

have this provision in the Bill. It might be productive of some friction, or there might be some reflection on the Government in the future. It might be said that the Government did not exercise the power given to them because they did not wish electors placed on the rolls. That argument had been used, and would be used as long as people had peculiar turns of mind. He recommended the hon. member to strike the clause out.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: This matter had been spoken about elsewhere.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Had the Colonial Secretary any information from the law officers of the Crown that Clause 4 had the effect he had stated? Otherwise the explanation of Mr. Haynes ought to be sufficient.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had received an opinion to the purport which he had already stated. The clause would be inoperative for the purpose of getting names on the roll under the Electoral Act, because under the Electoral Act a list had only to be made up in the month of December.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The opinion held by himself was contrary to that, and he had obtained the opinion of another member of the bar with whom he had been in consultation over the point for over half a day.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

THIRD READING.

On motion by Hon. R. S. HAYNES, Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 5 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th June, 1900.

Papers presented—Federation Enabling Bill, Council's Amendments (4)—Select Committee on Privilege: Comment on Evidence—Motion for Papers: Locomotive Engineer, Mr. R. B. Campbell—Motion: Members and Free Telegrams, Public Business (adjourned)—Municipal Institutions Bill (to reinstate electors on roll), first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Return as ordered, showing Mining Leases Surrendered on Goldfields, and Compensation in connection therewith.

By the PREMIER: Mail Steamers calling at Fremantle, further correspondence.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Bathing Regulation (amendment), Swan River Jetties, etc.

By the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (per Mr. Piesse): Regulations (various), Stock Diseases Act and Land Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

FEDERATION ENABLING BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council, considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

Amendment No. 1, Clause 4 (extending hour from 6 to 9 p.m. on Saturday)—agreed to on motion by the PREMIER.

Amendment No. 2, Clause 8 (reducing distance from 30 to 20 miles for sending vote in absence):

THE PREMIER: This amendment merely meant that persons who resided or were distant 20 miles from the polling place at the time of taking the poll might send their vote, as in the case of an absent voter, and that this should be done if the distance was 20 miles instead of the 30 miles provided in the Bill and in the Electoral Act. He could not see any reason why the amendment should not be accepted in this special case. He therefore moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Amendment No. 3, Schedule 2, insert the words "or assistant registrar"—on motion by the PREMIER, agreed to.

Amendment No. 4, Schedule 3, insert the words "or assistant registrar"—on motion by the PREMIER, agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Legislative Council.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGE— COMMENT ON EVIDENCE.

MR. MONGER (York): I rise to move the adjournment of the House, in order to call the attention of hon. members to certain remarks which have been reported in the public Press, with reference to the evidence given and the remarks made by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson), when appearing before the Select Committee of this House appointed to inquire into the charges made by that hon. member.

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is out of order in making such a motion now.

MR. MONGER: What I am desirous of doing now is to show the people of Western Australia who the member for Geraldton is. I am desirous of showing the people of Western Australia that the man, the member for Geraldton, is a man who cannot say there is not a slur or a stain on his character—

THE SPEAKER: I am of opinion that this motion, if the hon. member intends to move a motion, would be out of order. The hon. member is out of order in speaking on the question at the present time. I do not know whether he intended to conclude with a motion; but, if so, I do not consider this is a matter on which the hon. member would be justified in moving at the present time. It would also be anticipating a discussion which will take place on the report of the Select Committee when it is presented here; and independently, therefore, of such motion being against Parliamentary rule, I think it is undesirable that a discussion should arise before the report of the Select Committee has been presented to the House. When the report of the Select Committee has been presented, it will be in the power of the hon. member, or any member, to move any motion he likes with reference to the subject; but at present the hon. member would be

out of order in moving as he proposed to do.

MR. MONGER: I gladly bow to your decision, but I would like to give the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) a cheap advertisement.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member will have an opportunity of doing that, when the report of the Select Committee has been presented.

MOTION FOR PAPERS—LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER, MR. R. B. CAMPBELL.

MR. HIGHAM (Fremantle) moved:

That all papers and correspondence in connection with the retirement of Mr. R. B. Campbell, Locomotive Engineer, be laid on the table of the House.

The retirement of the Locomotive Engineer, Mr. R. B. Campbell, had been creating a good deal of dissension throughout the community. On the one hand we had a large body of men who had been associated with him, who claimed that the Locomotive Engineer had been unjustly dealt with: whilst on the other hand a considerable number of people, who seemed to know something about the matter, maintained that the Commissioner of Railways, and those associated with that Minister in the control of the railways, were perfectly justified in the action taken. It was only fair to both parties that every detail connected with this retirement should be put before the public. He did not propose to discuss the matter at the present moment.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle) seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—MEMBERS AND FREE TELE- GRAMS, PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. HIGHAM (Fremantle) moved:

That all communications on public business by telegram between members of Parliament and Ministers and chief officers of Government departments be accepted as on public service, and sent free of charge.

His desire was to move the motion not in the interests of town members, but in the interests of country members, many of whom were put to considerable expense in transmitting telegrams on public service to Ministers and to heads of the different Government departments. It was not fair that those members should be penalised with the full cost of those telegrams,

nor indeed any cost whatever. The telegrams were despatched on public service, and were for the public benefit. What he now advocated had been for many years the practice in other colonies. In New Zealand the custom had been in existence for twenty years, and he saw no reason why the practice should not obtain here. The motion would commend itself to every member of the House.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In regard to this motion, he felt in some difficulty, because we knew there was a chance of this colony entering federation, and the Post and Telegraph Department would not be long under the control of Western Australia.

MR. GEORGE: Let not the Premier be too sure about that.

THE PREMIER: The permission, if given now, might not be of a long duration. Seeing that members of Parliament were not paid in this colony, it was doubtless a considerable tax upon them to have to use the telegraph in making communications on public business, and having to pay.

MR. GEORGE: What about letters?

THE PREMIER: Letters were not so expensive.

MR. GEORGE: Were they not?

THE PREMIER: The only objection he had to this motion was that, if carried into effect, telegrams would be used on all occasions when letters would do very well. No member of Parliament would then think of writing a letter for any information in the future, but would write a telegram. That seemed to be a matter which required some thinking over, as there were 80 members of Parliament. The Postal Department had urged for years, and the question was still before it, that all telegrams should be paid for by Government departments as well as by the general public. This was the case in all the other colonies, and a great deal could be said for it. The Postal Department did an immense amount of this kind of work through the telegraphs, and received no payment from other departments, while the expense of the officers was charged against the Postal Department. That plan had been abandoned by all the other colonies. No doubt the result of adopting this motion would be that all departments would have to pay for the telegrams, and Parliament

would have to pay for telegrams sent by its members.

MR. GREGORY: They should all pay.

THE PREMIER: The motion was not opposed by him, but at the same time he believed that if carried into effect the practice would tend to a great use of the telegraph by members of Parliament. He knew very well that many of them would use the telegraph all day long, if it did not cost them anything—especially those members connected with newspapers, for they were great hands at using the telegraph, even when they had to pay for it.

MR. GEORGE: There was no one here connected with a newspaper now.

THE PREMIER: They would use it just as much when they did not have to pay for it. At any rate, he would not oppose the motion.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie) thanked the mover for bringing forward this motion. The mover had said he introduced it more in the interests of the country members than of town members.

THE PREMIER: The goldfields members especially.

MR. GREGORY: The goldfields members had to put their hands into their pockets a great deal more than the right hon. gentleman.

THE PREMIER: That was not his opinion.

MR. MORAN: We all put our hands into our pockets, but we did not always find things there.

MR. GREGORY: Goldfields members could not have Government horses or send telegrams without paying anything for them. At times he had paid from £2 to £3 a week in telegrams for his constituency, and he hardly thought it fair that members should have to pay if they were doing public business. The motion ought to be amended, for he did not see why telegrams should be sent between members of Parliament, and that was the way this motion could be read. One member of Parliament had no right to telegraph to another about public business. He would like the House to agree to a substantial amendment in the motion, for he desired that a member should not only be allowed to telegraph to a Minister or to heads of the departments, but should be allowed to telegraph to clerks of municipalities or roads boards, and to secretaries of boards of

health. If the amendment he suggested were carried out, it would not entail great expense, and in his opinion there should be a special vote from the Assembly to meet the expense. Members of this House were not paid.

THE PREMIER: What did a member want to telegraph to roads boards for? Could not people write?

MR. GREGORY: They could write, but a letter from any part of the constituency of the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) would take three weeks or a month to get through, whereas a telegram would arrive in two days, or perhaps one. He moved, as an amendment, that all the words after "telegram" be struck out, and the following be inserted in lieu: "From members of Parliament to Ministers, chief officers of Government departments, clerks of municipalities and roads boards, and secretaries of boards of health, if on public business, be accepted on public service, and sent free of charge."

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): Neither the original motion nor the amendment was advisable, for if either were adopted it would be opening the door rather too widely. Everyone in business knew well that when a person could use the telegraph without charge he would not take the trouble to sit down and write a letter. Although it might cost members a small amount of money, still we hoped that members, especially those on the Government side of the House who were said to have no means of living, if the system of payment of members were adopted, would be able to get a little out of that to pay for telegrams. Take the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), or the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper): those gentlemen at the time of an election might send telegrams to health boards, to municipal councils, and to various public bodies, and might use the telegraph service to a large extent in that way. This motion went further even than the payment of members; and he understood that when the people were recording their votes at the general election they were to be asked also to fill up a paper showing whether they were in favour of the payment of members or not. This motion, if carried, would place members of this House in an invidious position in regard to postmasters and others in

charge of telegraph offices. An officer might say, when a member handed in a telegram, that he did not consider it was altogether on public service; and if that officer refused to send the telegram, he would not be regarded as a friend of that member, and such feeling might result in lots of things, indirectly. If it was necessary to pay members for what they were out of pocket in communicating with their constituents, then a simpler plan would be for members to make out a list of expenses once in six months, hand it to the Treasury, showing what had been spent in telegrams and in letters on public service, and the cost could be paid.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): The arguments just used by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) were peculiar.

THE PREMIER: He did not want to get his hand into the public purse.

MR. GEORGE: As to the public purse, it appeared to be empty when any member of this House went to the Government to ask for something reasonable to be done, the reply being that there was no money. If the mover would add to his motion the words "also telegrams and letters between a member and his constituents," he (Mr. George) would support that. It would be useful if something could be done to stop the expenditure to which members were now put in communicating with constituents, the cost to some members being seven or eight shillings a week, to others even a pound a week. Did the Premier ever pay for telegrams or letters sent on public business, in communicating with his constituents? At any rate he (Mr. George) would not pay if he were in the Premier's position. If the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) was afraid that the members for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) and North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) would be likely to use the privilege very largely at election time, the excessive use of the privilege might be stopped, because in the last year before a general election the privilege might be withdrawn for the time, and then it could not be abused in connection with elections. It would be a good thing to allow members to have this privilege in regard to telegrams. Very few members were doing extra well, and they had to give much time to public duties. It

would not be much expense to the State if each member were allowed to send a few telegrams on public business at the public expense. Ministers had the privilege of sending telegrams on matters connected with the State, without extra personal expense.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra) : The motion was only a reasonable request, and he could not understand the opposition of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), whose electors seemed to get everything they asked for, while the electors of the Pilbarra district were always urging requests to be placed before Ministers, and he (Mr. Kingsmill) invariably received these requests by telegrams, which of course had to be paid for. It was only right the electors should pay in such a case, because they were many persons, while he as their member was only one. A member acted very often as a buffer between the Minister and an electorate; and if the Minister had to deal directly with the electorate and had to reply to all the telegrams which he would be likely to receive in that way, the expense to the State would be considerably greater than under the present system. Members having local knowledge of their districts were often able to give valuable information to Ministers, and in order to do that it was often necessary for members to communicate by telegraph with their constituents; so that the members were put to expense in this way. Electors in the Pilbarra district had always communicated with him by telegraph, and in no other way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The principle proposed in the motion was formerly in vogue in Victoria during many years, as he remembered well, and it became so great an abuse that Parliament had to sweep it away. The practice at present in Victoria was that a member might write a letter within the precincts of Parliament, and the librarian or other officer would issue stamps for the letter, accounting to the Treasury for all stamps so used; also in regard to telegrams on public business, these might be franked with the official stamp by the proper officer within the Parliament Houses. He did not suggest that hon. members here would abuse the privilege; but if it were conceded, the House should do it carefully, and it might be done by

members being intrusted with franked envelopes of a particular colour, and these could be intrusted to the honour of members, to be used on public business only. It would be a useful precaution to have the paper specially coloured.

MR. MORAN : And scented.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he agreed with the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) that considerable friction was likely to take place between hon. members and the officers in charge of telegraph offices, if the system now proposed were introduced. An officer receiving a message for transmission might think it was not on public service, and that officer must pass such a telegram or run the risk of losing the favour of that member, and possibly losing his position. Such things had occurred, though he did not say they had occurred in this colony. A telegram, when once presented, should be inviolable so far as the person presenting it was concerned, and it ought not to depend on the judgment of the clerk or officer who received it for transmission. The motion was reasonable in itself, if it could be kept within bounds; but experience had shown that the system had not been a success elsewhere.

MR. HALL (Perth) : As a city member who could not have any interest in this question of sending free telegrams or letters, he must give his unqualified support to the motion. Country members had to expend considerable sums during the year in telegrams to their constituents, and in letters also. Even the officers employed in the Postal Department had the privilege of sending memorandums on matters of public business; and if that was permitted to officers, surely members of this House should have the privilege of sending telegrams free, on public business only, to their constituents. He did not mean to say the employees of the Telegraph or Postal Department should not have the power to send a few memos. free of charge, because in every department of life there were certain privileges allowed; as in the case of shop employees, who were able to get goods for personal use at 10 per cent. on cost, and also in warehouses the employees could get what they wanted at cost price. Therefore postal officials should not be

deprived of this privilege, which should also be granted to members of Parliament, who surely had not sunk so low as to be capable of sending franked telegrams on private matters. Such an abuse, if committed, could be exposed by a return in the House, which return could also be called for if telegrams were too freely sent. The motion went scarcely far enough, for members should also be permitted to frank letters. Representing as he did the constituency of Perth, he had to spend scarcely anything on telegrams; but country members should be allowed to send these free, until the principle of payment of members became law.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): Seeing that, according to the Premier, the colony was likely to enter the Commonwealth, after which the local Government would lose control of the posts and telegraphs, he could not support the motion. The Premier had promised to introduce the question of payment of members to the next Parliament.

MR. VOSPER: No; he had promised there should be a referendum on the subject.

MR. WALLACE: And the referendum was to be taken at the next general election. If we were to have payment of members, and if we were to enter the Commonwealth, why establish this principle merely for the last session of this Parliament? Personally, he would like a refund of the money he had spent on telegrams; but he could not agree to put this principle on the statute book for three months only.

MR. GREGORY: Twelve months.

MR. WALLACE: The definition of "public service" was not clear; and if called on to distinguish between public and private messages, telegraph operators would be in a delicate position. He would not be subjected to the dictum of an operator as to whether a telegram was on public service. Better supply members with franked envelopes, which would facilitate correspondence between members and Ministers.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle) supported the motion as proposed to be amended. He sympathised with members for distant constituencies whose correspondents sent them telegrams covering pages of foolscap, and expected replies of

similar length. If abused, the privilege could easily be curtailed.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay): It did not appear there was more virtue in members of Parliament than in any other section of the community. He preferred to be guided by the custom and experience of other colonies, and urged the adjournment of the debate.

MR. HIGHAM: In New Zealand the practice had been in vogue for twenty years.

MR. QUINLAN: This new proposal required consideration. He moved that the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie) supported the motion for adjournment. He had "taken his gruel" for the last six years in the shape of answering constituents' letters and telegrams, and could not see why new goldfields members should not also "pay the piper." For five years he had kept a big waste-paper basket, and could testify that 99 per cent of the letters and telegrams thrown therein would answer themselves. In all the Eastern colonies this privilege of franking had been abused. Was it not in New South Wales that members' wives and families used to travel free in the trains?

MR. HIGHAM: In Victoria.

MR. MORAN: In Victoria, and lately in Tasmania, members of Parliament were found telegraphing about the price of sugar and the consignment of goods by means of adroitly worded messages.

MR. GREGORY: Could such frauds be worked in telegraphing to a town clerk?

MR. MORAN: The system was for a member to get a constituent to ask the Government to reserve, say a commonage. Then a mining code might be drawn up based on the word "commonage," and the possessor could get free mining quotations every day. If this objection were good regarding telegrams, which were open to inspection, what could be said for franked letters?

MR. GREGORY: There was no motion for franked letters.

MR. VOSPER: There was a suggestion.

MR. MORAN: And some hon. members said the franking of letters was the fairer plan. It had been suggested that only those letters written in Parliament House be franked. Many members seldom went

outside of Parliament House, but came at sunrise and left at midnight. Their whole occupation was writing letters and "chits." Why not have free "chits" as well as free letters, and thus give hon. members a really good roaring time at the close of this dying session? Seeing that the forthcoming referendum would decide whether the colony should keep control of its Postal Department, it would be unwise for this Parliament to risk a dispute with the federal authorities about such a paltry matter, which should be held over till after the referendum.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned—put and passed.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS AMENDMENT BILL.

TO REINSTATE ELECTORS ON ROLL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by MR. MONGER, read a first time.

MR. MONGER: I move that the second reading of the Bill be made an order for to-morrow.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have seen this Bill, and it seems to me a useful measure as regards the City Council of Perth; but I do not want to be in any way a party to breaking the understanding arrived at, that we should not do any further business this session; although all the Government said on the point in the Governor's Speech was that they did not intend to introduce any other business. Of course that does not prevent private members introducing measures, if they like, and if the House wishes to deal with them. The leader of the Opposition also was agreeable to the course proposed in the Speech being pursued; therefore unless we come to an understanding between myself and my friend opposite (Mr. Illingworth) in regard to taking this Bill, I shall not be able to give it any support. I may say that I will confer with the hon. member after we adjourn, in regard to this and another important matter, and I shall not do anything unless we can act in concert. I perhaps may mention that there is a question I intend to ask the hon. member to confer with me about, and that is the date of the next meeting of Parliament. The question arises

whether it will be wise for this House to meet until the referendum has been taken. Of course the Government are quite ready to meet at the usual time, or perhaps a week or so later, but it is a question I think we may all consider to-morrow. I will confer with the leader of the Opposition as to whether, in the interests of the community, it is advisable for us to be carrying on our business in this House while the referendum is taking place. There is also a question which is being discussed at the present moment, in regard to a further meeting of Premiers in relation to Clause 74 of the Commonwealth Bill (appeals to the Privy Council). I have been asked whether I shall be prepared to meet the other Premiers, and I have replied asking for information as to the time and place. Of course it will be impossible for me to think of going there, if we meet here at the ordinary time. When the hon. member has moved his motion to-morrow for the second reading of this Bill, I shall have had an opportunity of discussing the matter with my friend opposite.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): I hope this small Bill will pass through in the present session, for it is to facilitate ratepayers being placed on the roll by the council, the present Act not allowing anyone who is in arrears of rates after June to be on the roll. I believe there is only one clause in the Bill, so it will take only a very short time to go through the measure, and it will enfranchise a great many ratepayers. It would be advisable, if possible, if the Premier sees his way clear, to pass the Bill through this session.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I am one of those who feel very strongly that Parliament should not meet until the federation question has been decided. I also think that this little measure might well be left till next session. I fail to see the urgency of it, unless it be for the purpose of enabling ratepayers to participate in some municipal election; but, if it is for that purpose, I can see the sense of it. We know there will be no Parliamentary election in the ordinary course till those people have time to get on the roll.

THE PREMIER: This measure could not put them on the roll. It could not overrule our electoral law.

MR. MORAN: As far as the referendum vote on federation is concerned, I should not go across the road to aid any man who would not take the trouble to do that which any other man would have to do, and which his wife would have to do, to get the name on the referendum roll. Why put the cumbrous machinery of Parliament into operation, when we have provided special machinery to enable persons to get their names on the referendum roll?

THE PREMIER: It is impossible to do it. We have not the power.

MR. MORAN: We now hear from the Premier what we should have heard from him when he spoke before.

THE PREMIER: This measure will deal with municipal rolls for municipal purposes.

MR. MORAN: Of course I support every measure to afford to everybody every possible opportunity of obtaining the franchise.

MR. LEAKE: Let the matter stand over.

MR. MORAN: I hope no legislation will come to the House this small session, and I want to take this opportunity of asking members to come to the Assembly to-morrow with their minds made up not to have another meeting of Parliament until the referendum is settled. I do not think there is room for any other great question to be dealt with until this matter is settled.

MR. MONGER (York): I never before heard such a long discussion on the first reading of any Bill introduced into this Parliament.

THE PREMIER: The first reading has passed.

A MEMBER: It is the second reading.

MR. MONGER: I moved that the second reading be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow. I think under the circumstances the least hon. members should do is to pass the first reading.

THE SPEAKER: The first reading is passed.

MR. MONGER: I moved that the second reading be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow, and that is all I ask for now.

Question—that the second reading be made an Order for to-morrow—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5:38 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 13th June, 1900.

Message: Assent to Bill—Want of Quorum—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO BILL.

A message from the Administrator received and read, assenting to the Federation Enabling Bill.

WANT OF QUORUM—ADJOURNMENT.

At 4:45 o'clock—an interval of 15 minutes having elapsed—there not being a quorum present, the President declared the House adjourned until the next day.