

was a sufficient reserve fund. The Treasurer made his statement on the strength of some bank manager that 2s. 6d. was sufficient.

THE TREASURER: I said 2s. 11d.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We will say 3s. I want to give the House one single fact. Members will perhaps know a banking institution in London called Birkbeck's, perhaps one of the soundest institutions next to the London and Westminster Bank, and Birkbeck keep all their funds liquid. What was the actual effect 20 months ago when there was a run on Birkbeck's bank? Before they could stop the panic they paid out 24½ per cent. of their gold. If that could happen to a sound banking institution, would anyone say that 3s. in the pound is a sufficient gold reserve in our Savings Bank? No bank manager in the world who understands the question would say that 3s. was a sufficient gold reserve.

THE TREASURER: You should take Australian statistics.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am taking my own figures. We have a Savings Bank with two millions of the people's money, and we have invested nearly £1,800,000. I say the liquid portion of the fund is only about £200,000, and I think that is not safe and proper financing. The account ought to be put in a different position. While we are perfectly safe so far as the creditors are concerned, because the State is behind the bank, and if there was not a shilling there the State would have to and would find the money, the financial position is not a good one, and the Government are not wise in using so much of the Savings Bank money. The Government should be satisfied in raising a 3½ per cent. loan if they can get one. Next, they should go to London for the money; and next the works on which they are going to spend the money they borrow should be reproductive enough to pay 3½ per cent. with sinking fund. Again, the Government should make every effort in regard to the management of the State so as to reduce the expenditure, and place as much revenue as possible upon reproductive works. I believe the Government are moving in that direction, and because I believe that I desire to encourage them and to express my satisfaction at what they are doing. In many respects

I approve of the Government. In some respects I disapprove of them. That is natural. However, I wish to offer these remarks for what they are worth, and having done so, I thank hon. members for giving me the opportunity to do so and for listening to me so patiently.

On motion by Mr. HIGHAM, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:40 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 3rd November, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Roads Act, 1902—(a.) By-laws of the Yalgoo District Roads Board; (b.) By-law of the North-East Coolgardie District Roads Board. 2, Collie Municipality—By-law made under "The Weights and Measures Act, 1899." 3, Western Australian Government Railways—Alterations to Classification and Rate Book. 4, Fremantle Harbour—Reports, etc., as to the best method of providing appliances and accommodation for dealing with cargo and vessels at Fremantle. 5, Department of Agriculture—Annual Report for the year ending 30th June, 1903.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In reference to the report as to harbour

facilities at Fremantle, the plans now on the table of the Legislative Assembly (that House having called for them first), after remaining there one week, would then be laid on the table of this House.

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY'S LANDS.

HON. J. M. DREW asked the Colonial Secretary : 1, Whether, since the report of the Joint Select Committee of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly on the Midland Railway Company, Limited, was adopted by Parliament, the Government has consented to the sale of any of the Company's lands. 2, The total acreage of the lands the sale of which the Government has sanctioned since the adoption of the report. 3, Whether, in accordance with the Joint Select Committee's report, the Government has withheld its consent to the sale of lands by the Company, except upon the same conditions as to area, residence, and improvements as apply to Government lands. 4, Has the Government received the proceeds of all sales of land by the Company since the Joint Select Committee's report was adopted. 5, To what purchase have such proceeds been devoted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, About 8,000 acres; the applications for consent to these sales were made prior to the date on which the Company was notified that no farther sales would be permitted, except subject to conditions. 3, Yes; with the exception of the area mentioned above. 4, Yes. 5, The information is given in the accompanying return. (See Parliamentary Paper No. 29.)

PASTORAL LEASES, KIMBERLEY—EXPLANATION.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Before we proceed with the business of the House, I desire to say a few words in reference to a subject which has been, if I may use the term, a bone of contention between myself and Mr. Wesley Maley. That hon. member made certain statements, in speaking on the Address-in-Reply, and I afterwards, speaking on the authority of information supplied by the Lands Department, gave those statements a denial. The hon. member subsequently

asked a series of questions, which I answered, and which answers clashed with information I had previously given to the House when speaking on the Address-in-Reply. I regret that the information first supplied by the Lands Department was incorrect, and I take this the first opportunity that Mr. Maley and myself have been in the House together for some time for making this explanation, which I consider is due to him. Members will recollect the circumstances, and the explanation of the matter is that when inquiry was instituted into the statements which had been made by the hon. member, the officer who was intrusted with the prosecution of the inquiries satisfied himself with (as it were) the surface aspect of the question, and did not go deep enough to find out the procedure which had been followed. Hence the reason for my having given information which turned out to be apparently incorrect. The effect of the procedure adopted was the same as I stated, but the method of obtaining that effect was not the same. I may say that the officer to whom this inaccuracy was traced was suspended, remained suspended for three or four weeks, and was then reinstated after a very severe reprimand from his Minister; and I am inclined to think that the officer was treated leniently, because his remissness has placed this House, the Lands Department, and myself in an extremely awkward position. With regard to the land itself, an explanation has been given by the Under Secretary for Lands, the gist of which I will read to the House:—

The whole of the land in question was applied for by Mr. Copley, and portions of it by Cameron, R. T. Smith, F. Johnston and H. Gunter, Roscoe and Parker. The board allotted Cameron, Smith, and Johnston's lots almost in the form in which the applications were made, and allotted Copley all that portion of the land south of the production of the southern boundary of Reserve 8215, thus throwing out Gunter's and Roscoe and Parker's applications. Copley, however, refused to take the land allotted to him; and on his withdrawing his application the blocks which had been applied for by Gunter, Roscoe and Parker were granted as shown on the plan.

Thus it will be seen that while the effect of the original applications being granted without reference to a board was incorrectly stated, the fact, nevertheless, remains that the original applicants for

the land got the land which they applied for. It was with regard to this point that the officer who made the inquiry did not go deep enough into the matter. The minute of the Under Secretary farther states that instructions have been issued to the department that all information required for Parliament should pass through the Minister, and be initialled by the officer responsible for its correctness. I feel that this explanation is due to Mr. Maley; and I hope that nothing I have said on this subject has caused that hon. member any pain or hurt his feelings. I intend to keep these papers by me in the House for a few days; and if any member wishes to see them, I shall be glad to give the opportunity.

COMPANIES DUTY ACT CONTINUANCE BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time.

BILLS FOR PUBLIC BODIES, JOINT STANDING ORDER.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE PRESIDENT brought up the report of the Standing Orders Committee on message No. 13 from the Legislative Assembly, which transmitted a resolution,—

That Joint Standing Order No. 30, relating to private Bills, be amended by adding thereto the words "Provided that this standing order shall not apply to any Bill promoted by a municipality or roads board."

The committee recommended that the proposal of the Assembly be agreed to, but that the words "or roads board" be struck out.

Report received.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee be agreed to.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: In what position did we stand? Another place had applied for the alteration of a Joint Standing Order, the product of the Joint Standing Orders Committee. Had that committee been consulted as to the alteration, and was this procedure usual and regular? Surely such a matter should have been considered by that committee, and a joint determination arrived at and recommended to both Houses simulta-

neously, which, if adopted, would become a Joint Standing Order of the two Houses. As a member of the Joint Standing Orders Committee, he knew that this message had not come before the committee, and he was at a loss to know how the matter came before this House at all. The procedure seemed irregular and unusual; and an explanation from the Chairman as to the constitutional position of the matter would be welcome.

THE CHAIRMAN (Hon. H. Briggs): It was usual for resolutions of the other House to be amended in this House on their being sent here for our concurrence. In hundreds of such cases amendments had been made here in Committee of the whole House, and then transmitted by message to another place.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member (Dr. Hackett) need not fear that the constitutional rights and privileges of both Houses would not be respected in this case. He (the Minister) acknowledged that, as he had previously stated, the course followed was perhaps somewhat cumbersome, and that the same result could have been more expeditiously arrived at. However, it was usual for this House to receive resolutions from another place with a request for concurrence, such resolutions being frequently amended here before being returned. If in this case the two Houses concurred as to the advisableness of altering this Joint Standing Order, he took it that the Joint Standing Orders Committee would then be asked to meet and give their sanction to the amendment approved by Parliament. This course would be unexceptionable, and would doubtless be followed. Owing to the urgency of this matter, he hoped there would be no farther delay.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: As a member of the Standing Orders Committee who approved, not of the message from another place, but of the Standing Order in its amended form, he did not think the Chairman in answering the question quite went to the root of the matter; but that need not be discussed now. This was quite different from ordinary messages. Although not laid down by law, the practice in Parliament, which of course was the law, was for the Joint Standing Orders Committee to consider the Stand-

ing Orders to be suggested to either House, and having approved of them, the chairman of the joint committee, who was the Speaker, signed the Standing Orders and forwarded them to the Governor for approval and assent. The steps which it was suggested should be taken in this case he had no objection to, but they reversed the usual order. He would raise no farther objection, on the assurance of the Colonial Secretary that the matter would be sent to the Joint Standing Orders Committee and proceed through the farther stage. A slip had been made in introducing the Standing Order in the way adopted. He trusted the Standing Order would be sent to the Joint Standing Orders Committee, a Parliamentary body whose rights and privileges were to be considered as fully as the rights and privileges of the House.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Why treat a roads board differently from a municipality?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There were few roads boards in a position to bring in a private Bill which necessitated the expenditure of funds. As a matter of fact, there was practically no roads board in that position now.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: There was one.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Then that roads board ought to be a municipality. There seemed to be the greatest repugnance for roads board districts to become municipalities, because the members thought they could get more money from the Government for a roads district than for a municipality; and in addition the rates were not so heavy. This Standing Order might act as an inducement for roads boards to become municipalities, which was a farther reason why the amendment should be made.

HON. G. RANDELL: On several occasions the deposit had not been insisted on by the Assembly. A municipality was looked on as somewhat in advance of a roads board. As to the course mentioned by Dr. Hackett, which being the practice had become law in Parliament, it seemed that if this course was to be adopted the initiative was taken from the Assembly and from the Council, and was placed in the hands of the joint standing committee. The Assembly or the Council should initiate

these Standing Orders, and ask the concurrence of the joint committee; this course being an act of courtesy. There were many occasions when an alteration of the Standing Orders was required, and except some one asked the joint standing committee to pass such a rule, how could it be done? Parliament was the last court of resort. It should also be the first resort, if he might so put it; for we might require to alter our Standing Orders, and how could it be done unless through the Assembly or the Council? The Joint Standing Orders Committee were the servants of either House, to do as they were bid. He certainly objected to lowering the privileges and responsibilities of the House. It was the province of Parliament to alter the Standing Orders whenever that was thought necessary.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: All agreed that when an amendment was required, such amendment was sent to the joint standing committee, who, having considered the matter, sent the Standing Order back to the two Houses.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 5 o'clock, until the next Thursday.