

nothing about the breach of privilege complained of, and could, therefore, take no cognizance of the matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) said he really was not aware whether or not His Honor was in the habit of reading the papers, but the hon. member had made out a very plain case of breach of privilege. If His Honor would consult the records of other Legislative Assemblies he would find that breaches of privilege of much less gravity than the one complained of by Mr. Bickley were not overlooked.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has called my attention to some obnoxious remarks which he said appeared in one of the public journals, but he does not even mention the name of the paper in which the remarks were published. He makes no definite charge of a breach of privilege against any particular journal, and, under the circumstances, I really can take no cognizance of it.

The matter then dropped.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAYS BILL.

First Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), with leave, without notice, and in order to assert the rights and privileges of the House, moved that leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for the Construction and Maintenance of Railways authorized by any Act of the Legislature.

The Bill was read a first time.

Suspension of Standing Orders.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved for the suspension of Standing Orders, with a view to now moving the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

GERALDTON AND NORTHAMPTON RAILWAY BILL.

First Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), with leave, without notice, moved that leave be given to bring in a Bill to authorize the construction of a Railway from Geraldton to Northampton, out of monies authorized to be raised by "The Public Works Loan Act, 1873."

The Bill was read a first time.

Suspension of Standing Orders.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved for the suspension of Standing Orders, with a view to now moving the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

Suspension of Standing Orders.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved for the suspension of Standing Orders, with a view to the Council adjourning until Friday, 21st November, at 2 p.m.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at 3.20 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 21st November, 1873.

Telegraphic Communication with South Australia—Damaged Articles of Food—Private Bond Warehouses—Construction and Maintenance of Railways Bill: in committee—Geraldton and Northampton Railway Bill: in committee—Adjournment: suspension of Standing Orders—Moorings—Harbor Improvements—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2 p.m.

PRAYERS.

TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), in accordance with notice, moved,—

That, in the opinion of this Council, the establishment of Telegraphic Communication between this Colony and other parts of the world by means of a Line to connect with the South Australian Telegraphic System, *via* Eucla, is an object of main importance to the progress of the Colony.

That it is desirable that the Government should at the commencement of next Session be in a position to lay definite proposals on this subject before the Council for its consideration, and that such proposals should be then considered in connection with correlative questions of Public Works and Finance.

He said that he did not conceive that any valid objection could be raised to the motion, first, because it was a truism, and, secondly, because, it was not intended to tie the Council down to any definite course of action. Had it done so, he could readily conceive objections might fairly, at the present time, be raised. With a very thin House, merely convened for one formal matter, it would have been unwise on the part of the Government to endeavor to bind members to any particular line of action, and still more unwise on the part of members to give in their adhesion to a particular line of action till they had statistics and reliable data in regard to other public matters connected with or correlative to the question under consideration. He thought this colony owed a debt of gratitude to that of South Australia, which had ever shown itself forward in public works requiring energy, determination, and pluck to undertake and carry through. In joining with us in an undertaking such as was contemplated in the resolution he had read, South Australia had apparently little to gain, but no doubt she looked ahead; she saw the necessity of the work, she saw how it must aid the progress of all matters in this colony, and that it could not fail to be a great incentive to the development of our resources. She deserved the acknowledgments and the thanks of the colony, and he hoped at no distant period to see those thanks flashed along the electric wire. In moving the resolution his desire was to pledge those honorable members who were present to nothing more than that the work was a very desirable one, if practicable, and if the means by which it would be proposed to carry it out were satisfactory. If we wanted an example of the benefits derived from telegraphic communication with all Australia and the Mother Country, we need not go any further than to South Australia for that example. Was not the overland line to Port Darwin looked on as a chimerical scheme, and one that could not be carried out effectually? How different had the result proved; and as to the cost, great as it was, it is paying its way, and he believed that the large sum netted by the colony a few months after the opening of the line, consequent on information received as to the state of the flour market throughout the world, and which had been computed as in excess of the whole cost of the overland line, was a wonderful result of a great and important undertaking, which can but reflect great credit on our enterprising neighbours. If we wanted another example, we need go no farther than our own doors. Who did not recollect the laugh that was made when it was first proposed by a few enterprising men to run a telegraph line between Perth and Fremantle? He had planted the first post of that line, and

it was done in the presence of not more than half-a-dozen people, and it might have been thought they were ashamed of themselves, so quiet were their proceedings; but it soon began to pay and then people pricked up their ears, and a company was started, subsequently ratified by an Act of this House; and he remembered the flourish of trumpets and the sensation that occurred when the first part of the Company's line in Perth was planted by the Governor of the colony. It had become fashionable now, though no one on that occasion alluded to the pioneers of telegraphic communication, who were really there, on whom praise should have been bestowed. Since that date, telegraphic communication had spread from end to end of the settled portion of the colony, and had become a recognised necessity which we could not now brook to be without; and it was paying its way and would add to the revenue of the colony. He would ask, was it necessary that he should say one word as to the advantages the colony would derive from telegraphic communication with Australia and the whole world, by the proposed route? Were there some who doubted it, and desired we should continue on in the same slow routine we have done for so many years? He was really told there were some who thus thought, and he had no answer to make them. No arguments he could use would convince such men, whose minds by long residence in places far from the haunts of civilised men had become petrified and not amenable to the force even of the electric shock. But there might be those who think that there are other more important works that should take precedence of this great work,—Harbor improvements at Fremantle, a railway to the Eastern districts; and that steps ought to be taken first to ensure a large influx of immigration. These argued that the telegraph was not a necessity such as the works he had enumerated, but a luxury which we should not dream of till we can afford it. Well, he could find replies to those who argue in this way, greatly as he differed from them. He saw that all such works, aye, and numerous others, would be greatly forwarded if we had a telegraph line to Eucla, and that the impetus that would be generally given to business of all descriptions would place us in a position to undertake works that we now could only think of that are tantalising; we may look and long for them, but we cannot see our way to accomplish them. What were the main drawbacks to our being able to construct railways, and to undertake those harbor improvements at Fremantle which were so essential to our progress? Were they not the want of population and the want of capital? What had kept people from visiting us but the length of time

that they are compelled to be absent from their friends and business? Was it not notorious that many would have come but for the difficulty in getting to the colony, in travelling about it when they did come here, and in getting away again? Everyone who came here spoke well of the place, saw plenty to be done, and everyone who undertook any business employed labor, brought people here, and it was by such means that we shall get that immigration which we want and must have, and which makes its appearance when there is a real and earnest demand for it. We shall never get it or many other matters if we go on in the same hum-drum way we have gone hitherto. We must follow the enlightened example set us by colonies younger than ourselves, colonies in many ways not more gifted with resources than we are, and who now look down upon us for want of energy and spirit. Were we not crying out continually for want of shipping? Could we not act with promptitude and certainty on this and a thousand other matters if we had a telegraph line? It was only a few days ago that there was a real and serious fear that the colony would have been put to grave inconvenience for want of flour. Could such a thing have occurred if we could telegraph to Adelaide or Melbourne? Fortunately the opportune arrival of a vessel with flour saved us all from being put on a very scanty allowance. Or again, if we were blessed with a good harvest, could we not prevent anything like a glut in the market by warning persons not to ship flour? Need he point out, he was sure he need not, to the hon. members of that House how many marvellous accounts they had read of the boon that the telegraph has been to business men? How much money had been saved, and how much made by a judicious use of the telegraph line? How men had been prevented from working at cross-purposes? How long and unprofitable journeys had been avoided? Or need he point out what an advertisement to this colony would be the opening up of telegraphic communication between Western Australia and the whole world? Let them look at the colonies, and indeed at those kingdoms who did not hesitate to utilise the telegraph in its early days, and to connect themselves with the centres of civilisation. Compare them with those colonies and those countries which did not do so, and see the vast difference in their present position. He had heard it said, and seriously argued, that such a work as he was advocating would only benefit a few merchants and be no good to the community at large. The man who used an argument like this must be very obtuse; he could not see beyond his own nose. Could any reasonable man doubt that what is profitable to the merchant must be

profitable to the consumer, profitable to the community at large? Were we not absolutely without competition? And could such a state of things occur where there is competition? He had long come to the conclusion that the work was a work necessary to our progress, and that we must have it. Some few years ago we had a chance, we held back; shame to us that we did so; and took no advantage of it. We had a second chance now, or rather when the Council met in May or June, a definite proposition would be put before the House. If it were rejected, we might whistle for a third chance. We could not always expect the fates to be propitious. He asked for no pledge now. It would be wrong in him to do so, when there was barely a quorum of members present, and those members only assembled for a special and formal matter. He only asked them to adhere to the terms of the resolution he had read. If that resolution be passed, the Government would be prepared, in pursuance of it, at any early date, in the ensuing session, to place before the House such statistics and information in regard to this and other important works as would satisfy, he had little doubt, hon. members as to the wisdom of the undertaking now under consideration, and that it could be done with little or no burden to the colony and with powerful and favorable effect on other works which hon. members had so much to heart.

Mr. MARMION echoed the regret expressed by the Colonial Secretary, that so few hon. members were present to consider so important a question as that before the House, and he trusted that no one of those who were present doubted the very great importance of the subject, or the great benefit to be derived by the colony from telegraphic communication with the rest of the world. He would say but little now upon the matter, as the House was not asked to come to any definite conclusion at this session, but only to place the Government in a position to negotiate with the South Australian Government, so as to enable them to place before the Council at the next session definite proposals, plans, and statistics. He would, therefore, postpone his remarks generally upon the subject until the next session, and would confine himself to what he had heard was one of the arguments raised against the scheme by some persons, viz.,—that it would only benefit a few merchants and men of business, or, in fact, the commercial interest. This seemed to him to be great nonsense, for it was impossible to benefit the commercial interest, without benefitting every other interest in the community. The commercial interest was that upon which every or nearly every other might be said to hinge, and it was

impossible to benefit or to injure it without benefitting or injuring in the same degree other interests. What, he might ask, were the principal duties of commercial men, or men in business? Was it not to watch the markets of the world in connection with the home market, so as to enable them to buy and sell their wares to the very best advantage? This telegraphic communication with the outer world would enable them to do, and must be a benefit alike to producer and consumer; to the former, by enabling him to at once take advantage of the highest rates ruling for his produce in the foreign markets, and to the latter by placing him in a position to purchase in those foreign markets articles not produced in the colony to the best advantage when prices were low. Then, again, telegraphic communication would be an immense benefit to us in consequence of our geological position, which is so favorable with regard to the Indian, Singapore, Batavia, and other markets, and would enable us, at all times, to be the first to supply Australian products to the above markets when prices were such as would yield a profit. Many more arguments could be adduced, but he trusted that no hon. member would oppose the motion before the House. As no pledge was sought to be exacted, he hoped it would meet with unanimous approval.

Mr. PADBURY said he did not think there was a member in the House or a person in the colony who would object to the scheme alluded to; it simply meant daily communication with the world. The question was, whether it would be better for us to ask the Victorian Government, if they would lay a sub-marine cable from Cape Otway to King George's Sound, if we would lay one from either Champion Bay or Nickol Bay to Java Heads, and thus place us in direct communication with the outer world.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee): The Victorian Government will not do it.

Mr. PADBURY: I'm not so sure of that; at all events it is a matter of pounds shillings and pence as to which line be adopted. If a line can be made from here to Eucla at a cost of £30,000, and will pay its working expenses, I would willing pay interest, to commence with, out of current revenue. But if we have to pay working expenses out of current revenue, then it becomes a rather serious matter, as it would be involving rather a heavy debt on us, and we should have to pay interest and working expenses both out of current revenue. Before, however, I give my vote for telegraph to Eucla, I shall want to see that the Government are in earnest with reference to harbor improvements at Fremantle.

Mr. BICKLEY remarked that the honorable mover of the question before the House had treated the subject so exhaustively,—had made so palpably clear the benefits which would accrue from the establishment of telegraphic communication with the outer world, that it left nothing for him to say but to add his testimony to the facts the honorable gentleman had so ably represented. It was quite true there were many other works of great importance needed to be executed, and no doubt would be executed in due time, but he considered it of little use that we should have incurred the expense of local telegraphic communication unless the matter were followed up and completed by placing this colony in connection with her neighbors, and, by their means, with the world at large; and notwithstanding, therefore, the great importance of other works advocated, he considered the extension of the telegraph as proposed in the motion before the House to be the most paramount. No doubt the honorable mover had his reasons for wording his motion so mildly, but for his (Mr. Bickley's) part he greatly regretted the wording had not been very much stronger and he would have been glad had the House been called upon to pledge itself in far more definite terms.

Mr. DEMPSTER was fully aware of all the benefits arising from telegraph communication, and also of how much more importance the lines already in operation in this colony had proved to be than at first anticipated. He was also aware that, if these lines were paying now, as the colony advanced they must considerably increase the revenue. But, notwithstanding all that could be said in favor of the proposed extension, he should consider it his duty to oppose it on these grounds,—that other works which are of more importance to the colony at the present time would be retarded in consequence.

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Hon. M. Fraser), on rising, said, that as allusion had been made by the hon. member for Swan and by another hon. member to harbor improvements being paramount as colonial public works, he might reply that the telegraph in question, was, in fact, only to be regarded as correlative to, and not, as imagined by some hon. members, a corollary of such works. The Council was just finishing a spoke in the wheel of the car of progress, namely, the complete authorization of the railway at Champion Bay. This telegraph would be another spoke, for if the harbor works and the railway to the Eastern districts were carried out and perfected,—which he fervently hoped for, and which he had worked for ever since he had been in the colony,—the proposed telegraph line would be

a necessity; for, were there afforded secure accommodation for large steamers and vessels at the port of Fremantle, the fact of there being in existence instantaneous communication with the whole world would make the principal port of the colony no doubt the calling place of the whole commerce, incoming and outgoing, of India, China, and the Eastern seas, and Australasia. If the Council did not now accept the magnanimous offer of South Australia the telegraph would subsequently have to be hereafter entirely done at the expense of this colony, as being absolutely necessary in connection with such harbor works and internal communication. Apart from this altogether, the traders and passengers by the P. & O. steamers at King George's Sound would contribute largely to its revenue, and the extensive telegraph system at present existing within the settled districts of this colony would have its present value increased tenfold by the proposed addition. He earnestly hoped to see both the harbor made good and the Eastern districts railway completed, and nothing could serve more to that end than this proposed telegraph. We wanted immigration and this would naturally serve us in that respect also. If, in fact, South Australia's great offer was refused, it was so much more to be deplored, because the gain was all on our side; and should gold be struck in payable quantities, which there was reasonable grounds for believing it would, now that practical and experienced gold prospectors were on our shores, there would be a dire necessity for the work. Every one who wished to see us go up in the world, and to see other and great public works carried out, must allow this was a foremost undertaking; besides all this was a probability of the line being accepted as part of another great telegraph line to India and Europe. His colleague the Hon. the Colonial Secretary had just told them of the two chances which the colony had lost already; he (the Surveyor General) therefore hoped there would not be a dissentient voice raised against the proposed scheme. There was a tide in the affairs of men, and of colonies, which taken at the flood led on to fortune. Let us take it on the turn.

Mr. BIRCH: The resolution before the House is one of very great importance. We have already experienced the benefit of telegraph communication within the colony, and there is no doubt that if communication can be opened up by the same means with the outer world it will be an immense benefit, not alone to our commercial interests but to the colony generally. I shall therefore support the resolution, while at the same time, by doing so, I do not feel myself pledged to vote for carrying out the scheme when brought before the Coun-

cil, for should the erection of the proposed line retard works, which I consider more necessary for the prosperity of the colony, I should vote against it. I cannot agree with what some hon. members have said, that telegraph communication is of paramount importance, for suppose we have the means of telegraphing for ships to come and take away our produce, and they are cast away upon our sand beach at Fremantle, that surely would not benefit the colony, but would rather retard its progress, and bring us into bad repute. I have not been convinced by the arguments used, that telegraph communication ought to precede harbor improvements and other public works which would tend to develop our natural resources and give facilities for the transit of our produce to the market. Should the Government, however, after laying before the Council all the necessary information which will be required on the subject, show that these necessary public works can be carried out at the same time as the telegraph line, feeling as I do the importance of the work, I should then gladly support it.

Question put and passed.

DAMAGED ARTICLES OF FOOD.

Mr. BICKLEY, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether there was any enactment under which persons may be punished for selling or offering for sale for human consumption damaged articles of food, such as flour, rice, meat, &c.; and whether it is the duty of any officer of the Government to take cognizance of any such goods landed in a damaged state from vessels arriving at ports of this colony. Also if there should be no such enactment, whether it was the intention of the Government to take any steps to prevent the sale of impure food, whether imported or otherwise. He said that in bringing this matter forward it seemed to him unnecessary to say more than that he considered it a duty of the Government to provide as much as possible against the health of the people suffering from impure food. Not long ago two vessels had arrived in the port of Fremantle from which a large quantity of flour had been landed in a damaged state, and this having gone into consumption the result was a considerable amount of sickness. He thought some steps should be taken to prevent the sale of articles unfit for human food,—the people, in fact, should not be poisoned.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) replied that it was impossible, at so short notice, to give any positive answer on all the points raised; but he assumed it would be satisfactory to the hon. member, and to the House, if he said that the question would be

considered in all its bearings during the recess, and, if found necessary, brought under notice of the House at an early date next session.

PRIVATE BOND WAREHOUSES.

Mr. BICKLEY, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether there existed any legal obstacle, or other objection, to the granting of licenses to merchants or other respectable persons, to have warehouses in Fremantle for the reception of goods in bond, as is usual at other mercantile ports. The hon. member believed that the issue of licenses for private bonded warehouses would be a great convenience to the mercantile public, and tend considerably to lessen the expenses on goods; while at the same time the measure would afford relief to the Customs Department. He said it was usual in other ports to allow such warehouses, and he did not see why the practice should not prevail at the principal port of this colony also.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) replied that he was unable to give the hon. member an answer that would be altogether satisfactory to him, because he had not had time to investigate the matter. The question, however, should be fully enquired into, and information thereon should be afforded him.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF RAILWAYS BILL.

In Committee.

In the Committee stage the Colonial Secretary briefly explained the provisions of the Bill, and its various clauses were agreed to without amendment.

GERALDTON AND NORTHAMPTON RAILWAY BILL.

In Committee.

The Bill passed through Committee without discussion.

ADJOURNMENT.

Suspension of Standing Orders.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved for the suspension of Standing Orders, with a view of moving the adjournment of the Council until Saturday at 10 a.m.

Question put and passed.

MOORINGS.

Mr. MARMION, with leave, without notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether the moorings for Gage's Roads and elsewhere, for which the sum of £1,000 was included in the first Loan Bill, had been ordered by the Government, and whether any notice had been received of their purchase and shipment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) replied that the whole of the moorings had been ordered but no communication had, as yet, been received by the Government notifying their shipment or purchase; such advices, however, may shortly be expected.

HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. MARMION, with leave, without notice, asked the Colonial Secretary what steps had been taken by the Government during the recess to carry out the resolutions and decision of the Council at the last session with reference to proposed harbor works at Fremantle.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) replied that during the recess the instructions of the select committee on Harbor Improvements had been strictly carried out. The Government had been in communication with the engineers of the South Australian and the Victorian Governments. The former were so exceedingly busy that they could not devote their attention to the subject at all; the Victorian Government had submitted the report of the select committee to a board, consisting of their three principal engineers, Mr. Higginbottom, Mr. Gordon, and Mr. Wardell, who had reported that the information contained in the report did not supply sufficient data to justify them in giving an opinion on the matter, without either one or more of them visiting the colony, which would involve an expenditure of five guineas each *per diem*. Under the circumstances, the Government had thought it better to collect every possible information on the subject,—which was now being done, and which it was anticipated would be completed towards the end of the present month,—and it was the intention of the Government then to request the Surveyor General, armed with such information, to proceed to Melbourne and place himself in communication with the engineers of the Victorian Government. Should they then be unable to arrive at any definite decision without a personal inspection of the river and the harbor, one of them might be induced to visit the colony for that purpose. He hoped the Council would recognize the fact that the suggestions of the select committee had been strictly adhered to by the Government.

ADJOURNMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Council now adjourn until Saturday, 22nd November, at 10 a.m.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at 4.15 p.m.