administration of the whole department was in his hands and under his control, and he was responsible to the Government, in the same way as the head of any other department. The other officer was simply the Resident Medical Officer at the Colonial Hospital, where he had quarters, and also his board, in addition to his salary.

MR. A. FORREST asked what steps the Government intended to take to provide a medical officer for West Kimberley? It was some time ago now since the last one died.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government were most anxious to fill up both these appointments, one at Derby, and the other at Wyndham, but they found considerable difficulty in getting suitable officers to go up there. It had given the Government a great deal of trouble. No one cared to go to these tropical places. He did not think there was a medical officer now in the colony who would accept an appointment either at Wyndham or Derby. If they combined the duties of medical officer with those of resident magistrate, it would probably make the difficulty greater, for if they got a suitable medical officer he might not also be a suitable magistrate. The whole question of these Northern appointments was a great trouble to the Government, but they would fill up these two appointments at the earliest possible time.

MR. A. FORREST suggested that the Government should go outside the service and outside the colony, if they could not find anyone in the service, or in the colony, who would undertake the dual duties of magistrate and medical officer at the North. He did not think they would ever get a medical officer to go to West Kimberley for £200, and he thought a medical man was more important than a magistrate up there.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item, "Yilgarn Resident Medical Officer, £200," said while he considered that there should be a medical man at Yilgarn, he thought that with its large population it ought to provide its own medical officer without being subsidised to the extent of £200. There was another objection he had, and that was to the appointment by the Government of officers before that House voted the money for them, or was asked to vote the money. He believed that had been the case with this medical officer at Yilgarn.

MR. A. FORREST said he had something to do with this appointment. There was a great outcry at Yilgarn; people were dying there for the want of a doctor, and strong representations were made to the Government by himself and others interested in the fields as to the absolute necessity of sending a doctor up there. Fortunately, Dr. Black happened to be here at the time, on his way to the other colonies, and influence was brought to bear upon him to induce him to go to Yilgarn, and at last he consented. He thought the Government deserved very great credit indeed for the appointment. If the Government had to wait for a vote of that House before they made any appointment, the sooner we got back to the old system the better.

MR. TRAYLEN did not think that £200 was too much for such a man as Dr. Black, and he congratulated the Government on having secured the services of a man of his abilities to go out to such a place as Yilgarn.

MR. CLARKSON thought that £200 for a young, active, and properly qualified medical officer like Dr. Black, was little enough, in an out-of-the-way district like Yilgarn, where he could get nothing but salt water and tinned meat, and often had to ride 100 miles at a stretch, with not a bit to eat all the way.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the object in granting these subsidies to medical officers was to induce them to go and settle in places where there were only a small population and little practice. On these goldfields the population already was considerable, and there ought to be an extensive and profitable private practice for a doctor there. What he should like to know was whether the Government was bound to continue this subsidy of £200 if the population (as they hoped it would) increased largely at Yilgarn.

MR. SIMPSON thought it must have escaped the hon. member that this appointment was over a district 100 miles long, and he did not think a doctor would get rich on £200 a year, when he must keep a horse, and when horse feed could not be had under 30s. a week, or possibly £2.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) pointed out that £200 a year was not the outside sum on these Estimates for a resident medical officer; there was Gascoyne, for instance, where they gave the medical officer £250 a year. As to making appointments without the leave of the House, he thought there must be a limit to that rule; it would not do to have a hard-and-fast rule, and not allow the Government to make any appointment without first consulting that House. There were cases of emergency and of necessity, in which it would be almost culpable on the part of the Government to take no action. All the Government had to think of in such cases, was whether their action was likely to meet with the approval of the House afterwards. They were not afraid of spending money without authority, in cases of emergency or of necessity, so long as the House approved of their action when they came before it. If it did not approve, it could very soon let the Government know it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he also noticed another new appointment—a resident medical officer at Beverley. He should have thought, with railway communication established, and only 20 miles from York, that Beverley could have done very well without a subsidised medical officer. There were equally important places at the North which had not a resident medical officer, although they were hundreds of miles away from a

doctor, and had no railway communication. He moved that the item "Beverley, Resident Medical Officer, £100," be struck out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) hoped the committee would not listen to such a thing. The hon. member had evidently made up his mind to have a tilt at every item on these Estimates. As to Beverley being only 20 miles from York, the same might be said of Northam and Newcastle, yet each of those places had a resident medical officer. Some consideration, surely, was due to the people living in these outlying districts. It seemed to him that if we could get a duly qualified man for £100 a year, the money would be very well spent indeed. His opinion was that we could afford to have these medical men almost all over the colony, so long as we had not to pay them more than we did now.

MR. HARPER said the necessity for a medical officer at Beverley had been strongly emphasised within the last few months, when they had two cases of men who died in the train on their way to Perth from Albany. Apart from this, as the Premier had said, people who went out to live in these back settlements with their families were surely entitled to some consideration, and ought not to be left without medical assistance within a reasonable distance. He thought it was in the interests of the whole community, and certainly in the interests of settlement, that, as far as possible, wherever there was a congregation of people, there should be a medical officer within their reach. The necessity for a medical man at Beverley had been strongly urged upon the Government by the settlers of the district, and he was surprised that anyone should cavil at it.

Question put—That the item be struck out—and negatived.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item "Katanning, Resident Medical Officer, £100," said that, considering there was already a medical officer at the Williams, he thought that officer might also do duty at Katanning.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Resident Medical Officer (who was also the Magistrate) at the Williams was likely to go on leave, and some arrangements might be made by which the magistracy at the Williams need not be

perpetuated, but the vote was asked for on these Estimates because no arrangements had yet been made. Katanning was 70 miles from the Williams, and was becoming an important settlement, and he hoped to see the place develop into one of the principal agricultural centres of the colony. So far from cutting down, he thought it would be necessary to increase the Government staff in that locality very soon.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said if it was understood that the officer at the Williams was not to be continued he had no objection to this Katanning vote, but he did not see what they wanted two for.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he should not like to make a promise, but any economical arrangement that could be made would be made.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said if he could not get a promise, he would move that the item be struck out.

MR. LOTON thought that in the case of newly opened districts like Katanning we ought not to wait until there were a number of deaths before appointing a medical officer. The settlers in these outlying districts, even with the little aid they got from the Government towards supporting a medical officer, found that they had as much as they could do to pay for medical attendance; and you could not get a medical man to go to these sparsely populated districts unless you guaranteed him something certain to start upon. The appointment of a medical officer at Katanning would not do away with the necessity of a medical officer at the Williams; the people who settled at Katanning would not be drawn from the Williams. What he did object to with regard to these votes for medical officers was that once the vote was granted, there was no end to it. No matter how the population increased the vote still appeared on the Estimates. He thought the Government should consider whether a district or township attained a certain amount of population, it was not in a position to do without this aid. These votes should be limited to sparsely populated and newly settled districts, where there was not sufficient private practice for a medical man to live on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) pointed out that these grants in aid were

not a dead loss; these medical officers had to do all the Government work; they had the police, the railway servants, paupers, the natives, and others to attend to, and he questioned very much, if we had to pay them a fee for each attendance, whether we could have the work done so cheaply. He believed it would come to a great deal more than £100 a year.

MR. PIESSE thought that of all the items on the Estimates this was one that the House ought to let stand. They were all anxious to see settlement extending, and new agricultural districts started, and the least they could do was to give the settlers this little assistance. This medical officer at Katanning would have to serve the whole district, and not the township alone, and he thought it would be generally agreed that the Katanning people were only asking what they really deserved. The mere fact of there being a medical officer at the Williams did not do away with the necessity of having one at Katanning, where the population was increasing and the want of a medical man very much felt. At the time of the last Census the population had increased from 1,300 to 2,350, and by this time it was probably 2,500, scattered over a large area of country. It must be remembered that these people who went out to open up fresh settlements were doing good to the whole colony, and benefiting the whole community, and the least we could do was to give them some little encouragement in this way.

MR. DE HAMEL said he did not object at all to this £100 for a medical officer for Katanning, if this was the only additional expenditure contemplated. But what were the facts? Hitherto the whole district, including the Williams, was served by one officer, the Resident Magistrate and medical officer at the Williams, at a cost of £270 per annum; but now it was proposed, in addition, to provide a stipendiary magistrate for Katanning at £315, and a medical officer at £100, making a total of £685, instead of £270.

MR. HASSELL said he might point out what the hon. member had apparently forgotten as to having a magistrate at Katanning, and that was that the cost of taking cases to be tried at the

Williams, the expense of witnesses and so on, would probably cost the country more than the salary of the Magistrate at Katanning.

MR. A. FORREST was surprised at the hon. member for the Gascoyne thinking that one man could be Medical Officer and Magistrate of the two districts. It would be impossible for one man to do it. He thought the Government had done quite right in providing a rising town like Katanning not only with a doctor, but also a magistrate. They already had a gaol and a lockup there, and a police-station, and now they wanted a magistrate, and the Government acted quite right in giving them one.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he really thought the hon. member for West Kimberley was not only financing the Government, but also driving them. He seemed to boss the whole concern. People in the Northern districts, with much more important townships than Katanning, had to be satisfied with a medical officer hundreds of miles away, but, in this part of the colony, every twopenny-halfpenny town required its own medical officer and its own magistrate. The next thing they would require would be a town hall. He objected to a member being allowed, because he was a supporter of the Government, to ask the Government to give his district all these things. He thought it was time the Government should learn to say "no," when outrageous items like some of those he saw on these Estimates—and he would challenge every one of them—were asked for. He did not see why, simply because a member supported the Government, he should have all these luxuries (he called them).

MR. PIESSE did not think the Government, in the case of Katanning, had been inspired or prompted by anyone. It was a spontaneous act on their part, seeing the growing importance of this district, to make provision for some of its wants; and a medical officer was one of them.

MR. TRAYLEN, referring to the item "Government Analyst, £25," said this was either too much or too little. If this was all the money that was provided for this purpose, it might as well be left out altogether, because it would only pay for about eight analyses. But he took it that this £25 was only a kind of retaining fee

to some gentleman who should hold this appointment, and who, by virtue of that appointment, would have at his disposal all the necessary apparatus, tests, etc., for conducting analyses. But he did not see any money for him to work upon, after this retaining fee was paid. Last year the House took into consideration the question of the adulteration of alcoholic beverages going on in the colony, and a select committee drew up a report on the subject; and, if the Government would read between the lines of that report they would see that somebody—whom the select committee, if they had wished, could have indicated, but they thought it wiser not to do so at the time; or he would put it in this way: if the Government would read between the lines of that report they would see that there must be a large amount of adulteration going on in connection with alcoholic liquors. By way of supporting him in this allegation, one member of the Upper House and a widely-known and respectable merchant at Fremantle, forwarded him a circular that had been received from London, in which wonderful circular it was announced that something which they gave the name of brandy to, and other alcoholic beverages, could actually be supplied to the trade at 6½d. per bottle, straw envelopes and case for packing it included. Now the strength of that beverage must be something to talk about. Was it worth while to allow villainous stuff like that to come into the colony unchallenged; or, what was perhaps more to the point, was it worth while to allow stuff of this kind to be made up in the colony? If we insisted on legalising the sale of alcoholic beverages to the public, it seemed to him that we should endeavor as far as possible to provide that they should have a drop of the real "cratur," and not any kind of vile compound. Of course, from his own standpoint even the real stuff itself was injurious, but certainly this other concocted poison was worse. He thought the whole matter should be thoroughly inquired into, and this system of adulteration checked as far as possible; and this was the reason why he asked the Government whether they had some other funds besides this £25 from which they could pay for analysing, as the occasion might require.

In the Police Bill passed this session provision was made for testing beverages, but it seemed to him useless making such a provision unless there was money to pay for conducting these tests.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could only inform the hon. member that there were funds available for all these small items of expenditure that were not specially provided for in these Estimates. This £25, as the hon. member said, was merely a retaining fee; the Government paid for all analyses. These small items generally came out of the vote for "Miscellaneous Services," and incidental expenses, which the hon. member would find on page 33. There was always a way to find money, although it might not be apparent on the Estimates, generally out of this "Miscellaneous" vote. A great number of assays of minerals had been made for the Government, and the gentleman who made them received his fees; but he was not aware of many analyses of liquor having been made.

MR. RICHARDSON thought there ought to be some provision made for analysing liquors, and that the police should be instructed to take samples for that purpose.

MR. COOKWORTHY understood the select committee last session to state that the Adulteration Act could not be enforced because there were no funds available to carry out the Act. He thought funds ought to be provided; certainly this £25 was hardly sufficient for all purposes.

MR. MOLLOY understood that this £25 was simply a retaining fee for the gentleman who acted as Government Analyst, and who would probably hold some other appointment, in the same way as the Health Officer of the Perth Local Board, who received the princely sum of £25 a year, was also one of the principal medical gentlemen of the city.

MR. TRAYLEN said that to be a competent analyst required special training and an expensive apparatus, and, if the work was going to be done at all, it ought to be done thoroughly. So long as it was understood there were other funds which the Government could draw upon for this purpose, he would say no more.

Vote put and passed.

Police Department, £43,109 11s.:

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether this vote was considered sufficient, in view of the native depredations going on in the Northern parts of the colony, and the promise of the Government to increase the amount of police protection. It appeared to him that the increase in the number of police provided on these Estimates was an insignificant increase, especially looking at the increasing demand for police protection on the various goldfields as well as by the Northern settlers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was informed by the Colonial Secretary, who was the Minister in charge of this department, and also by the Commissioner of Police, that the provision made on these Estimates would be sufficient. He found that the total number of the police force provided for here was 239, and it might be of interest to members if he mentioned how it was proposed to distribute the police in what might be called the disturbed districts at the North. The distribution in the Geraldton district would be as follows: Greenough, 2 men and 2 horses; Dongara, 6 men and 6 horses; Northampton, 3 men and 3 horses; Mount Wittenoom, 3 men and 10 horses; Mount Gould, 6 men and 10 horses; Thomas River, 4 men and 10 horses; junction of the Gascoyne and Lyons, 2 men and 4 horses; Mount Labouchere, 6 men and 11 horses; Carnarvon, 6 men and 3 horses, and 2 boats; Murchison Goldfields, 3 men and 6 horses. Members would see there was a considerable addition provided for that part of the colony. He could only say that he was assured that ample provision had been made to meet the difficulties that had arisen in connection with the natives, and he thought they would be able to cope with the difficulty. He had a report recently received from the Magistrate of the Gascoyne district, who said that in the present dry state of the country, if they had a thousand police and a thousand horses they could not do anything, unless they had forage carted for their horses, the whole country was so destitute of feed. The Government was as much alive as anyone could possibly be to the necessity of coping with this native difficulty, and members might rest assured that the Government would do all they could in the matter.

Vote agreed to.

Gaols, £13,540 4s.:

Put and passed.

Rottnest Native Prison, £2,907 10s.:

MR. MOLLOY would like some information as to the necessity for this expenditure. He noticed that the salaries alone for this establishment amounted to £1,262 10s. He had taken some little trouble to find out the average number of native prisoners that these salaried officials had to look after, and he found that the average lately had been about 40. It seemed to him monstrous that for the custody of 40 native prisoners the country should be involved in an annual expenditure, for salaries alone, of £1,262 10s., starting with a Superintendent at £325 a year, besides other allowances or perquisites. The sooner this huge and expensive establishment was broken up, the better would it be in the interests of the country. These 40 wretched natives could be better utilised in some other parts of the colony, or they could be lodged in some part of the convict prison at Fremantle, which was now half empty. He noticed that while they paid the Superintendent of the Fremantle Prison, the principal gaol in the colony, only £300 a year, they had at Rottnest a brigadier-general, or something, drilling this black brigade of 40 natives, at a salary of £325 and perquisites. He thought, that for the credit of the colony, it was time this absurdity ceased.

MR. QUINLAN said he had already referred to this matter this session, and he could endorse in a great measure what the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy) had just said, that it would be wiser for the Government to make some alteration in this department. It was late now to take any active steps in the matter this year, but he hoped the Government would see the wisdom of taking some action in the direction of abolishing this establishment altogether as a native prison. He would be in favor of the Reformatory for boys remaining on the island, for he thought it was desirable they should be kept apart from more hardened criminals. He hoped the Aborigines' Protection Board would take some notice of the feeling of the House in regard to this native prison.

MR. CLARKSON would like to see every item under this vote struck out,

with the exception of the Reformatory for Juveniles. The prison, as a native reformatory, had been a perfect failure, and so had the officer at present at the head of it. It was a well-known fact to everyone acquainted with the subject that these natives came out of this establishment tentimes worse than when they went there, and he thought it was time it was broken up. We made a grant of £5,000 a year for the aborigines, which was invested in some Board. Nobody appeared to know who the members of the Board were, or how they spent the money, or whether they spent it or not. If this native prison was not going to be broken up, he thought it should be handed over to this Board, and let them do what they liked with it, and not let it remain any longer a charge upon the revenue of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he also would like to see the Government have the control of this £5,000 provided every year, under the Constitution Act, for the Aborigines' Board; and he thought they must consider whether some arrangement could not be made, when they altered the Constitution Act, for doing away with this Board. He thought it would be more satisfactory if the Government, who were responsible to Parliament, should control the expenditure of this money, rather than a Board responsible to no one. With reference to this item of the native prison at Rottnest, he might inform members that although the amount appeared large, it ought not to be so large as it was here shown, for this reason: for many years past—ever since it had been established, in fact—all the sales of stores upon the island to the officers of the institution had never been credited to the institution, but credited to the item, "Sales of Government property." During the year this item came to about £300. There was another item which the institution did not get credit for; it did all the work connected with the harbor and light department on the island, and the pilot crew, supplying them with stores, buildings, etc. Altogether, if they looked into the matter—as he would during the year—they would find that this establishment was charged with many items it ought not to be charged with, and did not get credit for what it ought to have. The revenue derived from the island was not perhaps what it ought to be, but he believed the

present Superintendent—although some members had spoken disparagingly of him—brought more energy to bear upon this matter than probably any other man who had been there. Last year the island yielded £700 worth of produce, although the number of natives there were considerably reduced, and many of those who remained were old and infirm. He would ask members to pass this vote now, and leave it to the Government to see what could be done between this and next year. They would try to reduce the expenditure if possible, and they might probably be able to repeal that portion of the Constitution Act by which we had to provide £5,000 a year for the Aborigines' Board for looking after the old and infirm and sick natives. He thought the Government could do this as well as the Board. At the same time, they must not disparage this Board; the members of it devoted a good deal of time and trouble to the natives, solely because they considered it their duty to do so. The Government were not aware how the money was spent; the Board spent it in the way they thought right.

MR. LOTON: Does the £700 include the sale of salt?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes.

MR. LOTON: Can you give us the proceeds of the sale of salt alone?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not off-hand.

MR. LOTON: I see we incur an expenditure of £360 a year on these salt works, and it seems to me it would be better to do away with them if they are not reproductive.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think they are.

MR. CANNING asked whether the Premier was aware that there was a strong feeling abroad that the time had come when Rottnest should be thrown open in some way or the other to the public generally? That it had not been a success as a native prison was generally admitted, and it was a question for the consideration of the Government whether some other method of dealing with troublesome natives might not be found. It was hardly for members of that House to suggest a scheme; it was rather the business of the Government to bring forward some comprehensive plan for dealing with

these natives other than sending them to Rottnest. The present plan had not worked well in any way, either as a means of punishing these natives or of reforming them, or in deterring them from committing depredations; and as an industrial undertaking it had been shown that it had not been a success.

MR. MOLLOY said the revenue from this department for this year was set down at £800, and the expenditure at £2,907 10s., representing a loss of £2,107. Was not this a high price to pay for the supervision and control of 40 native prisoners? He would ask whether, in view of this disparity, it was necessary they should have a Superintendent at a salary of £325 to look after these natives. He moved that the salary be reduced by £125.

MR. A. FORREST said he would like to ask the hon. member for Perth whether he would like to stay at Rottnest for less than £325. The remarks that had been made regarding the Superintendent were altogether uncalled for. To ask the House to reduce the salary by £125 was asking to do a thing which he was sure they would never agree to. If the hon. member would make some suggestion as to the island being handed over to the Aborigines' Protection Board, he would in all probability get some support; but hon. members would not, he was sure, listen to a suggestion to reduce the salary of this officer.

MR. MOLLOY said that because the hon. member for West Kimberley said he would not be listened to, was no reason why they should take it as a fact. He did not mean to have the whole establishment swept away; for that was impracticable at the present time, and, therefore, he sought to obtain an opinion on the subject from the House by moving to reduce the salary of the gentleman who was practically the head warden there. It was not necessary to have a high-salaried officer at the head of the establishment. He thought, as he had already said, the native prisoners should be removed to the Fremantle prison, where they would be under control without any extra expense to the country. If the gentleman concerned was a valuable officer, and could not accept the reduced salary, the Government might find something else for him; but the

country should not be called upon to pay £325 as the salary attaching to a post of this kind.

MR. COOKWORTHY said he would support the item; but at the same time he thought the establishment at Rottneest should be abolished.

Question put—That the vote be reduced by £125—and negatived.

Vote agreed to.

Printing Department, £7,057 :

Put and passed.

Inspection of Stock, £1,152 :

MR. A. FORREST asked whether the amount provided for this work was sufficient. There was a large amount of stock in quarantine, and if the sum put down for inspection was found to be insufficient, would the Government be able to provide further funds?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the head of the department thought the sum named would be sufficient. If it were found to be not so, the Government would not hesitate to spend any further sums that were necessary to stamp out the disease of scab as soon as possible.

MR. TRAYLEN said that, notwithstanding the Act which was passed last session, scab was not decreasing, and he would like to ask the Government whether they were satisfied with the ability of the Chief Inspector. Was he sufficiently zealous in his work? He noticed that whenever he brought a case into Court it was nearly always dismissed or a small fine inflicted.

MR. A. FORREST said the Chief Inspector was a most able officer, but there was a reason to account for what the hon. member for the Greenough complained of. The reason was that when a case was brought into Court the bench was packed, and the defendant only fined a nominal sum, or the case dismissed altogether. Until power was given to someone outside the local justices to deal with the matter, scab would never be eradicated.

MR. SIMPSON thought this a most serious charge to bring against the Magistrate of the district, who was a thoroughly conscientious one. He protested against such an allegation being made by a gentleman who seemed to occupy the position of "sixth Minister." He had heard what the reason for the

present state of things was, but he did not wish to assert it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he believed the Inspector was an excellent officer.

MR. TRAYLEN said he would then like to know where the fault lay in the scab not being eradicated.

MR. CLARKSON said that there was a very great difficulty in eradicating scab when it once got hold. The Chief Inspector was an able officer and was well up in his duties.

MR. PARKER said he had a theory why scab was spreading, and one which seemed to be a reasonable theory. The Greenough and Victoria districts abounded in thickets, and it was known that when scabby sheep got into these it was difficult to get them out for muster. Even if the greatest precautions were taken some would be left behind, and they ultimately contaminated others. Another reason was that some of these settlers did not assist the Inspector as much as they should do. Some time ago a number of settlers agreed to have a general dipping all round, but a minority would not fall in with the arrangement, and therefore the good that might have been done was not done.

MR. CANNING said there must be some reason why things were worse now than they were before the passing of the Act of last session. Persons were brought before the Court for breaches of the Act and were dismissed. This must be paralysing to the work of the Inspector, and he thought some amendment should be made in the Act giving the Inspector summary powers to deal with cases, without having recourse to the courts.

MR. R. F. SHOLL also thought the Inspector should be clothed with greater powers. He was satisfied that the magistrates acted conscientiously, but he thought that they might interpret clauses of the Act differently from what was intended by the framers of the Act, or those who passed it.

Vote agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 11, p.m.