

## Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 13th February, 1891.

New Supreme Court-house—Prohibition of Stock Importation from Western Australia—Remission of Sentences on Prisoners—Excess Bill, 1889; first reading—Loan Bill, £1,336,000; third reading—Officials in Parliament Bill; third reading—General Loan and Inscribed Stock Bill; in committee—Audit Bill; in committee—Estimates, 1891; further considered in committee—Apportionment Bill; received from Legislative Council—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2:30 p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## NEW SUPREME COURT HOUSE.

MR. CANNING: I wish, with leave, without notice, to ask the Director of Public Works whether the Government have had under consideration the question of erecting a new Supreme Court-house in Perth? The present building is a very inconvenient structure, and very unsuitable for such a purpose.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Government have not considered the question, so far; but they will do so.

## PROHIBITION OF STOCK IMPORTATION FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, Whether the Government contemplated taking any steps:—(1.) To ascertain the reasons that have actuated the Eastern colonies in prohibiting any live stock coming from West Australia being landed there. (2.) To induce the removal of those restrictions upon all stock, excepting (for the present) sheep.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest) replied, as follows:—The prohibition recently placed by Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia, upon the importation of stock into those colonies from Western Australia, is the result of the late Government of this colony not having been able to join with the Australasian colonies in precluding the importation of such stock from places outside of those colonies, as recommended by the Stock Conference held in Melbourne in November, 1889, which appears to be considered exposes them to the danger of

contracting disease. The question has not yet been considered by the present Government.

## REMISSION OF SENTENCES ON PRISONERS.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, If the Government had had under its consideration whether, as an act of grace and in commemoration of the introduction of Responsible Government, certain sentences passed upon prisoners, who have since their imprisonment been well conducted, might be either reduced or remitted?

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest) said the Government had not had this matter under consideration, thus far; nor had it, as far as he knew, been brought to its notice.

## EXCESS BILL, 1889.

Read a first time.

## LOAN BILL (£1,336,000.)

The Standing Orders having been suspended, this bill was read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT BILL.

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

## GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK BILL.

This bill passed through committee, *sub silentio*.

## AUDIT BILL, 1891.

This bill passed through committee (with the amendments recommended by the Select Committee), without comment.

## ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE, 1891.

The House went into committee of supply for the further consideration of the Estimates for 1891.

## Crown Law Officers, £675:

MR. A. FORREST, referring to an increase of £100 in the salary of the Crown Solicitor, asked whether the Government anticipated any increase of work for this officer under Responsible Government? He always understood this gentleman was not an overworked official,

and he had a large private practice. Did the Government think there would be more prosecutions under this form of Government than under the old form of Government; if so, we had better go back?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) said that in all colonies under Responsible Government the Crown Solicitor had to perform the greater part of the Crown law work of the Government, a great deal of which, under our old constitution, was performed by the Attorney General. In the other colonies the Crown Solicitors were generally very well paid officers, and a great deal of work devolved upon them. It would be the same here, and, when we first adopted this form of Government, the fact struck him at once. The Attorney General, under the present form of Government, would simply act as counsel, the main portion of the Crown law work devolving upon the Crown Solicitor, whom he did not consider at all overpaid at £400.

Item passed.

*Supreme Court, £2,700:*

**MR. RICHARDSON** said he noticed that the Sheriff was down for an increase of £100 a year. Was it expected that, under the new Constitution, more people would suffer the extreme penalty of the law than under the old Constitution; or, what was the reason for this increase?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) said the reason why the Government proposed to increase the Sheriff's pay was, because they thought he was underpaid. This officer generally lost, every year, more than his salary in law suits; and it was a question whether they would be able to get anybody to take this billet unless they indemnified him against these losses. The Sheriff was not only responsible for his own acts, but also for the acts of his bailiffs all over the colony; and he did not think many members would like to risk that responsibility for £500 a year. The Government thought they were only doing an act of simple justice in increasing the Sheriff's pay, so long as they could get an officer prepared to act under these exceptional circumstances.

**MR. A. FORREST:** Here's another increase in the hon. and learned gentleman's department—"Chief Clerk, £220," instead of £160; why should this officer

have this large increase any more than other clerks in other offices, such as the Lands Office?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt): Because he deserves it.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** Is it correct that this officer is also doing duty as clerk to the Acting Chief Justice?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt): I have not heard anything of it officially. If it comes to my knowledge officially it shall be put a stop to; it is not part of his work, and I will take care he is not put to it. I may say, in answer to the hon. member for Kimberley, that the Chief Clerk in the Supreme Court is not on the same footing as clerks in the Lands Office, or other offices; he does not receive an annual increase as they do. The present clerk is very attentive to his duty—one of the most attentive we have in the service, and I do not think he will be at all overpaid at £220. For years I have thought he was an underpaid officer, and, now that I have something to do with the department, I was very glad to concur in this increase.

Item put and passed.

*Stipendiary Magistracy, £11,077:*

**MR. H. W. SHOLL** asked how it was that the Resident Magistrate at Roebourne only received a salary of £475, while those at East Kimberley and West Kimberley received £500? There must be a great deal more work at Roebourne, and a great deal more responsibility; while the cost of living was much more expensive.

**MR. RICHARDSON** concurred, and said he thought the salary of the Resident at Roebourne ought to be second to none.

**THE TREASURER** (Hon. J. Forrest) said the reason was that as you went farther North, the climate was worse and the accommodation worse, and they had consequently to give a higher salary to induce anyone to go there. At Derby he believed there was a fairly good house for the Resident Magistrate to live in, but at Wyndham it was not so, and the climate was not nearly so good as at Roebourne. That was the reason, he believed, why there was this difference in the salaries. At any rate this was a matter with which the present Government had had nothing to do; they had simply left the salaries as they found them. Nothing had been brought to

their notice to have the salary of the Roebourne Magistrate raised, either by that officer himself or his friends, and the Government, therefore, were very glad to let the item remain as they found it.

MR. H. W. SHOLL said the explanation given by the Colonial Treasurer could hardly be correct—that the salaries were increased the farther North they went; for he noticed that the Resident at Champion Bay got £535 a year, a place where he could live 25 per cent. cheaper than at the North. The Roebourne District was a very large district, and a very important district, and the Government Resident there had twice as much to do as either of the Magistrates at Derby or Wyndham. He hoped the Government would take this into their consideration.

Item passed.

*Land Titles, £1,880:*

MR. A. FORREST asked for an explanation as to the new item, "Clerk and draughtsman, £200." Was there any absolute necessity for increasing the staff of this department? It seemed to him a strange thing that the inauguration of Responsible Government should necessitate these increases in every department. He thought it would have been time enough for the Government to have made these increases when the colony really began to make some progress. With regard to this particular vacancy, he had heard that the Government had gone to private offices in town and invited persons to apply for this appointment, which he thought was a very mean thing for the Government to do.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he could give most cogent reasons for making this appointment, and he thought he ought to know something about this department. This was an officer the necessity for whom he had informed the late Government of for very many years; but, as no one connected with the old Government knew anything about the working of this department, the department had to go without him. In other colonies, where the same system of registration existed as here, this department was very fully manned with officers, none of whom we have here, and we were working the department most economically. It might be in the recol-

lection of some members that when this department was first established the cry was that it would be too expensive—that was the general belief—and the result had been that the department had been worked as cheaply as possible, and had been undermanned from the first. This was an officer who ought to have been attached to the office from the very first. One of his duties was to prepare diagrams of lands that were certificated, and put them in the volume of certificates which was kept in the office as the proof of title. Hitherto these diagrams, instead of being made in the volume of certificates, as they undoubtedly ought to be, were left about on loose sheets, and, if the windows of the office happened to be left open and the wind blew them away, away went the title. Was that a desirable state of things, to have people's titles to land flying about the streets, instead of being inserted in the proper book kept for that purpose? Hitherto these diagrams had actually to be pasted in this book, instead of being drawn in the volume itself. As he had said, they were liable to be blown away anywhere, and you might go into the office any day and pick up your neighbor's title on the floor. It was monstrous, he thought, that such a state of things should be allowed any longer. A draftsman was absolutely necessary in the office, and the want of such an officer had been felt ever since the department was created. It was perfectly astonishing to him how the department had got along without such an officer; and, the first opportunity he had, he put him on the Estimates. With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Kimberley as to the Government going about other people's offices to induce their clerks to leave and join the Government service, if such a thing had happened it was certainly without his sanction. So far as he was aware, there was no reason whatever to think that the Government had gone behind any party and tried to entice away any man in his employ.

Item passed.

*Surveys, £15,941:*

MR. H. W. SHOLL asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands if the Government had considered the matter of having a land office at Roebourne, for the convenience of the settlers of the district?

Considering the rents received from these Northern Districts, and the number of people applying for land, and the inconvenience they were put to in having to send their applications to Perth, he thought it was high time a branch office was established at Roebourne. They had an office opened at Champion Bay some years ago, before there was nearly the same amount of revenue received from Crown Lands as there was now received from the North-West, and he thought the Government might give them an office at Roebourne.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it had not been considered advisable nor necessary to have branch offices for receiving applications for land. The question had been considered some years ago, and it was considered better that all applications should be received at head quarters in Perth. The Land Regulations required this to be done. Apart from that the inconvenience of having applications received at different offices, and of dealing with applications so received, there would also be the expense of maintaining these branch offices.

Item passed.

*Mining*, £2,552 15s.:

Passed without comment.

*Geological Survey*, £1,175:

MR. RICHARDSON, referring to the item, "Travelling and incidental expenses of Government Geologist, £400," asked upon what scale these expenses were adjusted? Was this amount given to this officer in a lump sum, to do the best he could with it, or had he to furnish an account of his travelling expenses, and vouchers?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the arrangement in connection with this item was not made by him; it was made long before he took over the Crown Lands Department. This officer drew this £400 in monthly instalments, and out of it he had to provide himself with horses, labor, and all travelling expenses.

MR. H. W. SHOLL said that from what he saw of this gentleman when he was travelling through Roebourne some months ago, he should think his travelling expenses would not amount to much. He travelled with a pack horse and a native boy, and, so far as he could find

out, never deviated from the road in any direction; and he generally sold his horses, when he had done with them, at an advance of about 15 per cent. on what he paid for them. He should think, judging from the way he travelled, his expenses would not be more than a pound a week.

MR. A. FORREST said this officer received a salary of £600 a year, and an allowance of £400; if it was the intention of the Government to pay him £1,000 a year, why not put it down as such? That was what it really amounted to. He understood this vote for travelling expenses was intended to cover the actual expenses incurred by this officer in travelling; instead of which it appeared he was allowed to draw the £400 whether he travelled or not. This officer might remain in Perth for months together, and not spend a penny in travelling; yet he would be drawing this £400. The sooner the Government made some better arrangement than that, the better would it please that House.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest) said that, so far as he understood, the present arrangement was not a binding one, and could be altered at any time. They first commenced by allowing this officer to buy his horses and forage and pay all his travelling expenses, and then send in vouchers. The result was that after some months had gone by the money was all spent, and he could not go out any more, the vote being exhausted. So the Government of the day thought some other arrangement might be made, and it was agreed that the Government Geologist should draw this money and do the best he could with it; he said he could do more work and at a less cost if he were allowed to do as he liked with the money, and the result was the Government of the day said to him, "Well, do it." The arrangement was not a permanent one, and, if a better arrangement could be made, the present one could be altered. He knew this: while the old arrangement lasted, there was never any money left towards the end of the year, and the result was the Government Geologist could not go into the field.

MR. RICHARDSON thought that £400 a year was a great deal too much for the travelling expenses of an officer of this kind, who was always welcome to

free hospitality at any settler's house in the country.

MR. A. FORREST said that human nature was human nature, and, with a lump allowance like this, any man must feel that the fewer times he went out of town into the field, the more he would save. He thought this was a great objection to this vote being paid in a lump sum; it was simply a temptation to a man to stop at home, if he was allowed to draw £400 a year whether he went out or not.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought a good deal might be said on both sides; the only question to his mind was whether the work would be as well done under the present system,—whether the Government Geologist would take with him as large and efficient a staff as he would under the old system. If he took out a proper staff and did what was expected of him, he did not think £400 a year was too much for him.

MR. KEANE agreed with the hon. member for Gascoyne that there were two sides to this question. He presumed this officer would have to go wherever the Government sent him; he was under orders like any other public officer, and he could not remain in Perth if the Government required his services in the field, in any part of the colony; he had been to Yilgarn two or three times. Very likely the Government Geologist himself would be very glad to go back to the old arrangement, and be paid his actual expenses.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he had already stated that the present arrangement was entered into before he took office; but, to his mind, it was just a question whether the colony would save anything by reverting to the former arrangement. He would consider the question, and, if there was nothing binding in the present arrangement, he would see whether it would be possible to make some arrangement that would be more satisfactory to the House.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item, "Gratuity, Rev. C. G. Nicolay, £25," said he could not understand the meaning of this item cropping up every now and again. The last amount voted for this gentleman was £100, and they were then told that was absolutely the

last gratuity the House would be asked to vote for him. He understood the so-called Museum had been shifted from Fremantle to Perth; if so, he should think this gentleman's services would be no longer required. He would far sooner see an annual vote, than these gratuities. Was this £25 going to be absolutely the last grant they would be asked to make for this gentleman?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): Yes. I may say that in my opinion the colony owes a debt of gratitude to this gentleman. While some of us have been devoting our lives to money-grubbing and the grosser pursuits of life, this gentleman has been quietly and unostentatiously devoting his time and talent and culture to scientific pursuits, and has devoted years to the collection of geological specimens illustrating the mineral wealth of the colony. He has now handed over that collection to the Government, and made a present of it to the country. I think even the hon. member for the Gascoyne might have allowed this paltry £25 to pass unchallenged. I think this gentleman not only deserves it, but more than deserves it.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE would like some information with regard to the item "Museum expenses, £50." He did not suppose many people knew there was such an institution as a geological museum in the colony. Was the Government Geologist to act as curator?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the present collection, he hoped, would form the nucleus of a more imposing collection in the future. It had taken some years to gather these specimens together; it had been done, as the Premier had said, by Mr. Nicolay, at Fremantle; but the collection had recently been transferred to Perth, and it was now in charge of the Government Geologist, who had been assisted in arranging it by Mr. Bernard Woodward. He thought this small sum of money might be very fairly spared out of the revenue of the colony in establishing a geological museum, which he hoped some day would be a credit to the colony and a most useful and instructive institution, both for our own colonists and for visitors.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE: Where is it located?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I am sorry to say that at present it is located in the Perth Gaol; but it is only a temporary arrangement, I trust. In fact, all the arrangements connected with this institution are as yet in embryo.

Item passed.

*Railways and Tramways, £63,651:*

MR. SYMON, referring to the item, "Engineer-in-Chief, £1,500," said this seemed to him rather a large amount for an Engineer-in-Chief in a colony like this, especially when he saw lower down another item, "General Manager and Engineer for existing lines, £550." He thought if we started with £1,000 for an Engineer-in-Chief, it would be sufficient to secure the services of a man quite capable of looking after the railways of this colony. £1,500 a year was more than was ever paid to such an officer in South Australia, with a population seven times more than we have here. He moved that the item be reduced by £500.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest) said the reason why the Government had placed this item on the Estimates was that they desired to secure the services of a man of reputation—a man of experience; and one in whom they could put entire faith, in the carrying out of the extensive system of public works about to be inaugurated. They believed they were not likely to secure the services of such a man for less. When this amount was fixed at £1,500, the Government had in view a gentleman whom he had already referred to in that House (Mr. Mais); but, as he had already informed them, that gentleman had declined the offer made to him. That showed pretty clearly that the amount proposed was not too high to secure the services of a really good man—a man distinguished in his profession. He would have advocated this item ten times more strongly if he had been able to inform the House that the gentleman referred to had accepted the appointment. But the Government would do the best they could in the matter. After all, what was £1,500 a year for controlling the large expenditure we were about to incur upon public works,—an expenditure of nearly a million and a half of money. The salary would be saved to the country over and over again if they got a really

good man. A little mismanagement in connection even with a railway cutting or an embankment might cost them a great deal more. In looking round for a competent man to fill this important position, the Government would be careful not to pay a higher salary than they could help; but he did not think it was an appointment in regard to which they should be particular about £200 or £300, so long as they secured a first-class man. As he had already said, he did not think £1,500 a year was at all too much to pay such a man. On the other hand, if they should be unable to secure the services of a man whom they considered worth £1,500, that was no reason why they should give such a man more than £1,000 or even £800; and that would be the principle upon which they intended to act. Therefore, he hoped the committee would allow the vote to stand. He had been perfectly candid with them. At the present moment this amount was not required for any particular man, and the Government would be careful not to pay more than they could really help. But he was very anxious to secure the services of a thoroughly good man, a man in whom they could put every faith.

MR. LOTON said the item to his mind was a large one,—larger than the colony, at the present time, need pay. He should think that £1,000 or £1,200 a year, at any rate, would be sufficient to secure the services of a competent man, a man of ability in his profession, and, he trusted, also a man of integrity. One of the largest undertakings the colony was about to enter upon was that of harbor works at Fremantle, and we already had the plans of these works prepared by one of the most eminent marine engineers of the day. As to the new railways, they had been told that they presented no engineering difficulties, and that they were to be constructed on the simplest principles and at very small expense—about one-half the cost of existing lines. Under these circumstances he thought the Government should be able to secure the services of a thoroughly competent and reliable man for less than £1,500. As to the assurance of the Government that they would get him as cheap as they could, they must take that for what it was worth; his experience had been that if an amount was put on the Estimates

it was generally expended. When a man found there had been so much put on the Estimates for any office, he generally went in for that amount, and nothing less.

MR. THROSSELL would be sorry to see the item reduced. The colony was now committed to a very large expenditure on public works, hundreds of thousands, and it was necessary they should have a thoroughly competent and trustworthy man to supervise this large expenditure, or they might find that a cheap servant was a very bad servant indeed. He thought it was all-important in the best interests of the country that the Government should have professional assistance of the very highest character they could, to watch over the expenditure of this large sum of £1,336,000, and if they could get the right man for £1,500 the country ought to be congratulated.

MR. R. F. SHOLL agreed that if you wanted a really good man you would have to pay for him. We not only wanted an able man, but also an honest man to control the expenditure of this large sum of money that we were going to spend on public works. Such a man might save the colony thousands of pounds, and tens of thousands. The only danger was that (although they voted this large salary) they might not get the right man; and he hoped the Government would be careful in satisfying themselves that they got a really capable man, and a man who was worth his money. If so, he would not begrudge him his £1,500.

MR. RICHARDSON said the only danger in placing so large a sum on the Estimates was that persons applying for the appointment—who would otherwise, perhaps, have been prepared to come for less—would stick out for this £1,500, and the Government would have to pay it. If a smaller sum could be placed on the Estimates, and yet not tie the hands of the Government, he would be better satisfied. He should be sorry to cripple the Government in any way in making an appointment of this importance. We did not want a duffer, who, through lack of experience or knowledge in his profession, might cause the colony to lose goodness knows how much.

MR. CLARKSON believed in paying a good man good wages. He thought it would be very shortsighted policy on the

part of the Government to attempt to employ an inferior man in his profession, considering the large public works we were about to inaugurate. We wanted a first-class man to watch over the expenditure of this loan money, and he should say that £1,500 a year was not at all too much. At the same time, he should expect him to do a great deal for that.

MR. PATERSON thought the colony would lose rather than gain by reducing this vote, and employing an incompetent engineer. We wanted not only a first-class man in his profession, but also a practical man, a man of experience, or he might cause the colony to make great mistakes, and costly ones. A case in point was the use of karri for jetty piles. Seeing that we were about to spend over a million and a quarter of money on public works, he thought it would be very shortsighted policy to cut the salary of this officer down to the very lowest point. It would be a case of spoiling the ship for the sake of a ha'p'orth of tar.

MR. CANNING said that, compared with the salaries paid to officers holding similar positions in the other colonies, this amount appeared altogether out of proportion, and also out of proportion with our means. If the services of the gentleman referred to by the Premier could not be secured, he hoped care would be taken by the Government not to pay more than was absolutely necessary. Should it become known that this amount had been actually voted as the salary for this officer, no man, whatever his qualification might be, would accept less than the amount voted. There might be a little haggling over it, which would lead to nothing at all, and eventually we should have to pay the amount voted on the Estimates, whether he was worth it or not. If they voted a smaller amount now, it would be easy, later on, if they found they had secured a really good man, to increase his salary.

MR. SCOTT said he was in accord with the Government in this matter. He thought we had had quite enough mistakes, and costly ones too, in consequence of professional incompetency. If there was an officer in the whole service who ought to be liberally paid, it was this one, entrusted as he would be with the expenditure of hundreds of thousands

of pounds. We not only required a competent man in his profession, but also an honest man, a man of integrity, a man who would be superior to all sordid or mercenary motives in carrying out these large public works.

MR. A. FORREST thought they ought to vote the amount asked for, and trust to the Government to employ a first-class man. If the House gave them this £1,500, and they only got a second-class man for it, it would be time enough for members to speak out about it.

MR. SYMON said, as to not being able to get a good man for less than £1,500, he questioned it. He believed, on the contrary, there were plenty of good men, capable of superintending the railways and other public works likely to be constructed in this colony for many years to come, for considerably less than £1,500 a year. He believed in paying a good man what he was worth; but he had never yet seen the best paid man who had never made a mistake, and, if we paid this officer £2,000 or £3,000, he was just as likely to make some mistake as if we had a man whom we only paid £1,000. We could increase his salary, after a trial, if we thought he deserved it; but, once we gave him £1,500, we could not very well reduce it, however incompetent he might prove.

MR. TRAYLEN did not think it was a question so much of salary as of competency and fitness for the work. A high salary did not always ensure competency; or, at any rate, salary was not always a correct gauge of a man's competency. It did not necessarily follow that if they got what he might call a ten-point man for £1,000, they would get a 15-point man for £1,500. There was also the question of superannuation to be considered; would this officer be entitled to a superannuation allowance?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest) said if he was employed on the permanent staff he would of course come under the Superannuation Act. He could only say that the Government would make the best bargain they could, and he would ask members to leave it to the Government to do the best they could in the interests of the colony. If they could get all they required in this officer for £1,500 a year, he thought it would be an

economical arrangement so far as the colony was concerned.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said there was one strong point connected with this matter which appeared to be overlooked by some members, and that was the fact that even £1,500 a year was not sufficient to tempt the gentleman whom the Government had in view to accept this appointment. If they expected to secure the services of an equally good man in his profession, they were not likely to get him for less.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) would remind the committee of what had become of their late Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Wright). Had they not lost his services because a private company had offered him exactly the same salary as the Government proposed to offer the Engineer-in-Chief of the colony? It was notorious that our late Engineer-in-Chief had been pounced upon by a private company, who offered him this very same sum of £1,500.

MR. KEANE thought it had escaped some hon. members that this department was about the only department in the service that really wanted reorganising, and, not only did we want a good Engineer-in-Chief, but also a man capable of reorganising what must become the most important department in the public service. In fact, we wanted a good all-round man. He thought it would be a "penny wise and pound foolish" policy to haggle over a few hundred pounds for the salary of an officer who would have to superintend and control the expenditure of over a million and a quarter of money. The House had swallowed the loan policy of the Government *holus bolus*, because they had faith in the Government, and having swallowed this £1,336,000, he thought it rather strange they should object to trust them with £1,500 to obtain an Engineer-in-Chief. They were straining at a very small gnat after swallowing a very big camel.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE hoped that when the Government entered into an engagement with this officer it would be for a limited term of years, so that in the event of his services not being satisfactory, he could be got rid of, without being entitled to a large pension. In the other colonies the Chairman of the



Railway Commissioners was only engaged for three years, so that at the end of that term they could either re-engage him or not. Our late Engineer-in-Chief was also engaged on the same conditions, and he hoped the Government would take the same precaution when entering into an engagement with this new Engineer-in-Chief.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): We were not be able to get him on those terms.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE: How do the other colonies get them, for far more important positions?

The motion to reduce the item by £500 was negatived, on the voices.

MR. TRAYLEN, referring to the item "Permanent way inspectors" on the Eastern Railway, asked why it was necessary to have an inspector and two assistant inspectors to look after 130 miles of railway, when on the Great Southern Railway, 242 miles in length, they only employed one such person? On the Northampton line, too, only one was employed, and that officer drew no travelling allowance, whereas these three inspectors on the Eastern Railway each drew £104 a year travelling allowance in addition to their salaries.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said there was a much larger body of permanent way men employed on the Eastern Railway than on the Northern Railway, and they required a great deal more supervision. There was no comparison either in the amount of traffic on the two lines.

MR. A. FORREST thought it was perfectly absurd that we should require three inspectors for 130 miles of railway, and, although it might have done under the old form of Government, he hoped such things would not be tolerated now. They looked to the new Commissioner to remedy these abuses, and to put the department on a more satisfactory footing than it was at present.

MR. LOTON said his own view was that not only had we too many inspectors, but also a great many more men employed on this permanent way work than was necessary. He travelled about a good deal, and he did not do so with his eyes shut; nor did other people.

MR. TRAYLEN asked whether the Locomotive Superintendent was expected

to be always, during working hours, within the precincts of the workshops, or where the repair of locomotives was going on; also whether there was any foundation for the rumours, the somewhat free rumours, that intemperance prevailed in these workshops to a very considerable extent?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the duties of the Locomotive Superintendent necessitated his being a great part of his time in the workshops, though not necessarily always; he might be called away on duty somewhere else along the line. With regard to the question of intemperance, nothing had come to his knowledge in any way that anything of the sort existed in that or any branch of the railway service. If anything of the sort came to his knowledge, officially or otherwise, it would be put down with a very firm hand indeed.

MR. KEANE—referring to the item "Traffic Manager and Station Masters, £1,700"—asked what salary the present Traffic Manager (Mr. Roberts) was receiving, and whether he had had any increase since he had been appointed Traffic Manager, and how many years ago was it? The reason he asked the question was because this officer held a very responsible position, and he had no particular hours, having to work 12 or 16 hours a day. He considered that the greater portion of the responsibility of the management of the whole of the traffic was upon the head of this officer, and he should like to ask the Commissioner whether, if the Traffic Manager's salary had not been increased during the last four years, the Government would bear in mind the extra work and the extra responsibility that fell on this officer in consequence of the increasing traffic?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that without looking back at the Estimates for past years he could not say how long it was since this officer had received any increase of salary. Without now referring to the way he had risen in the service since he first entered it, he might say, in answer to the hon. member's question, that there was no increase of salary proposed for the present year. The salary at present, as Traffic Manager

and Station Master, was £300, and £50 allowance, making £350 a year. He might say that the Government had in view some changes in the department, and it was probable that before long there would be a change made which would possibly relieve this officer of some of his duties and make an alteration in this branch of the service.

MR. CANNING said it was very satisfactory to hear that the Government intended to relieve this gentleman of some of his duties. The Government, no doubt, were aware of the fact that it was on the efficiency and watchfulness of this officer that the safety of the travelling public and the satisfactory working of the railway to a very large extent depended.

MR. TRAYLEN said he was very glad to endorse the remarks that had fallen from other members with regard to this officer. He thought, when they had been voting increases to the salaries of gentlemen who went to their offices regularly at 9, and left as regularly at 4, it would have been more considerate on the part of the Government if they had proposed some increase in the salary of a gentleman whose hours he, the officer himself, could not tell, for they were so uncertain; sometimes he believed this officer was on duty 18 or 19 hours out of the 24. He was very glad to hear that it was the intention of the Commissioner to relieve him of some of his duties.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to the item "Supervision expenses, Land Grant Railways, £1,100," said the only railway that was now being built on the land grant system was the Midland Railway, and the contractor was well known to them all, and the company had a representative in the colony who looked after the contractor; the railway belonged to the company, and surely we might rely upon the work being carried out properly without this item for supervision expenses. Who was there to supervise? The contractor? The company would take care that he did his work properly for their own sake. If the Government considered it necessary to exercise supervision over a railway in which they were not concerned they should call upon the syndicate owning the railway to pay for such supervision. Why should the colony waste £2,000 or £3,000 a year?

This sort of thing was done, he knew, under the old form of Government, the object being to provide a good fat billet for some friend; but he had hoped for better things under the new.

MR. R. F. SHOLL would be sorry to see the item struck out; it was absolutely necessary, in the interests of the public and of the Government, that there should be some supervision over these lines to see that they were properly constructed. The company might look after the contractor, but it might suit them to have the work cheaply done and even inefficiently done, and he thought it was the duty of the Government to exercise a very careful supervision over the work. He was in favor of economy, but he thought it would be false economy to dispense with this item.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said this question had not escaped the present Government in any way. At present they were unable or unwilling to interfere with any arrangements made by the late Government, and under the terms of contract for the Midland Railway it was the duty of the Government to exercise this supervision. The Commissioner of Railways was responsible for the due performance of the contract, and it would be impossible for him to give the necessary certificates without this supervision. He could not at present recommend any reduction in this staff, as he understood it was necessary to have an inspector at each end.

MR. LOTON did not think they could escape this vote at all under the present contract, as the Government had to see that the contract was properly carried out, that the work was well done, and suitable material employed. It was within the bounds of possibilities that the Government itself—though he hoped it would never occur—might have to work this railway. [Mr. A. FORREST: No, no.] They might shut their eyes to that possibility, but the fact remained. He did not mean to say a word against the contractor nor the way the work was being carried out—he believed the works had been pushed forward as much as possible, and that in an efficient manner; but he hoped the Government would not slacken their supervision in any way, but see that

the contract was carried out in the best interests of the colony.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE could not see how we could do away with these inspecting engineers, because one of the conditions of the contract was that the railway shall be made in all respects equal to the Government lines; and how was the Commissioner going to see that such was the case unless he had somebody to supervise the work? He agreed in one respect with the hon. member for Kimberley that it would have been well when this contract was made to have required the contractor to make the company pay for this supervision. But if they were to ask him to do so now, he would simply laugh at them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) thought there would be one disadvantage in having the Government inspector virtually the servant of the contractor. It would be a curious thing to expect such an officer to report upon the inefficiency of the work done by his own employer and paymaster. He thought that would be a most inadvisable arrangement.

MR. A. FORREST said his argument was that the money for supervision should be paid by the company, and not by the Government, but that the Government should appoint their own inspecting officers. It would be absurd to allow the contractor to appoint them. He hoped the Commissioner of Lands did not think he was born yesterday.

Item passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again another day.

#### APPORTIONMENT BILL.

A Message was received from the Legislative Council, forwarding this bill for the concurrence of the Assembly.

The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 16th February, 1891.

Alleged intemperance in the Locomotive Workshops, Fremantle—Message from the Governor: Confirmation of Expenditure—Fremantle Jetty: inspection of Karri piles—Prevention of spread of insect pests—Water Supply, North Ward, Fremantle—Adulteration of Liquors—Excess Bill, 1889: second reading—Apportionment Bill: first reading—General Loan and Inscribed Stock Bill: third reading—Estimates, 1891: further consideration—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### ALLEGED INTEMPERANCE IN LOCOMOTIVE WORKSHOPS.

MR. TRAYLEN: I should like to ask the Commissioner of Railways, with leave, without notice, whether he has received any further communication with reference to the alleged prevalence of intemperance in the Locomotive Workshops, to which I referred the other day?

THE COMMISSIONER of RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): In reply to the hon. member, I have much pleasure in saying that I have received some further information on this subject, in the form of a deputation representing the workmen employed in the Locomotive Workshops, who waited upon me since the hon. member mentioned the subject in the House the other day. The representations made to me by the deputation I will read to the House:—

"We, as Delegates representing each department of the Locomotive workshops, respectfully beg to call your attention to the question regarding the alleged rumour of intemperance in the Locomotive workshops, asked by the hon. member, Mr. Traylen, in the House of Assembly, on 13th instant, and are deputed by the unanimous desire of a full meeting of workmen, held on Saturday afternoon, to most emphatically and firmly deny the slightest foundation for any such rumours, and to express the feeling, that the open publication of such rumours, through the public press, may cast a stigma of a grave and damaging character upon the workmen of this Department, and would respectfully, sir, through you, make such public utterances as would