

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 19th November, 1900.

Papers presented—Question: Fire and Guarantee Insurance, Return—Question: Gooseberry Hill Show, Railway Arrangements—Motion: Mr. H. W. Hargrave's Retrenchment, Inquiry—Land Act Amendment Bill, Council's Amendments—Fire Brigades Board Debenture Bill, second reading, in Committee, third reading—Hampton Plains Railway Bill (private), second reading, in Committee *pro forma*, reported—Annual Estimates, Committee of Supply, Colonial Secretary's votes (resumed), to Printing vote (progress)—Loan Estimates (progress)—Municipal Institutions Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Amended By-law, Perth Building Regulation; 2, By-laws of East Fremantle Municipality, Cab Stands.

Ordered to lie on the table.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: 1, Particulars showing issue of Vouchers, etc., *re* Coolgardie Water Scheme; and 2, Wages, Pay-sheets, etc., *re* Coolgardie Water Scheme (in matter of Mr. H. W. Hargrave), as ordered.

QUESTION—FIRE AND GUARANTEE INSURANCE, RETURN.

MR. HIGHAM, without notice, asked the Premier when the return ordered as to fire and guarantee insurance would be laid on the table.

THE PREMIER: The matter had apparently been overlooked, but inquiries would be made, and the hon. member be informed to-morrow.

MR. HIGHAM: The return was ordered about six months ago.

QUESTION—GOOSEBERRY HILL SHOW, RAILWAY ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. WILSON (for Mr. Ewing) asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, What arrangements were made with the Canning Jarrah Timber Company *re* rolling-stock for the conveyance of passengers to and from Gooseberry Hill on Monday last? 2, Why was the rolling-stock used earlier in the day and sent from Midland to Perth at about 7:15 p.m. not returned for the remainder of the passengers, who were left all night at Gooseberry Hill?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood) replied: 1, The company applied for four bogie passenger coaches, and were supplied with six in all, four being lent by the Midland Railway Company, and two by the Government; 2 (a.), The company concurred in the arrangement made for sending the rolling-stock to Perth at 7:55, p.m.; (b.), No application was made by any of the company's officials for carriages in order that they might send another train back; had such application been made, there were carriages available; (c.), The company's superintendent advised the station-master at Midland Junction that he had sufficient stock to bring in the remaining passengers, and he did not ask for more.

MOTION—RETRENCHMENT OF MR. H. W. HARGRAVE, INQUIRY.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra) moved:

That a Select Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into the circumstances leading up to the retrenchment of Mr. H. W. Hargrave from the position of Resident Engineer attached to the Coolgardie Water Scheme. No one regretted more than he the necessity for such a motion, but it could not be gainsaid by any hon. member who had taken the trouble to read the papers recently laid on the table that an inquiry should be held. He learned there would be no opposition to the proposal, so he did not propose to deal *in extenso* with the case involved. He might, however, say that the motion for a select committee was actually the last resource which Mr. Hargrave had. Mr. Hargrave had asked for a departmental inquiry, which had hitherto not been granted to him, and in order to get the case investigated, he had been obliged to come to Parliament. Such a state of affairs pointed very strongly to the necessity for the Public Service Bill, which the House passed some little time ago.

Question put and passed.

A ballot having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover (Mr. Kingsmill), were elected:—Mr. George, Mr. Higham, Mr. Rason, and Mr. Wilson.

MR. GEORGE: I notice I have been elected, notwithstanding that I informed members of a disqualification in my case. Mr. Hodgson, the engineer, is a personal friend of mine, and it may be considered that I am prejudiced.

THE SPEAKER: I do not know what should be done under the circumstances. According to the Standing Orders, a member who is interested is not eligible to be elected; but because the hon. member happens to be a friend of a person interested, I do not think that will absolve him. I suppose the hon. member will act without any prejudice in the matter.

On further motions, leave given for the committee to sit on days when the House is not sitting; also to report this day week.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Legislative Council, considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

Council's amendments agreed to.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

FIRE BRIGADES BOARD DEBENTURE BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather), in moving the second reading, said: By Section 18 of the Fire Brigades Act of 1898, power was given to the board to borrow a sum of £5,000 on the security of its land. Last year an amending Act was passed enabling the board to borrow to the extent of £10,000. It appears no provision was inserted in either Bill to enable the board to give security by way of debenture. The short object of this Bill is to remedy that defect; to give power to borrow on debentures, and to make the measure retrospective, inasmuch as the board has already borrowed £8,000, and wants to issue debentures. These are the short facts.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

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

HAMPTON PLAINS RAILWAY BILL (PRIVATE).

SECOND READING.

MR. MOORHEAD (North Murchison), in moving the second reading, said:

I should like to point out very briefly that this Bill has been promoted by a company known as the Hampton Plains Company. The company is carrying on extensive developments on what is known as Block 48 of its estate, and the developments include large mining operations. It is absolutely necessary for the further development of that estate to connect the estate with the railway system of the colony. The company is not asking anything in the shape of bonus or any concession from the Government, beyond a narrow strip of land about nine miles in length, just sufficient for the line itself, together with what land will be required for the station yards. This strip of land really divides Lakeside (from which it is proposed the line shall start) from the north portion of the Hampton Plains property. On the property of this company there is a very large reserve of timber, and the value of that being brought to Kalgoorlie is inestimable. At any rate the Roads Board, the Chamber of Mines, and the Kalgoorlie Miners' Association have signified their approval of this scheme, and have by resolution communicated that fact to the Premier. The line only runs over nine miles of the Government property, as I have already said, and, exclusive of the rails and other requisites ordered from England, this undertaking will mean an expenditure in the colony of about £40,000, the amount being spent on earthworks, sleepers, station buildings, and ballasting. It is calculated that about 100 men will be employed for something like 12 months, the sum expended on labour reaching about £20,000. As I have already said, the opening up of this line under the powers of this Bill will bring into the market what is badly wanted at the present moment—fuel. Under the provisions of the Bill the company propose to carry passengers, goods, etc., on the same terms as those existing on the Government line; in fact, the line, as will be seen by perusal of the amendments suggested by the select committee, will be practically under the control of the Commissioner of Railways.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I have not had an opportunity of going practically through the report of the select committee. I would like the

promoter of the Bill to say whether it is intended to make any amendment with regard to purchase?

MR. MOORHEAD: Yes.

MR. PIESSE (Williams): As one of the select committee dealing with this private Bill, I may say the amendments which have been proposed by the select committee, and which no doubt will be dealt with afterwards in connection with the ultimate progress of the Bill, will, I think, safeguard the interests of the country. Ample provisions appear to have been made in these amendments to deal with matters which may crop up; but if anything has been omitted from the amendments, there is also provision under the Bill rendering it legal to make certain rules and regulations which will deal with matters that are not included in the Bill. Therefore, in every particular I think provision has been made in the Bill, in the first instance, and then subsequently in the amendments proposed by the select committee to, as I said just now, safeguard the interests of the country and the Government. In regard to the question of the carrying of mails, paragraph 10 of the committee's report provides that if, at any time after the completion of the railway, the Commissioner desires to forward or convey any trains, rolling-stock, goods, live stock, parcels, or passenger traffic along or over the railway, all reasonable facilities shall be afforded by the company for doing so. In that paragraph we may add the word "mails." In fact, it was added; but somehow it seems to have been subsequently omitted. Another portion of the clause deals with terms, which, in case of dispute, will be settled in accordance with the provisions of the Arbitration Act, 1895, so that every provision is made to enable the Government, if necessary, to deal with any matter which may have been omitted, or any matter which may not have been agreed upon between the company and the Commissioner, by referring the question in dispute to arbitration under the Arbitration Act of 1895. In the concluding paragraph, No. 15, the select committee deal with the question of the Government purchasing this railway, and that is a matter which, no doubt, will be dealt with when it comes forward. The terms upon which the line may be purchased can then be settled in

committee. I may say with my knowledge of railway matters, and as one who has carefully gone into this, with the assistance of the other members of the committee, we were able to frame the amendments that appear in the report which, no doubt, will be settled when the matter comes before the Committee.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I think the House should decide whether it is intended to allow private railways to be constructed in this colony. Hitherto we have had a good deal of trouble with privately-owned railway lines. For some of them we have had to pay very high prices when taking them over. I think the Premier has always, as far as possible, set his face against private railways; and I should like to understand why, on this occasion, this Bill is to be allowed to go through without debate. There is a general impression that the object of the Bill is to permit of the construction of a line which will be the commencement of a railway to Norseman; and that, to my mind, would be a grave injustice to Coolgardie. I do not think this matter has been fully dealt with or considered by the House, and I move that the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.

MR. MOORHEAD: The Bill has been long enough on the Notice Paper to be studied by hon. members.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): These private Bills take much more time to go through the House than do public Bills, and longer intervals are required between the various stages. This Bill has been a long time on the table. I do not know what hon. members think about it, but I think they should have made up their minds what they intend to do. If the hon. member (Mr. Gregory) can give any good reason for moving the adjournment, the Government may agree with him.

MR. GREGORY: There is a thin House.

MR. GEORGE: There are no maps provided.

THE PREMIER: You should speak from your seat.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I have no desire whatever to impede the passage of this Bill, and I thought the Premier had risen to give the House some information. I regret that I addressed him, and gave him an opportunity of using the usual brusqueness and rudeness with

which he treats hon. members. However, I shall support the adjournment for the reason that, so far as I know, it is usual, in bringing in these railway Bills, that locality plans should be laid on the table, so that hon. members may have some opportunity of forming an opinion as to what the Bills involve. If there be anything in the point raised by the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) that this is a side-wind to try to start a railway to Norseman from Kalgoorlie instead of from Coolgardie, I think this is a matter upon which we should look with a considerable amount of suspicion.

MR. MORAN: What are we debating?

THE SPEAKER: The motion for the adjournment of the debate. There really ought not to be any debate taking place at all.

MR. GEORGE: Am I in order, sir?

THE SPEAKER: No; the hon. member is not in order; but several other members have been out of order too; and therefore I do not wish to call him to order, lest I should make a distinction between him and the other hon. members who have spoken.

MR. GEORGE: Do I understand the Premier has a right—

THE SPEAKER: Go on, and say what you have to say.

MR. GEORGE: Very well, sir; thank you. A remark fell from the hon. member who moved the second reading (Mr. Moorhead), which, if I rightly remember it, was to the effect that the rails have been ordered from England.

MR. MOORHEAD: No.

MR. GEORGE: Oh! that they were to be ordered?

MR. MOORHEAD: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: I misunderstood the hon. member, so I have nothing further to say on that point, at any rate. I think this Bill would not lose anything by its discussion being adjourned until to-morrow night.

Motion (adjournment) put and negatived.

Question (that the Bill be read a second time) put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Amendments adopted *pro forma*.

Bill reported with amendments (for the purpose of reprinting).

Adoption of the report moved:

MR. PIESSE: None had a stronger objection than he to private Bills of this kind, if there were a possibility of avoiding the construction of a railway by private enterprise; and in this case he had been most careful to ascertain that hon. members could consistently agree to the second reading, and could consider the proposals of the promoters, subject to the amendments of the select committee. This was a line of a kind not likely to be constructed by the Government, and one which would open up private lands of large area, would cross a section of Crown lands of only nine miles in extent, and would then pass through eighteen miles of the company's lands; therefore it appeared to be a proposal which might fairly be submitted to hon. members for acceptance or rejection. With much diffidence, and after full inquiry, he had agreed that the Bill might fairly be submitted to the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There should be some definite statement from the select committee or the Premier as to whether this line might possibly form part of a railway to Norseman.

MR. PIESSE: No.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If the line might eventually develop into such a railway, the Bill should be carefully considered. In the Government proposals for the railway to Norseman, Coolgardie was the starting-point; and there was a suspicion that this line was the commencement of such a railway. If, however, the railway was to be simply a *bona-fide* private railway for the development of the property of the promoters, the latter were entitled to sympathy, inasmuch as they held property which they should be allowed to connect with the railway system of the colony, and their line would open up a considerable timber area. But the House should not be trapped into supporting a railway which would eventually become a Government line to Norseman from a starting point which the House had not had an opportunity of discussing. Would the hon. members concerned give some assurance on this point?

THE PREMIER: In allowing this Bill to pass, and in giving it some support, the Government had no intention of departing from their proposal to build a

railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. One of the objections to such a railway was that the Norseman people would have to carry their goods a very considerable distance. That had been a material argument in the discussion; and if the route were *via* Kalgoorlie, the distance would be increased some 40 miles, so the objection would be much stronger. This proposed railway, he considered, would not be a monopoly. The Government, if they thought fit, could build a line alongside of it; they had power to run their rolling-stock on it, and to purchase it; and the line had no connection whatever with the extension of the colony's railway system from Coolgardie to Norseman.

MR. GEORGE: The Premier's remark that there was nothing to prevent the Government building a railway alongside this private line was the most absurd statement imaginable, as if it were likely that this or any other Parliament would authorise the Government to build a line alongside an existing railway! Better avoid theories and deal with facts.

MR. MORAN: This proposed railway had nothing to do with the Norseman line. As firewood was required at the rate of about 1,000 tons a day for Kalgoorlie and Boulder, it was as well this private line should go as near as possible to those centres, as it would do by the route proposed; whereas the projected Norseman line would be anything but a convenient timber line for Kalgoorlie. Even this private railway would soon exhaust the available timber, and spur lines must then be sent out in all directions. If a private company were willing to build such a line, let the House refrain from riding a principle to death, seeing that the time would come when numerous light cockspurs must be built to bring in timber to the great mining centres. He knew intimately the country which it was proposed this railway should serve, and it was the principal mineral belt from Kalgoorlie through Boulder towards Mount Monger and Norseman, while it was pretty close to Red Hill, and there was settlement all the way.

MR. GEORGE: And there was Widge-mooltha.

MR. MORAN: It was difficult to understand why Widge-mooltha should crop up in every one of these discussions, because Widge-mooltha was only a spot in

the bush which had proved a failure and had been abandoned.

MR. GREGORY: This was a railway to Red Hill.

MR. MORAN: That was so, and Red Hill was in decent country, whereas Widge-mooltha had no right to be mentioned among serious people when talking of gold centres.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member ought not to prophesy too much.

MR. MORAN: There was no prophesying at all, but he knew there had been thousands of pounds spent at Widge-mooltha, where shafts had been sunk on every available reef there with no results. It was true there was a battery at Widge-mooltha years before the public battery was erected there, notwithstanding what the Minister of Mines might say, but that battery had had to shut up; at any rate Widge-mooltha was one of the "busted" centres of old boom days.

THE PREMIER: But many such places had turned out well.

MR. MORAN: No centre that had "gone bung" had come to the front, to his knowledge. Some abandoned mines might afterwards have proved valuable, but Widge-mooltha never had a mine. With all the advantages which might be offered in favour of the proposed line, he felt inclined to vote against the measure.

MR. GREGORY: On looking at the plans, he found that this was to be a railway concession to Red Hill; and if that had been distinctly stated, hon. members would have known the object of the measure. As there were likely to be a large number of amendments, it was to be hoped the Bill would not be considered in Committee to-night.

Question put and passed, and the report formally adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Consideration resumed from previous sitting.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT (Hon. G. Randall).

Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary, £12,081 :

MR. GEORGE drew attention to the way in which arrangements had been made, or purported to have been made, in regard to electoral rolls. The amount

provided in this vote under the head of "electoral" was too small to give anything like satisfaction or satisfactory work. The chief officer, whose work grew heavier year by year, received the munificent salary of £300, and one understood that while in some districts the police were used, and properly used, in making the electoral roll as complete as possible, other districts and portions of districts were not similarly looked after; and in support of this statement he had only this morning received a letter from a gentleman on the Murray. He saw that the federal referendum was put down in the Estimates as costing £5,000, but he would like to know whether that was the full cost, or whether the same principle had been adopted in this, as all through the Estimates, of only providing for half the expenditure and trusting to Providence for the rest. The Medical Department, he trusted, would be dealt with before the close of the session. In the anxiety of certain members to push social legislation through at any cost, a difficulty had arisen in consequence of the Truck Act passed a little while ago. For many years it had been the custom at timber stations to make a wages deduction, in which the men cheerfully agreed, for the provision of medical and hospital attendance; but in this respect the Truck Act had operated on some of the timber stations, certainly not to the benefit of either men or masters. Whereas employers had previously contributed equitably towards these medical funds, while they were allowed to make a deduction and had the matter under their control, these contributions had been stopped, and the men found themselves "between the devil and the deep sea." On the part of both masters and men there was a desire to fix the matter up equitably, but the Act stepped in and prevented any arrangement. Some ten years ago he was manager of the Jarrahdale Timber Mills, and at that time there was no medical officer nearer than Pinjarra or Perth; and if it had not been for the deductions then made from the men's wages, medical attendance could not have been obtained at Jarrahdale except through public subscription. Unless the Government were prepared to take the responsibility of providing medical attendance at these stations, then it

had not been a wise thing to interfere between masters and men when both were in accord. Had the men objected to these deductions it would have been undoubtedly right for the Government to interfere, because when a man had earned his wages he should have them in full; but when a friendly and necessary arrangement like this was made, there was no reason why anybody should step in between the parties. He noticed there was a vote of some £6,000 or £7,000 in respect of Orphanages and Industrial Schools, and as this was a new departure some explanation was due to the Committee. The Education vote was too small for the growing needs of the colony. The Government now received comparatively nothing in the shape of fees, but the children were increasing in number, not only naturally, but by immigration, and yet the same old difficulties arose. Those in charge of the department were desirous of doing all they could, and knew what ought to be done, but funds were not available. The number of schools required could not be provided, and even if the schools were provided, there was not sufficient money for the requisite number of teachers. This colony was suffering from a lack of teachers at the present time, caused by the miserable salaries paid to those who undertook the duty of teaching. That view was shared by the department to some degree. A number of the salaries were less than could be earned by a manual labourer. We had been crying out for years for men to bring their families to this colony, but no man would stop in a place unless he could have his children educated. It was not good for the children, and it was not good for the State. It was the duty of the State to see that educational advantages were offered to the public. Referring to item "Inspector of Parliamentary rolls, £300," was there any intention to place the Electoral Department on a better basis? If there was any time in the history of the colony when the electoral rolls should be full and absolutely clean, this was the time. The officer in charge of the work was very painstaking, and his salary was set down at only £300 a year. It was a small salary for an officer who was responsible for the whole of the parliamentary rolls.

THE PREMIER: The officer had received an increase of £25 this year, and it was not intended to increase the salary further during the present financial year.

MR. MOOREHEAD: How long had the officer been in the service?

THE PREMIER: About a couple of years, perhaps three; he was appointed at a less salary than the present one. At first the officer simply had to inspect the rolls; now a small department had grown up. It was necessary that the rolls should be scrutinised, and he believed in the older parts of the colony they were well scrutinised. On the goldfields it was not so easy to do that, but he hoped the department would be able to do the work with the assistance of the police. It was very easy to get on the roll, but it was not so easy to get people off. There were many places in the colony where there appeared to be thousands more people on the roll than there ought to be. These people had left the district, and the scrutiny had not been sufficient to take the names off the roll. No very great harm resulted, because if a person was not there, he could not vote; still it gave an exaggerated idea of the number of voters. The Government had tried the experiment of getting the police to place people on the rolls, and with very good result. The other day he saw that 90,000 people were on the rolls out of a population of 180,000, which was a very great percentage. It had been stated that the police had not visited all the districts. He was sorry for that, because he believed strict instructions were given to the police to put people on the roll. Instructions were issued, and were carried out; subsequently those instructions were amplified so as to make them more clear; therefore every police station had been particularly instructed by the Commissioner of Police to put people on the rolls, and with very great results, because an immense number of voters had been placed on the rolls, by the police, all over the colony. Complaints had been made that the police had not been as careful in some cases as they might have been in filling up the forms; but he believed that was only a small percentage, and the difficulty would be rectified when the police were more used to the work. That the people in the colony had

shown a thorough desire to get on the roll was certain by the number eligible as voters now. If the hon. member would tell him in what particular district the police had not visited, he would have inquiries made.

MR. GEORGE: What the Premier had said was fairly satisfactory.

THE PREMIER: What part of the colony did the hon. member refer to.

MR. GEORGE: Drakesbrook. The facilities for getting on the roll were so easy now, this made it necessary that there should be thorough and complete scrutiny. In certain districts in the South-West a sort of itinerant wanderer had gone round with a pocketful of forms filling them up and sending the forms to the Inspector of Parliamentary Rolls; that was where the work of the inspector and his officers came in. He knew of a case in Perth where a person had boasted that he had put 1,200 people on the roll during the last month: that was in Perth alone. When an unauthorised person could go round and undertake that class of duty, no doubt there was carelessness which would not lead us to have full reliance in the rolls; therefore he would impress on the Premier that the duty of placing people on the roll should be placed entirely in the hands of the police. In the other colonies this had been done with good results, and it could be so done here. Who was the "Officer in charge of electoral matters generally, £100"?

THE PREMIER: The Under Secretary.

MR. GEORGE: Why was it not shown that this officer was receiving another salary?

THE PREMIER: The officer had been several years in this capacity.

MR. GEORGE, referring to item 61, "Referendum, £5,000": was that the total amount for taking the referendum?

THE PREMIER: When the Estimates were prepared this amount was put down by the Under Secretary who had charge of the matter, but he (the Premier) had not inquired since if that was the exact figure. He had been informed that this was a sufficient sum, if not more than would be required. Before the Estimates were passed he would find out if there was any additional information in regard to this item.

Vote put and passed.

Medical, £78,701 :

MR. MORAN : It was to be regretted that we had not the report of the select committee on the Perth Hospital before us. In some sense this select committee deserved censure, and for all members knew it might just as well have not been appointed. He regretted exceedingly that any member of the House should call for a select committee on any subject, and hon. members to hear no more about it. Every year he had said something on this vote, and he wanted to know why certain medical men were shut out of the Perth Hospital. Every medical man should be allowed to follow his own patients into the hospital if necessary.

THE PREMIER : It was not the rule anywhere else.

MR. MORAN : Was there any particular reason for it ? The select committee ought to have reported. It was playing fast-and-loose with the House : he treated it as a matter of great seriousness. He hoped members would not take upon themselves public duties of this kind unless they carried them out. He wanted an explanation about the Perth Hospital question.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Postpone the vote.

MR. MORAN : This was the third year in which he had referred to this matter, and there was a considerable amount of feeling manifested by the public on the question. He knew of four medical men who were shut out of the hospital. There had been some boycotting in regard to certain medical men which he was not going to allow if he could help it. The public were entitled to an explanation, and for that reason perhaps the vote might be postponed.

THE PREMIER : The hospital board was working under an Act.

MR. MORAN : That was no reason why certain medical men should be shut out from the hospital. He did not blame the Government so much as the select committee. He had expected their report, and he would not agree to the passing of this vote until he got the report.

THE PREMIER : We could deal with the report of the select committee when it came up just as effectively as in connection with this vote. We must have this department carried on, and the two things did not go together. The hospital

was conducted under an Act of Parliament by which the Government appointed a certain number of persons to manage it, and it was provided that if the people subscribed a certain amount of money they could get the whole control into their own hands, and the Government would have nothing whatever to do with the appointments. The money, however, had not been forthcoming. It was said the hospital was somewhat exclusive, but that could be easily remedied, by having more people connected with its management. He could not tell whether it would be right to throw the hospital open to every practitioner. He knew something about hospitals in other places, and it was supposed to be a great honour for a physician or surgeon to be a member of a hospital board. In other places those officers were elected by the subscribers, but that was not done here, because there were no subscribers. The member for Perth (Mr. Hall), the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), and others, but especially those two, were very eager about the appointment of a select committee, and we had expected the report long ago. The committee had had several sittings, had visited the hospital, and had had all the nurses as witnesses. The hospital here was really a place to which anyone who was ill might be glad to go. The medical gentlemen referred to were honorary officers : they did not receive any pay, and as far as he could see, not much thanks. Some men always had a grievance. The fact that the report of the select committee had not been presented was no reason for stopping the Medical vote. Perhaps members of the Select Committee were electioneering, or engaged in some other way, but they could not with good grace refuse to bring up the report soon. The Government had no objection to all the doctors in the colony going to the hospital, speaking generally. All the Government wanted was to conduct the hospital somewhat on the same lines as those which prevailed in relation to similar institutions elsewhere.

MR. GREGORY : Nothing would be gained by reporting progress. He wished to speak more particularly with regard to placing all hospitals on the same footing, and would like an assurance from the Premier that if possible an effort would

be made to devise some scheme for a more equitable system than at present prevailed. The Perth and Fremantle hospitals were the only public hospitals in the colony. There were a large number of Government hospitals, and a very large number of assisted hospitals. In a little place like Leonora, in ten months £1,200 was collected, and by means of a small exhibition an additional £140 was obtained. It was very unfair that people in the back districts should pay for hospitals, whilst in other places the Government bore the whole of the charge. Government hospitals were maintained entirely by the State. There were nine Government hospitals in country towns, eight at the ports, and five on the goldfields. Then there were fourteen assisted hospitals. There should be no assisted hospitals, or else all should be assisted hospitals. The Estimates showed good work had been done in the Medical Department during the past year, for a saving of some £16,000 had been effected, and the efficiency of the goldfields hospitals was greater than in the old days. That was a very creditable result. Assisted hospitals could not be conducted so cheaply as Government hospitals.

MR. MOORHEAD: The hospitals should be placed on a more equitable footing. Quite recently mines in North Murchison had to be shut down for a time, owing to rain, and miners' contributions to the hospitals fell off through miners being out of work. That was brought under the notice of the Government, who came forward and gave assistance, which enabled the authorities to keep the doors of the hospital open; but the point he wished to urge was that the upkeep of the hospitals fell on the shoulders of about a dozen citizens or so. That was not fair. He supposed the same thing might be stated in regard to Peak Hill. The Government contributed so much, and the people of the neighbourhood found the balance. He hoped the Premier would find some equitable mode of dealing with isolated cases in the districts referred to.

THE PREMIER: This hospital question was very troublesome, and he did not see much chance of improving the present system immediately. In the older districts the hospitals were purely Government hospitals, and people who

went to them, and could afford to pay, were called upon to pay; but as a rule the hospitals were reserved for serious accidents, and for the poorer portion of the community, other people being generally attended in their own homes. The same applied to Perth and Fremantle hospitals, and that was becoming the system on the goldfields. It used not to be so. On the goldfields everyone had to go to the district hospital at one time, and even now that system prevailed to a large extent. These district hospitals were managed by committees, who worked very well and displayed much interest, but spent a great deal of money, and were not so economical as in Government hospitals; the reason being, probably, that members of the staff could not be got rid of so easily as in the case of the Government hospitals, as the Government could transfer persons from one hospital to another. Every centre desired to have an hospital. If the hospitals were to be supported altogether by the Government, probably there would be some difficulty in getting hospitals in certain places; but under the present system any number of people could have an hospital if they were willing to maintain it under the conditions laid down, these being that the Government gave something for the building, and for providing tents, and also allowed £100 a year for the medical officer, £ for £ of the amount subscribed, and so much for every indigent person. As a rule, however, these hospitals got into debt, and the Government paid the debt. That was the system going on all over the colony where there were committees. Such committees got further and further into debt, and the Government in almost every case paid the debts wholly or in part. On the goldfields there had been no serious difficulty with these committees, for they recognised that the Government had never been behindhand in helping on this good work. That a better system could be introduced was not probable. He had prepared a Bill for placing such hospitals under local control, but that could not be done except by local taxation, which would be unsatisfactory because it would be impossible to impose a poll-tax; and hence the burden would fall on property-owners, the very people who did not use the hospitals. The only defect of the present

system was that each committee gradually got into difficulties, and at last, as at Menzies, the Government had to take complete control. For the next year or two, the present plan might well be continued; and people in outlying districts, though they had to contribute more than those nearer the towns, had greater advantages from their hospitals; and as these were partly supported by voluntary contributions, they gave for that reason greater satisfaction to the public, who were content in the early stages of a district with hospital tents, whereas if an hospital were a State institution, such accommodation would be objected to. The Government were to be congratulated on managing this difficult matter so well, for throughout the colony it was admitted they had done their best to assist the sick.

MR. MORAN: After the Premier's explanation, he would not press the point regarding the Perth Hospital. No doubt the Premier was as anxious for the select committee's report as anyone.

THE PREMIER, referring to item "District Medical Officer and Quarantine Officer, £300," moved that the item be altered to read "District Medical Officer, £100"; also that a new item be inserted: "Quarantine Officer, £200." Two officers were now doing the work, and the salary had to be divided.

Amendments put and passed.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL, referring to item "Jarrahdale District Medical Officer, £150," asked if this medical officer was for the timber station only? If so, there was at Denmark a timber station employing some 1,000 people who would be glad of such Government assistance.

THE PREMIER: This officer attended the lunatic asylum at Whitby Falls, and whether he drew any sum from the Treasury as medical officer at Jarrahdale was not apparent. Probably he did not, for apparently the timber company would not accept the Government offer, and therefore the £150 represented payment for the doctor's services at Whitby Asylum.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: It appeared as if the Government provided medical officers for some timber stations.

THE PREMIER: Yes; as at Karridale. Probably no application had been made by Denmark. Such officers, however, had Government duties to perform, and could

not be exclusively at the service of the timber station; and that might account for no application being received from Denmark.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: The Denmark people would be glad of such assistance.

MR. GEORGE: The Jarrahdale Company had refused the Government allowance of £100 per annum, because they would have had to guarantee about £400 a year to the doctor, which they would not do unless they could have the full benefit of that officer's service. This doctor had to attend to the Whitby Asylum, to the police, and the people of the district generally, for which he received some £400 from the public. No doubt the Government would consider an application from Denmark.

MR. MITCHELL, referring to item "Northampton District Medical Officer, £150," said this £150 appeared year after year, yet last year only £46 16s. 10d. had been spent. From letters received he understood the medical officer, who was at Geraldton, repudiated any liability to go to Northampton.

THE PREMIER: But evidently, when he did go, he was paid.

MR. MITCHELL: It did not appear he had gone this year. The doctor had offered to pay a fortnightly visit to Northampton if £150 were allowed him and a special train provided by the Government when necessary. The grant might well be increased to £200.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member could, on application, have details of the £46 spent, which had doubtless been paid to the medical officer at Geraldton. There was evidently some arrangement by which the doctor visited Northampton periodically, for which visits he received this allowance. To provide a special train would be a rather large order, and it would be better to increase the allowance, as suggested by the hon. member. Northampton had as much right to a medical officer as other places. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] The town was growing. The hon. member's suggestion was worth considering. It was to be supposed people were never ill in that locality, and did not require a medical officer, because if people did get ill there, no doubt some enterprising medical man would be found even at £150. He (the Premier) would be glad

to confer with the hon. member, to see whether some small addition to the amount would induce a medical man to settle in the locality.

MR. MITCHELL: For some years £50 per annum was granted, but last year an alteration was made to the travelling expenses, and he understood the medical officer repudiated his liability to go to this place unless he were made an allowance for travelling. He (Mr. Mitchell) would call upon the Premier as suggested, and see what had become of this £46.

MR. GEORGE, referring to item "Officer controlling Sea Quarantine, £200," asked for some explanation, as this seemed to be a new expenditure.

THE PREMIER: This officer was the Principal Medical Officer, Dr. Lovegrove. Hitherto the Principal Medical Officer and the President of the Board of Health, the latter of whom was also City Coroner, had been allowed private practice; but now neither was allowed to have private practice except in the way of consultation.

MR. GEORGE: Why not make the salary of the officer a certain sum, instead of starting a new item?

THE PREMIER: Sea quarantine would go under the control of the Federal Government.

MR. GEORGE: Then this vote was to secure this gentleman before the department went over to the Commonwealth?

THE PREMIER: The officer would probably go over with the department.

MR. GEORGE: In that case the local Government would deal with the Principal Medical Officer, and the Federal Government deal with the Sea Quarantine Officer. It would be far better to pay the officer £750 a year.

THE PREMIER: That could be done by and by, when the difficulty arose as to the Federal Government.

MR. GEORGE asked for an explanation of the item "Quarantine Experts, four members at £12 per annum each, £48."

THE PREMIER: This item represented retaining fees to four medical officers, two stationed at Albany and two at Fremantle, who were bound to give their services when called on, but were of course paid for the services rendered.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked why Mount Magnet Hospital, for which £250

was granted last year, did not appear on the present Estimates.

THE PREMIER: No doubt Mount Magnet Hospital was provided for in the general vote this year. Last year he understood the money was a special grant, the hospital having got into debt.

Vote put and passed.

Gaols, £25,905 12s. 6d.—agreed to.

Rottnest Establishment, £2,781 19s.—agreed to.

Printing, £31,551:

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Several members interested in this vote were absent, and, under the circumstances, he moved that progress be reported.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Consideration resumed from previous sitting.

Vote—Departmental, £47,754 10s.—agreed to.

Railways and Tramways, £506,876 5s. 6d.:

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked the Government to consent to report progress, because in his opinion these questions ought not to be dealt with in such a thin House as was now presented; indeed it would, perhaps, be better to adjourn the House. He moved that progress be reported.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill, which has come from another place, is what I may term a codification of all the laws on municipal government in this colony, together with certain amendments which have been imported into the measure, mainly taken from the Local Government Act of Victoria. It is considered by everyone who has studied the subject that in Victoria the system of local government has been carried to a far greater degree of perfection than in any of the other colonies of Australia. The first Act was passed in Victoria as far back as 1869, and in 1890, with certain amendments, the Acts

were consolidated, and from that day to this have been the fixed law of local government in that colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was Fitzgibbon.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes. There is not much that is new in the Bill, which consists in the main part of the present municipal law in the country, with additions to which I shall refer. I intend to glance briefly at some of the new matter introduced into the Bill for the first time; but, before doing that, I would like to point out to the House that there is one reason that will recommend this Bill, and it is this. The measure in its complete form is a codification of all the existing laws of the colony, which number thirteen; and when one has occasion to search through the various volumes of statutes to find the state of local government law on any given subject, he cannot do so with satisfaction until he has waded through these thirteen Acts. This will be obviated now, because all the law will be contained within the covers of this Bill. That is, I think, the main ground for the acceptance of the Bill. In the next place, the municipal bodies of the colony have from time to time held conferences with a view of bringing the law on the subject as near in line as possible with that of Victoria and the other colonies. The result of these conferences is now embodied in this Bill. I may say without fear of contradiction that nearly all the municipalities of this colony that have gone into the subject, and have made a study of it, unanimously recommend the measure for the acceptance of the Assembly.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is the mayor to be still elected?

MR. GEORGE: This is not the Bill that came before us last year?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Bill of last year differs from this measure in one notable respect. The Bill of last year provided for a system of rating which was novel and not acceptable to a majority of the public. From this Bill, that system has been eliminated, and the present method of rating and valuation are retained; therefore this Bill makes no innovation on the present law in that respect. So far as the first 300 odd clauses of the Bill are concerned, they are really a repetition, I may say, of

the Bill of last year, but there are additions, to which I shall draw attention. In order to save the time of the House, I shall only refer to those clauses which are novel in their nature and new. The first clause to which I wish to draw attention is in Part 2, which deals with municipal councils—qualification for mayor, auditors, and councillors.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How is the mayor to be elected?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: As regards Clauses 41 and 42, the Bill of last year contained these clauses; but they began with the disqualification—hon. members acquainted with the subject will understand—that “no female or minister of religion shall be eligible for office.” In this Bill these words are left out, so that it is evidently competent for any lady or minister of religion to become an officer under the Municipal Bill now before the House. The next point I wish to draw attention to is that this Bill provides a uniform qualification for the whole of the colony, whereas under the existing Act the property qualification is confined to Perth, Fremantle, and Albany: now it will be one throughout the colony. There is a provision in the Bill that in cases where corporations own property, the corporation may nominate any person to be placed on the roll to represent them so as to have a voice in the representation; also a similar clause as to joint owners. At present under the Municipal Act there is no such provision. Division 4 deals with removals from office. In the past, elections have been held on Mondays, and doubts have arisen in regard to the seven days between the date of nomination and the election. In the future, according to this Bill, all elections will be held on a Wednesday: then there will be no doubt about the seven clear days. Another reason why Wednesday has been selected is to take advantage of the half-holiday to enable people to recreate and vote if they like. Then there is a provision introduced—I know it is in the Victorian Act—that any mayor for the time being shall be *ex officio* a justice of the peace. In the Victorian Act that provision is carried so far that not only is the mayor *ex officio* a justice of the peace for the year in which he is mayor, but for the following year; but under this Bill it is not proposed to give the mayor privi-

leges beyond the year in which he holds office. Under this Bill, by Clause 90, any candidate for office must make a deposit of £5 to save trouble and expense. The present system of nomination enables any person without a deposit to become a candidate for office. Then there is a provision, which is taken from the parliamentary system, that if one-fifth of the votes of the successful candidate are not obtained, the deposit is forfeited. There is a clause in Part 4 that will be salutary: it is a short and speedy way of determining, when the question arises, whether a councillor is elected properly to his office. An application has to be made to the Supreme Court.

MR. GEORGE: What is the number of the clause?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The whole of Part 4 deals with that: it is called "ouster from office." Any rate-payer can call on a person who has been elected to show cause why he should not be ousted from office. A petition has to be filed in the Supreme Court, and a deposit of £20 put up, so that no person shall be subjected to that procedure without a deposit of money first being made. There is one provision of the Bill which will recommend it very much to hon. members: it is Schedule 10, which contains a complete code of by-laws on every possible subject on which it is necessary to legislate by local governing bodies. There are by-laws ready made to hand, and all that municipalities have to do is to adopt them. There are many advantages in this. The by-laws being the same, if adopted, any decision on the by-laws will have equal weight and will be equally binding on the municipalities which have adopted these by-laws. Then there is a provision in Clause 195 to enable any person, who feels so inclined, to test the validity of any by-law. At present a by-law can be questioned in any inferior court; but in this Bill it is proposed to do away with that right of question, and only allow a by-law to be tested in the Supreme Court. The object is that there shall be uniformity of decision on the by-laws. At present one inferior court may regard a by-law as *ultra vires*, another as *intra vires*, and until a decision is given by the Supreme Court each Court is entitled to hold its opinion. The object is to do away with

that anomaly. Any person can have a by-law tested by depositing £20 security for costs; then the question will come before the Supreme Court. The provisions dealing with rating begin with Clause 325 and continue to 361. This Bill is practically the same as the Bill of last year, as I have said before, as regards the rating clauses; they are the same as contained in the present Act under which the municipalities are working, there being nothing novel in them and nothing new. These are the salient features of the Bill. The remainder of the clauses are a repetition of the existing legislation, and anything I might say to hon. members who properly understand the question would be giving them information which they already possess. Before I formally move the second reading I would like to point out that if it is intended to pass the Bill into law this session, members must see that to take the Bill clause by clause and question the measure right through will entirely defeat the object in view. This Bill has come from another place perfected as far as possible: perhaps it may need some further alteration, but at present I do not know of any. With much confidence and pleasure I ask that the Bill be read a second time.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I should like to impress on members the desirability, if at all possible, of placing this Bill on the statute book. It has been so long hanging about, and has received so much attention from all the municipal councils of the colony, that it seems to me we should try and do our best, even at this late hour, to assist the municipal councils who have worked so hard and taken so much interest in this matter. It will be little consolation to them after several years' work to find the Bill set aside last year and again this year. Last year there were difficulties in the way, which we could easily have overcome, in regard to rating. The Bill of last year proposed a new system of rating, but I believe the House agreed not to adopt the new system. The Upper House has amended the Bill this session so that there is no alteration in the rating. The matter that affects the citizens most is the rating, and, as the clauses dealing with this have not been altered, I do not suppose the

ordinary citizen will be very dissatisfied with the Bill when it is passed. Many powers are given to the municipalities which exist in other places, and which perhaps the municipalities do not have here so clearly as we desire they should have. My idea is, if the Bill is not all members desire it to be, it is better to get it on the statute book, feeling that we are certainly acting in accord with the wishes of the municipal authorities throughout the colony. We can feel assured that we are not going to do any great damage, as there is nothing in the Bill of an extraordinary character. It contains nothing that places more obligations on the taxpayer, and it is a consolidation of the law that exists in the colony at the present time brought up to date with that in other parts of Australia, especially in Victoria. I believe it will be found by those willing to give attention to the matter, that this is a very good Bill, and it will be wise on our part to place it on the statute book. I make these observations because the Government themselves have no interest whatever in the Bill. There is nothing in it which affects the Government, that I know of; nothing we wish particularly to see enacted; but we do desire to assist those who are anxious about this Bill—the municipal councils throughout the whole of the colony. I think we may fairly take for granted a good deal, when we know the Bill has received so much care from those who are specially interested in the matter. I would be one of the last to urge that this House should pass hurriedly a measure of this sort, if I were not convinced it had received very careful consideration; and especially has it received attention from the Government in regard to the rights of the Crown. I was anxious, of course, that those rights should not be infringed, and that the municipal authorities should not be given powers against the Crown greater than those at present possessed. I am assured by the authorities of the Law Department that there is no innovation in that respect. There has been no attempt in this Bill to give greater powers to municipal councils than exist at the present time in relation to the Crown; and seeing that there is no increase in the taxation of the ratepayers,

but the rates are the same as they have been for many years past, I think we would not be going far astray, or be acting unwisely, if we did our best to assist those who have given so much attention to the matter. With these remarks I urge most strongly upon my friend opposite (Mr. Illingworth) and the members of the House not to separate this session without an attempt, at any rate, to meet the wishes of such a large and representative body as the municipal authorities of the colony.

MR. GEORGE (Murray) : In reference to the remarks by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, I would like to set his mind at rest in regard to this measure. I have no intention of taking this Bill as I took the other Bill last session; but the Bill last session had just as many arguments, and as fair and just arguments, in its favour as those which have been delivered by the right hon. gentleman this evening, excepting that the Legislative Council have this year gone through the Bill, and last year they had not. The Attorney General has told us—and no doubt he is correct in what he said—that the qualifications contained in this Bill really are in the existing Municipal Act; but at the same time we find that there are 450 clauses, and schedules nearly as big as the Bill; and to ask at this late period of the session, and in this House when we have not even a quorum present, that this Bill should be digested and dealt with is rather too much. It was perfectly well-known that the Bill was coming on this session, and why was it not introduced as one of the early Government measures? I think members have great reason of complaint against the Government in relation to this matter. Here is a Bill which, for aught we know or can tell, may absolutely revolutionise the dealings with municipal matters. It is all very well to say this Bill is the result of the municipal conferences. The Bill brought forward last year was the result of municipal conferences, and yet the opposition which that Bill received in this House afterwards met with the approval of a number of the municipalities. Members of a municipal conference meet for a day or a couple of days and discuss matters; and do you mean to tell me that this House is to be asked to

accept a Bill of this sort when a municipal conference has put its final seal upon it, seeing that to deal with the measure properly in this House three weeks of solid work would be required? We have it upon the authority of the Attorney General that the rating novelty has been struck out, and I am glad it is so. There are some other items to which, when we get into Committee, I shall call attention, though not at any great length. There is one thing I think an innovation, to which, in my opinion, a great deal of objection can be raised, and that is the fact that no provision is made such as obtains, I believe, all over the world—at least it obtains in the old country—that no one shall occupy the position of mayor for more than three years in succession. That provision was considered wise years ago, and I believe that even in this colony it was felt that after a man had been in office some time a change was necessary. We have had examples in the colony of how it is possible for a man who remains too long in office to become absolutely brutal in his treatment of hon. members in this House. We have had instances where a man who has been in office so long forgets the common decencies that should exist among gentlemen, even when they hold a lower grade than himself. That being so, should we not adopt that rule to which I refer as far as municipalities are concerned, which would not act detrimentally to any municipality in this colony, or any other? It may be said that if the people are desirous of keeping a mayor in year after year, they should keep him in. There is a certain amount of reason with regard to that, but a good many of these provisions have been passed in the wisdom of different countries, and it is unwise for us to try to alter them for any reason whatever which may happen to come before us. I do not wish to say unkind things, for my heart is overflowing with the milk of human kindness to-night. If I desired to say unkind things as to why this provision is left out of the Municipal Bill, I could do so. But I propose to leave that until we deal with the question in Committee. Of course we have the opinion of the Attorney General, and also that of his right hon. colleague the Premier, that we should not discuss the Bill; and that being so, with the majority the Govern-

ment have it would be foolish to attempt to do it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): The hon. member (Mr. George) has forgotten that this Bill was introduced into another place in the early part of the session. In my opinion, it is a good thing for the Government to pass some of its measures through the Legislative Council during the early part of the session, in order that the Council may be employed and may have an opportunity of discussing some of the measures in a less hurried manner than would be the case if the discussion of those measures were continued in this House till almost the end of the session. Having had some little experience in another place of the evil effects of rushing on to the Legislative Council the whole of the legislation of the session at the close of that session, I speak with some knowledge and feeling in the matter. We may take it for granted that hon. members in another place have given to this Bill some consideration, and as we expect that when we give consideration to a Bill our work shall have some salutary effect upon the Legislative Council and prevent that House having so much to do, so we may take it for granted that the Council has assisted us in regard to this particular Bill. The Attorney General spoke definitely of the Bill as being practically a copy in most respects of the Act under which the municipalities work in Victoria. I may point out to him that there are a number of very material differences. For instance, we have no such thing in Victoria as the election of mayor by the people. Melbourne, with a population of 460,000, trusts the election of its mayor to its council, and the council elects its mayor every year. A system which answers in a city of that magnitude ought to be sufficiently effective for a city like Perth. I never have felt any great confidence in the system which places the chief chairmanship, so to speak, of the City Council, in the hands of a popular vote. I look upon it in the same way as I should look upon the selection of the Speaker of this Assembly, or the President of the Legislative Council, being made by a popular vote. I think that would be very undesirable. I regret the Bill does not follow the Victorian Act in this particular.

However, I feel that the Bill is required by the councils. The conference of municipalities has given a vast amount of consideration to the Bill for three or four years. The Bill is a codification of the Acts which exist, and we could not be going very far wrong if we were to pass the Bill *pro forma* just as it is. I am conscious of its defects, but I am quite sure we shall not be able to discuss the clauses and remedy these defects during the present session of Parliament, and I appeal particularly to the member for the Murray (Mr. George) as to whether it is not better for us to let the Bill with all its defects be placed upon the statute book as a consolidation or codification of our existing laws, than to leave the 13 Acts (I think that is the number) on the statute book for the councils to work under.

MR. GEORGE: I agree with you there.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I appeal to the House, and especially to the member for the Murray, as I have already said, because I am told he has 27 amendments on the first four pages.

MR. GEORGE: I have not one.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I got it from very good authority, that being the member for the Murray himself.

MR. GEORGE: Mr. Speaker, am I obliged to hear this misrepresentation? I do not wish to leave the House, but my feelings are getting hurt.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I regret that the feelings of the hon. member are getting hurt, because I know it takes a good deal to hurt them. If any member intends to discuss this Bill at any great length, it will not be possible to pass the Bill. Let us place this Bill upon the statute book, see how it works, and amend it next session, for it is impossible to amend it now. The Bill contains no violent changes at all. I know it is not perfect, for it contains a number of defects. I would like, for instance, to have an alteration in that clause which allows a woman or a clergyman to be made a councillor. But we shall have to forego some things, if the Bill is to be placed on the statute book at all. The Bill with these defects is better than existing legislation, and we shall be making a step forward. If there are some small matters, probably they could be dealt with, if the hon. member (Mr.

George) would move amendments without discussing them. The legislation contained in this Bill is practically the same in most respects as that contained in the 13 Acts under which the municipalities are now working. If we can get those Acts consolidated into one, and allow the municipalities to work under the Bill which they themselves have practically brought into being, we shall find out how the measure operates, and be able to deal with it in the next Parliament. We must remember, too, that the next Parliament will come fresh from the country, and will probably include hon. members who have had municipal experience. Consequently, that will be a much more suitable time than the present to deal with the amendment of the Municipal Act. If this were altogether new legislation, then I should certainly say the Bill ought to be rejected, because we shall not have time to discuss it with any degree of care; but being a codification, and a vast improvement on existing legislation from the fact that it is a codification, I would appeal to the House to allow the Bill to go on the statute book. Though I should not for a moment think of supporting the Premier in all his proposals, I support him in this contention, and I hope hon. members will do all they can to assist in passing this measure with as few amendments as possible. I think we may at all events allow the Bill to be read a second time without much further debate, and deal with necessary amendments in Committee. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 40, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 41—Disqualifications:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the Bill as submitted to the Legislative Council, the clause commenced with the words, "No female nor minister of religion, and." In another place these words had been struck out; and a large question arose whether women and ministers of religion should be eligible for municipal office. Hitherto they had been ineligible in this and in the other colonies, except New Zealand.

MR. GEORGE: Better exclude members of Parliament also.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the clause were restored to its original state, another debate must take place in the Upper House, and the Bill would be endangered. He would ask the House to entrust some future Parliament with the duty of making necessary amendments.

MR. GEORGE: Such amendment should not cause delay, for one night would suffice for the debate in another place. He had suggested the exclusion of members of Parliament from municipal councils, because it was better that offices of dignity should not be monopolised by the few. As many as possible should be induced to take a lively interest in public affairs. At present the clause favoured pluralism, and would permit of a man being at once Premier and Mayor of Perth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This was a very grave question, because municipal practice had an awkward habit of becoming parliamentary practice. It would be dangerous to admit clergymen as members of Parliament; and though there did not seem to be the same objection to their entering municipal councils, yet that might be the thin end of the wedge. Women had hitherto been precluded from sitting in Parliament, and it would be a mistake to admit a new principle in this Bill. Nor would it be wise to open the question of excluding members of Parliament from councils. Better restore the clause to its original form. He moved that the words, "No female nor minister of religion, and" be inserted at the beginning of the clause.

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

Clauses 42 to 45, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 46—Penalty for acting when disqualified:

MR. GEORGE: Would it be in order for the Chairman to read the parts of the Bill, instead of the clauses separately? To do so would save time. He wished merely to emphasise the fact that the Bill was being passed in a thin House, without proper discussion. It had been fully considered in another place, and on the other House must rest the responsibility.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 47 to 445 (put to the vote in divisions, by general consent)—agreed to.

Schedules—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:38 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 20th November, 1900.

Question: Federal Parliament, Opening—Return: Eastern Railway Sidings, Receipts—Truck Act Amendment Bill: Administrator's Suggestion of Amendment—Brown Hill Loop Railway Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, in Committee, Clauses 2 to 58, progress—Fire Brigades Board Debenture Bill, first reading—Municipal Institutions Bill, Assembly's Amendment (Count-out)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—FEDERAL PARLIAMENT, OPENING.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (for Hon. R. S. Haynes) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1. If the Government has made any inquiries from the other Australian Governments whether it is intended that the member of the State Parliaments shall be present at the opening of the Federal Parliament. 2. If not, will the Government make such inquiries.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:—1. The Government have not made any inquiries. 2. The various colonies will be consulted, but it is considered premature to do so at present, there being plenty of time in which to consider what arrangements shall be made.