

progress be now reported, and leave asked to sit again on Friday, 22nd August.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

LAND QUARANTINE BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past ten o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 21st August, 1884.

Intercolonial and Coastal Steam Service: Report of Select Committee—Proposed amalgamation of Offices of Registrar General and Registrar of Brands with that of Registrar of Deeds—Public Works at Carnarvon—Newspaper (Libel and Registration) Bill: recommitted—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

SUBSIDY FOR INTERCOLONIAL AND COASTAL STEAM SERVICE (MESSAGE No. 5): REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

The House went into committee for the consideration of the report of the select committee to whom had been referred His Excellency's Message (No. 5), relating to the renewal of the steam-service contracts with Messrs. Lilly & Co.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the select committee had made three recommendations in their report, and as the report was in the hands of hon. members, he would at this stage content himself by moving the first of the three resolutions, which was in the following terms:

(1) "That the present Intercolonial Service as now constituted (but not specially so provided for under existing

"contract) should be continued with the
"two steamers now employed in such
"service, or others of equal capacity and
"power, making the same number of trips
"in the year as at present between Mel-
"bourne and Fremantle *via* usual inter-
"mediate ports, and that the present
"fortnightly mail service between Albany
"and Geraldton *via* intermediate ports,
"as now included in the present contract
"with Messrs. Lilly & Co., dated 10th
"February, 1882, should be continued."

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) thought it would make the meaning clearer if after the word "year," in the eighth line, the following words were inserted—"that is, one complete voyage in about every three weeks." The hon. member moved an amendment to that effect, which was accepted.

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE said he had read the committee's report many times, and found great difficulty in understanding at what conclusions the committee had arrived,—there seemed so much difference of opinion among the members of the committee themselves. But he noticed one great departure from the terms of a resolution previously adopted by that House. He referred to the resolution recommending that tenders should be invited for these services. He was surprised that, in view of that resolution, the select committee should have made no reference to it in their report, especially in view of the desire which had always been expressed that before any future contract be entered into tenders should be called for, not only in the other colonies but also in England, the general feeling being that, if that were done, a better service and probably a cheaper service would be secured, and a better class of steamers—for it could not be denied that some of the steamers employed on the coast were totally unfit for the service and would not be allowed in the other colonies. The contractors seemed to think any steamers good enough for us. He thought himself the time had arrived when we should not subsidise steamers at all to go to the other colonies. There was no necessity for it that he could see. The P. and O. Co.'s steamers were much more comfortable, and he believed charged the same rates. It may have been necessary

at one time, perhaps, in bygone years, to have offered a subsidy for these steamers, in order to get an intercolonial service established; but he believed that of late years the contractors had done very well indeed. He therefore, so far as the present resolution went, was opposed to any subsidy at all being paid to steamers proceeding beyond Albany, to the other colonies.

MR. BROWN said he did not think the hon. member for the Swan would make up his mind to oppose the resolution until he had at any rate heard some little discussion, and heard something of the reasons which had actuated the select committee in drawing up their report. It did appear on the face of it somewhat strange that the select committee should have departed from a resolution of the House with reference to the question of the desirability of throwing open these services to public tender. But at the time that resolution was adopted the circumstances of the case were very different from what they were at present. There were then no less than four distinct steam companies, each possessing its own fleet of steamers, in the neighboring colonies, and all of those companies might have been expected to compete for these services if tenders were invited. Since that date these different companies had been absorbed, so to speak, by one company, the Adelaide Steam Ship Company, which was now all-powerful. In fact, according to the information laid before the select committee, there was no other company in the Australian colonies in a position to compete with them at all, as they had bought up all the other companies. When that resolution was passed, the Adelaide Steamship Co., itself, was separate and distinct from Messrs. Lilly and Co., and there was reason at that time to suppose that the Adelaide Co. intended to compete against Messrs. Lilly and Co. But things had changed since then. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that great efforts were made on more than one occasion, on the part of this colony, to get our steam services performed at a lower rate. The present Colonial Secretary was on one occasion sent to the other colonies, commissioned to do his best in the matter, and hon. members were aware of the report he made, and that it

was only after grave consideration that Messrs. Lilly and Co. were induced to perform the services required. No other company would look at our offer at the time; and, looking at the fact that the steamship trade was now virtually in the hands of one company, he thought the select committee were justified in departing from the resolution of the House, as to inviting tenders. The committee felt that, if we could absolutely secure from the Adelaide Steamship Co. the performance of these services for three years, the company would probably be inclined to make cheaper terms with us than if the service were thrown open to public competition. It would have been absurd, if it was intended that these tenders should be thrown open to companies in England, to have given only three or four months notice; and, under the circumstances, the committee felt that virtually there would be nobody to compete with the present company. The Adelaide Steamship Co., and this company, feeling itself all-powerful, would be in a position to exact from the colony a much higher subsidy than we were paying at present. This may have been an erroneous conclusion, but it was the conclusion which the committee arrived at. The hon. member for the Swan said the time had now arrived when it was no longer necessary to subsidise the intercolonial service at all. He (Mr. Brown) was very much misinformed if we were paying anything at all for that service at present. The service was not under the control of this colony at all; nor was it intended to subsidise it, that he was aware of. Our contract and our subsidy was in connection with the coastal service, but, in order to make that service pay the contractors, it was found absolutely necessary that they should connect it with their own service to the neighboring colonies; and the select committee thought it would be better, under the proposed new arrangement, to give this colony control over that service as well as the coastal service, especially as the committee could not see that it would cost any more. On the other hand, it would be a sort of advertisement for us to have it announced that these steamers were under contract with the Western Australian Government—although absolutely we should not be

paying them any subsidy for the inter-colonial service. The total amount of subsidy now paid was £7,576 per annum, and this was paid for the coastal services alone, and the committee recommended that under the new contract this subsidy should include the intercolonial service also, while at the same time it was proposed to secure greater facilities as regards the coastal service as well, without costing the colony a penny more than it was paying at present. The committee, it would be observed from their report, recommended that there should be two additional trips in the year to Kimberley, making a total of six instead of (as at present) four, those trips to be undertaken in the following months,—March, May, June, July, September, and November. It would thus be seen that the new arrangements would be very much more advantageous to the colony altogether than the present contract. Under all these circumstances, he hoped the House would not lightly oppose the recommendations of the select committee. He himself was satisfied that if the services were thrown open to public competition, Western Australia would find that she would be called upon to pay a vastly larger subsidy for these services than under the arrangement now proposed to be entered into with the Adelaide Steamship Co. So far as the class of steamers was concerned, he could only say that he differed from the hon. member for the Swan. They were not, some of them, high class steamers; but, taking the very worst of them, he maintained it was a far better class of boat than anyone in the colony—or at least the majority of people—four or five years ago, expected to see plying between the ports on our coast. He thought the colony was not only well served, but magnificently well served, considering the amount of the subsidy and the extensive coast that was served, with our small population, scattered along the seaboard from North to South.

MR. VENN said it would be seen from the committee's report that both he and the hon. member for the Vasse had disagreed with some of the recommendations of the committee. He cordially endorsed a great deal that had been said by the hon. member for the Swan, that the time had arrived when we should see an end of

subsidising steamers. But, so far as he could make out, we did not appear to be any nearer the end of subsidising than we were years ago. We seemed just as deep in the mire now, as regards steamer subsidies, as we ever were. He did not think it was a good thing on the part of a Government to subsidise any particular industry. These steamers came here heavily laden from the other colonies, and, whether they were subsidised or not, they could not carry any more than they were carrying now. Possibly, if we had mail steamers pure and simple to deal with, we should have to subsidise; but seeing that these steamers also carried merchandise, which was thought a great deal more of than the mail service, he thought they might do very well without a subsidy. Instead of that it was now proposed, in effect, to subsidise the inter-colonial service as well as the coastal service, and he expected that in a few years the colony would be subsidising steamers to England and to all parts of the world. He entirely disagreed with the proposal to retain the present services in the hands of the present monopolists, and he thought it would be to the interest and advantage of the colony if they were thrown open to public competition. Even if we did not obtain more advantageous terms, it would be satisfactory to know that we were doing the best we could. At present, we had only a mere assertion that no one else would tender. People from other countries besides Australia might take the matter in hand. At all events, it was only right and proper, and the legitimate business course, to call for public tenders; therefore he entirely dissented from the principle laid down in these resolutions. As to the way in which the services had been carried out—especially as regards the Southern districts—he thought the less said the better. The requirements and the conveniences of the inhabitants of the Southern districts had been entirely ignored by the present contractors, who seemed to have it all their own way. He expected the recommendations of the committee would be adopted, notwithstanding his opposition; but, if so, he did hope the Government would exert itself a little more than it had done in the past to see that the services, so far as the Southern districts were concerned,

were better performed and with less friction than they had in the past, as between the contractors and the public.

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE did not think there was the slightest chance of this friction being removed, and of the public being better served, so long as the Government let the contractors feel that they were masters of the situation. He was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for the Gascoyne say that, so far as the intercolonial service was concerned, it was independent of us altogether. Surely, when the hon. member said that, the present contract was not before him. He quite acknowledged the force of what one hon. member said, that it was quite possible these tenders might be taken up in England or other countries besides Australia. Looking at the depressed state of the shipping trade of late, he thought it was almost a certainty that if tenders had been invited for these services we should have had them done at less than we were paying now. He did not know whether there was time to adopt that course now, but if the matter had been taken in hand in time, we should have had plenty of tenders from English companies, without going to the other colonies at all.

MR. BROWN: What the hon. member for the Swan has just said as to the intercolonial service is quite right. I was misled by the statements of others, and had not the contract to refer to at the time. But, be that as it may, the recommendations of the committee embrace a larger service than at present to the colonies, and he thought we would do well to continue our hold over it.

MR. LOTON said the report before the committee, so far as his views were concerned, could not be looked upon as altogether satisfactory. With regard to subsidising steamers between this colony and the other colonies, his own opinion was that there had never been any occasion for Western Australia to pay any subsidy for such a service; and he was very much in accord with what had fallen from the hon. member for the Swan and the hon. member for Wellington on that point. But it appeared it was rather late in the day now to follow the suggestion made by that Council last year, as to calling for tenders. They had the fact before them that the

present contract terminated at the end of the year, and he understood the contractors had received a written notice to that effect. It appeared to him that the proper course would have been for the Government to have invited tenders during the past six months, so as to have something definite to have submitted for the consideration of the Council this session. His own view would be this—that the Government should invite tenders, and subsidise steamers for a monthly service between Albany and Geraldton in the first instance, calling at all the intermediate ports; and that, in addition to this, they should invite tenders for the service between Fremantle and Kimberley, calling at Champion Bay and all the other intermediate ports—that, in fact, we should have two separate and distinct services. It would be quite open for one company to go in for the two services, but he thought it was very desirable we should leave it to public competition. We had now, besides the Adelaide Steamship Co.'s service, another service which had just been started between Fremantle and Singapore, and which this colony was subsidising. He thought we might very easily, if we went into the matter in a business-like form, have services which would be equally satisfactory to the residents of the Northern Districts, at a less cost than if the suggestions embodied in the select committee's report were carried out. From what had fallen from those who supported the recommendations he could only arrive at this conclusion—that the Council was really going to subsidise a monopoly. [Hon. J. G. LEE STEERE: Hear, hear.] We virtually admitted in these resolutions that the Adelaide Steamship Co. was the only company that was capable of carrying on the services that we wanted, and, in doing so, we subsidised a monopoly which he thought it was time should be broken up.

MR. VENN said he noticed that the resolution now before the committee, dealing with the inter-colonial service, made no provision for the steamers calling at Eucla. He thought if we were going to subsidise steamers to run between this colony and Melbourne and Adelaide, that at certain times of the year, of which notice should be given, these steamers should call at Eucla.

They heard a great deal about Kimberley in the course of these debates, how necessary it was that the Government should do everything it could for that district, in view of the large revenue derived from it; but they heard very little about what had been derived from the Eucla District, and the large sums flowing into the Treasury from that part of our territory, although we had done nothing in return for it. The proposal to assist the settlers to discover water was thrown out, he might say, ignominiously; and he thought the least we could do in return for their contribution to the general revenue would be to make it compulsory upon these steamers to call at Eucla at certain times of the year.

MR. MARMION thought that in considering the report before the House many members appeared to forget that in continuing the present subsidy we were obtaining for it a much more extended service than was provided under the existing contract. He had always been opposed to subsidising the inter-colonial service, but the majority had differed from him; and, granting that the principle was a correct one—which he did not admit—he did not think we were likely to get the service better performed, for the same money, than the present company was performing it. As to the advisability of calling for tenders, he was aware it was considered desirable some time ago that this should be done, and no doubt the principle was a correct one. But there were times when we might advantageously depart from that principle, and, in doing so in this instance, he thought the committee were consulting the public interests. It was all very well to talk of the depression in the shipping trade, and the large number of steamers disengaged the owners of which would be glad to take up these services. But it was only yesterday he was informed, upon good authority, that it was almost impossible to find steamers adapted for our particular trade and requirements. So that the probability was, these steamers would have to be constructed on purpose, which meant the investment of £80,000 or £70,000. He thought that on the whole the colony was very well served. He considered it was an advantage that the present contract-

ors were such a powerful company, and that they had so many steamers at their command, so that, in the event of an accident, they could replace the damaged steamer without delay; which would not be the case with a company in England.

MR. SHENTON considered that some more stringent regulations should be inserted in the charter party between this Government and the Adelaide Steamship Co., with reference to the stoppage of the steamers at Bunbury and the Vasse on their outward trips to Albany, or on their return. From what had come before him as a business man he had reason to know that the residents of those districts had strong and justifiable grounds for making serious complaints against the manner in which they had been treated. He also thought that the Albany steamer should be powerful enough and of sufficient capacity to bring on the cargo coming by the P. & O. steamers from England, and to carry it as far as Champion Bay, instead of (as often happened now) filling up at Adelaide. What was the use of merchants having goods sent out, at high rates, by the P. & O. mail steamers, if, when the goods arrived at Albany, they were detained there for a fortnight, simply to suit the convenience of a company that was receiving a large subsidy from the Government of the colony. He would again insist upon the necessity of the Government, in any future charter party, having more stringent clauses and a heavy penalty behind them. No other Government in the world would have placed themselves in such a position as this Government had placed themselves in with these contractors.

MR. RANDELL said he had left himself open to conviction with reference to the course he would pursue with regard to this report, and he thought that what had been stated by the hon. member for the Gascayne had not been refuted. It was mere supposition that other companies were likely to compete, or that what he might call 'handy' boats would be available if they did—at any rate in the other colonies. Therefore he was inclined to support this first resolution. It was another matter whether we could get any English company to tender for these services—no doubt it would come to that in time; but, at present, he thought

there were many considerations which rendered it more desirable, or at any rate more likely, that the services would be taken up by Australian companies. He thought that on the whole the services were very well done, although he was willing to concede that Vasse and Bunbury had reasons to complain. At the same time, hon. members should bear in mind that there were times in the year when it was utterly impossible for the steamers to put in at Bunbury or the Vasse; and this should be borne in mind, before imposing any heavy penalties. Looking at the matter in a practical way, he thought there was no other course for the House but to adopt the recommendations of the committee. The amalgamation of companies which had already been spoken of had virtually established a monopoly—a very ugly word; but monopolies were not always injurious, and sometimes worked in the interests of the public as well as of the monopolists themselves, and he was not sure it had not been so in this case. No doubt there were many minor causes for complaint, which, if they were all put together, amounted in the aggregate to a good deal; but, looking at the difficulties and the drawbacks the contractors had to contend with, we could never expect a perfect service, for the amount now paid. He thought, however, that hereafter, some steps should be taken by the Government for inviting competition for these contracts. Three years, which was the time now proposed to enter into an agreement with the present contractors, was not a very long time, and it would enable the Government to look about them, and see whether the present subsidy could not be reduced, or, at any rate, competition invited.

MR. GLYDE said he intended to support the recommendations of the select committee. He had no doubt the members of committee had gone into the whole matter very carefully, and been guided by the statistics and information furnished to them. So far as his own judgment went, he thought we could not be better served, on the whole, than we were served at the present time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said, as to the resolution formerly passed by the House, he believed it was merely expressive of a wish that

when the present contract expired tenders should be called for. The Governor, in pursuance of that wish, had sent down a message to the House asking hon. members to inform him what course they deemed advisable to adopt. That message had been referred to a select committee, who had made certain recommendations, which, for good and sufficient reasons, the Government bench intended to support.

MR. SHENTON: What on earth was the use of the Government coming to this House, only a few months before the contract expired? There would be no time now to negotiate with the owners of steamers in England.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said the subject was mentioned in the Governor's opening speech, and it was then six months before the expiration of the present contract, which was all the Government had been asked to do.

MR. SHENTON: If the hon. gentleman will look at the last paragraph of the report of the select committee of 1882 he will find the following words: "Your committee are of opinion that at least twelve months prior to the expiration of the present contract, public notice should be given both here and in the other colonies, of the intention of the Government to invite tenders for the performance of the future steam service on this coast." That report was adopted by this Council. It is idle for the hon. gentleman therefore to say that the Government have carried out the wish of this House in the matter.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) thought hon. members could not expect the Government to abide by a recommendation of a select committee, if the circumstances of the case had changed. At the time that recommendation was made, the Government had only Messrs. Lilly & Co. to deal with, whereas now they had a very powerful combination, which, he thought, was one good reason why the Government should not have followed out the suggestion of the select committee. Considering that we had now five or six steamers plying on our coast and connecting us with the other colonies, he thought the subsidy we paid was a very small subsidy indeed. If, as hon. members

seemed to think, this company had us altogether in their power, it appeared to him they had not treated us badly at all, and they were now prepared to give us still greater advantages and an extended service. In fact, they had already done more than was within the terms of their contract. As to the Vasse and Bunbury, those districts might have good reasons for complaining; but it should be remembered that these steamers carry mails, and, if they were delayed at the outports, people at this end would then begin to complain at the detention of their mails, and there would be a much louder outcry from the residents of Perth and Fremantle.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said some hon. members still seemed to blame the Government in this matter. He maintained that all which it was the duty of the Government to do, the Government had done. What did His Excellency say in the 20th paragraph of the Speech with which he opened the session? "The renewal of the contracts for the present coastal steam service," His Excellency said, "will be a matter for your consideration, and, in order that your hands may be free, I have caused the contractors' agents to be served with a *pro forma* notice of the termination of the contracts in February next." That had been done, and anyone who asserted to the contrary could not support his assertion. Personally he might say he was perhaps better acquainted than any other hon. member with the initiation of the present service, which, he submitted, had served the colony well. If any hon. members thought that the wishes of the House had not been strictly carried out through want of care or through indifference on the part of the Government, those hon. members were laboring under a misconception. He spoke on the subject without bias or prejudice one way or the other. He was not interested in trade, nor in any company of steamers, and he hoped other hon. members spoke equally uninfluenced. He simply looked at the matter in the interests of the colony, and, looking at it in that light, he thought we might go very much farther and fare very much worse.

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE thought that the very fact of the circumstances

of the case having altered, by the amalgamation of the various steam companies, as mentioned by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, so far from excusing the Government from carrying out a resolution of the House, was a very good reason why the Government should have acted upon the terms of that resolution, and that at least twelve months prior to the present contract they should publicly have notified their intention of inviting tenders for the performance of the service in future. He could not at all agree with the Commissioner of Crown Lands that the contractors had done more than they were obliged to do under their present agreement.

MR. CROWTHER thought the House would be doing wisely in agreeing to the report of the select committee, and let us do the best we could until the three years had expired. It might be that by that time we might have the P. & O. steamers calling at Fremantle. If the dream of his hon. friend on the right (Mr. S. H. Parker) came to pass, and Responsible Government became an accomplished fact, we should by that time have steamers of all nations calling at Fremantle. There had been complaints from Bunbury and the Vasse ever since he first had the pleasure of meeting the representatives of those places in that House; and, as it was in the beginning, it was now, and ever would be, world without end, unless their Southern friends could exercise greater influence over the weather, and command the wind and the waves to do their bidding.

MR. VENN then moved, as an amendment, to insert after the word "ports," in the 12th line, the following words: "including Eucla, when called upon to do so by the Government, three times going and coming, during the course of the year." He had already explained his reasons for moving the amendment.

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE suggested that the words "when called upon to do so by the Government" would only complicate matters.

MR. VENN presumed that the Government would insist upon the steamers calling at Eucla three times in the year, of which due notice should be given to the public.

MR. SHENTON thought this was the least they could do for the Eucla district.

They always heard a great deal about the claims of Kimberley, but the claims of Eucla seemed to have very few friends to advocate them.

The amendment was agreed to, and the resolution, as amended, put, and, a division being called for, there appeared—

Ayes 12

Noes 7

Majority for 5

AYES.
Hon. A. P. Heusman
Hon. J. Forrest
Mr. Mason
Mr. Brown
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Davis
Mr. Glyde
Mr. Higham
Mr. Marmion
Mr. McRae
Mr. Randell
Hon. M. Fraser (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Loton
Mr. S. S. Parker
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Venn
Hon. J. G. Lee Steere
(Teller).

The resolution was therefore adopted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser), in the terms of the select committee's report, moved the following resolution: "That the North-West service, comprising, as at present, ten (10) trips during each year to Cossack from Fremantle, *via* customary ports, should be continued, but that the extended voyages to Kimberley ports, included also in this service, should be increased by two (2) additional trips during the year, making a total to Kimberley of six (6) in lieu of four (4); to be performed during the following months, March, May, June, July, September, and November."

MR. SHENTON said he objected to this proposal; for the amount paid for the service—£1576 a year—was, he thought, too large a subsidy altogether for the service to be performed. The Nor' West trade was now increasing fast, and he thought, as there were other companies who were willing to let their steamers call at Kimberley, the service should be thrown open to competition. He was in a position to state that, if that were done, another offer would be made to the Government. He would move that progress be reported at this stage, and leave given to sit again on Friday.

The motion to report progress was negatived on the voices, and, upon the

resolution being put, a division was called for, the figures being—

Ayes 10

Noes 8

Majority for 2

AYES.
Hon. A. P. Heusman
Hon. J. Forrest
Mr. Mason
Mr. Brown
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Davis
Mr. Glyde
Mr. McRae
Mr. Randell
Hon. M. Fraser (Teller.)

NOES.
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Higham
Mr. Loton
Mr. S. S. Parker
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Venn
Hon. J. G. Lee Steere
(Teller.)

The resolution was therefore agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser), in the terms of the select committee's report, then formally moved the following resolution:

"That the contract for the above-mentioned services should, if they are willing, be with the Adelaide Steam Ship Company for a period of three (3) years, from the 14th January next; or to the 1st February, 1888, the supposed date of the termination of the P. & O. Contract, at the subsidy as at present for the services, namely, a total of Seven thousand five hundred and seventy-six pounds (£7,576) per annum, payable monthly."

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE moved, as an amendment, that the words "if they are willing, be with the Adelaide Steamship Co." be struck out. The object of the amendment, the hon. member said, was that the Government might be able to make this contract with any company they thought proper, and not be tied body and soul to this one company.

MR. BROWN said the select committee, in making this recommendation, gave a direct and specific answer to a direct and specific proposal of the Governor in his message. His Excellency asked them for "an indication of the course which they were of opinion should be pursued with reference to the renewal or otherwise of the existing contracts with Messrs. Lilly & Co." They had been debating this point all along, and the House had already pronounced in favor of renewing the present contract with the present company.

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE pointed out that His Excellency said "renewal or

otherwise," and this amendment would give the Government the option of doing "otherwise."

Question put—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the resolution; whereupon the committee divided, with the following result—

Ayes	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	7

Majority for ... 4

AYES.
Hon. A. P. Hensman
Hon. J. Forrest
Mr. Mason
Mr. Brown
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Davis
Mr. Glyde
Mr. Higham
Mr. McRae
Mr. Randell
Hon. M. Fraser (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Loton
Mr. S. S. Parker
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Venn
Hon. J. G. Lee Steere
(Teller).

The amendment was therefore negatived.

MR. SHENTON moved that the word and figure "three (3)" be struck out, and "one (1)" inserted in lieu thereof. This, the hon. member said, would have the effect of carrying out the recommendation of the select committee made two years ago,—that tenders should be invited at least one year before the expiration of the present contract.

MR. BROWN thought the majority of hon. members would be of opinion that it would be in the interests of the colony if the present contract were renewed for three years, rather than one year. The result of the amendment, if carried, would be, that in a few months we should be entirely in the hands of the contractors, whereas, if the resolution were adopted intact, we should at any rate have three years guarantee that these services would be carried out at a fixed subsidy. He might add that the members of the select committee were in a position to state definitely that the Adelaide Steamship Co. would not accept a contract for such a short term as one year.

The question was then put—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the resolution; whereupon the committee divided, with the following result—

Ayes	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	7

Majority for ... 4

AYES.
Hon. A. P. Hensman
Hon. J. Forrest
Mr. Mason
Mr. Brown
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Davis
Mr. Glyde
Mr. Higham
Mr. McRae
Mr. Randell
Hon. M. Fraser (Teller)

NOES.
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Loton
Mr. S. S. Parker
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Venn
Hon. J. G. Lee Steere
(Teller).

The amendment was therefore negatived.

Question—That the resolution be adopted—put and passed.

Resolutions reported.

OFFICES OF REGISTRAR GENERAL AND REGISTRAR OF DEEDS.

MR. VENN (for Mr. Carey), in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that the offices of Registrar General and Registrar of Brands should be combined with that of Registrar of Deeds; and that if the Government, on inquiry, find the amalgamation can be made with advantage to the public service, the necessary steps should be taken as early as possible to carry this into effect." The hon. member said he understood from Mr. Carey—in whose name the resolution stood, but who was absent through illness—that this amalgamation of offices was suggested many years ago, by the hon. member for Toodyay he believed, and that the only objection then raised was by the Registrar of Deeds himself (Mr. Jauncey); but Mr. Carey informed him, without however being authorised to say so, that there would be no objection on the part of the present holder of the office to the proposed amalgamation. If the amalgamation was considered desirable years ago, surely it was still more desirable now when the duties of these different offices had so increased. The hon. member for the Vasse informed him that all those who had had dealings with these offices were quite aware of the inconveniences felt, under the present arrangements, and that these inconveniences had been more particularly felt by professional gentlemen. When searching in one Registrar's office they were frequently referred to the office of another Registrar, and *vice versa*. It appeared that Mr. Carey's attention was particularly drawn to the necessity of

separating the office of Registrar General from that of the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education, when at an early period of the session he called upon the Secretary to the Board of Education for some minor detail connected with the department, and he then noticed that there was such an immense amount of work in that office that it was quite enough for any one man; and Mr. Carey informed him that he was sure that in bringing forward the question of this proposed amalgamation, the members of the Central Board of Education would support him. The fact of the present Secretary to the Board of Education being in receipt of an Imperial pension debarred him from receiving any extra pay beyond a certain amount, no matter how many offices he filled, so that, so far as that officer was concerned, he would no doubt be glad to be relieved of the duties of Registrar General and Registrar of Brands.

MR. RANDELL said the resolution committed the House to very little, and he intended to support it, as it left the question to the Government to decide, upon inquiry, whether the proposed amalgamation should be made. He had himself heard of the inconvenience which the present distribution of these offices caused to the public, and he should think the proposed amalgamation would be an economical arrangement at any rate.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser), whilst not disagreeing with the sentiments expressed in the resolution, said he could not support the action of the hon. member who had tabled it. He thought it was going rather beyond the province of any hon. member to assume upon himself the reorganisation of any department of the public service. The Government were fully aware of the circumstances. Some time since, Mr. Clifton, the Registrar General, who was also Secretary to the Board of Education, became ill, and knowing the arduous duties devolving upon him as Secretary to the Board of Education, and the small salary attaching to the office, he (the Colonial Secretary) himself consulted him as to whether it would not be better he should retire from the position which he held as Registrar General and Registrar of Brands. It was not a matter for that House to express an opinion that

these offices should be amalgamated; that was a question of departmental detail, and it would be an unwarrantable interference with the functions of the Executive if the House were to pass this resolution, which would impose upon a public officer additional duties which, so far as the House was informed, he had not expressed his willingness to undertake. It was quite practicable to release Mr. Clifton of the duties of Registrar, but he was not at all aware that the Land Titles Department was prepared to accept them, and, if not, he did not think the House had any right to force them upon that department.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he felt bound to oppose the resolution. He did not himself think it was at all desirable that the office of Registrar General and Registrar of Brands should be combined with that of Registrar of Deeds. The Registrar of Deeds was also the Registrar of Land Titles, and in that office they had nothing whatever to do with the registration of anything but land. The House might just as well ask the Crown Solicitor to accept the position of Registrar of Brands in conjunction with the Crown Solicitorship. Apart from this, he thought the Registrar of Titles had quite enough work, without these extra duties being thrust upon him.

The resolution was then put and negatived, on the voices.

PUBLIC WORKS AT CARNARVON.

INSTRUCTION TO SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That it be an instruction to the select committee upon Public Works to be constructed out of a further Loan, to consider and report upon the expediency of appropriating out of such Loan a sufficient sum of money to cover the cost of constructing a jetty at Port Gascoyne into deep water; (2) a tramway from such jetty to a Custom House or other convenient position in the town of Carnarvon; (3) a Custom House and officers' quarters in connection therewith in the town of Carnarvon; (4) the construction of portions of the road along the valley of the Gascoyne, from the junction of the Upper Murchison and Gascoyne Roads to Carnarvon." It would be observed, the hon. member said,

that the resolution in no way pledged the House as to the necessity of these works. He did not wish the House to pledge itself to the construction of these works, either out of loan or any other funds. But he wished the matter brought under consideration, and he thought the best way to do it would be to make it an instruction to the select committee on Public Works to consider and report upon these works. He thought it would be admitted that most of them should come out of loan—possibly No. 4 should not; there might be a difference of opinion as to that particular work. For some time past, ever since he had represented the Gascoyne, his constituents had pressed upon him the importance and necessity of various works throughout the district,—amongst them a work entailing the expenditure of some £20,000 for sheet piling the river. He told them at once he could not ask the House for such a large expenditure as that upon one work, and there were various other matters connected with the district which he had never troubled the House with. But his constituents had strongly pressed him with reference to the four works mentioned in this resolution, and there could be no difference of opinion as to the necessity for them. (The hon. member then entered into particulars as to the nature of the proposed works, their estimated cost, &c.)

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) called attention to the terms of His Excellency's message (No. 21) relating to the works to be undertaken out of the proposed loan. His Excellency, he said, after enumerating the most important public works to be undertaken out of the loan, concluded his message in these words: "From the balance of £143,000 not less than £20,000 must be deducted on account of loss and expense in realising the loan. This leaves £123,000 to be apportioned among some of the works which have been mentioned. It would be advisable, the Governor thinks, to schedule a certain sum under the head of 'Miscellaneous.'" As this message was now under the consideration of the select committee, he thought, in view of the last passage, it would be unwise to saddle the committee with any instructions as to any particular works to be included under

the head of "Miscellaneous." The result would be that hon. members representing every district in the colony would come down with instructions, and that when the select committee set to work they would be quite confused. The hon. member who had brought forward the motion was himself a member of the select committee, and would have every opportunity of bringing these works under the attention of the committee. He thought it would be a most inconvenient course to hamper the committee with these informal instructions, and he knew of no precedent, during the whole time he had been in Council, for such instructions to a select committee.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said he wished to say a word or two in support of the position taken up by the Colonial Secretary. The Governor had sent a message to the House in which he requested the Council to favor him with a list of the public works which it considered desirable to be undertaken out of a loan. The Council had referred that question to a committee, and the whole matter was now before that committee. That committee had full power to deal with the whole question, and to give the House a list of the works which it considered should be included in the schedule of the Loan Bill. He had looked into the Parliamentary practice as to giving instructions to select committees, and he found it laid down in *May* very clearly. "A select committee," it was there said, "is composed of certain members appointed by the House to consider, or inquire into, any matters, and to report their opinion for the information of the House." Such a committee had been appointed in this case. "When it is thought necessary," the same authority continued, "to extend the inquiries of such committees beyond the order of reference"—there was no necessity here to extend the inquiries of this committee beyond the order of reference, as the whole subject of the public works to be undertaken out of the proposed loan had been referred to them—"a special instruction from the House gives them authority for that purpose." Or, "if it be deemed advisable to restrict or direct their inquiries"—there was no desire here to restrict the inquiries of this committee—"an instruction may be

given by the House." Therefore this resolution came under neither of those heads. The committee was seized of the whole matter; they could not go beyond without instruction, and they could not be restricted in their inquiries without instruction; and as there was no necessity or desire to do either one or the other, there seemed to be no precedent for the motion now before the House.

THE HON. J. G. LEE STEERE said he could not agree in the argument put forward by the hon. and learned gentleman who had last spoken. The hon. and learned gentleman had omitted one sentence in the quotation he had made from *May*, and that sentence was this: "Like committees of the whole House, select committees are restrained from considering matters not specially referred to them." One of the matters mentioned in this resolution—the construction of a road along the valley of the Gascoyne—had not been referred to the select committee on public works; nor was it ever contemplated that such a work should be included in the loan. What, then, was the hon. member to do, if he wished this work to be taken into consideration by the select committee, but to follow the Parliamentary practice, when it was found necessary to extend their inquiries, namely, to make it an instruction to them. At the same time he thought a great deal of discussion might take place in select committee without these instructions, and he did not see what practical good was to be gained by the motion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said there was no limitation in His Excellency's message as to the nature of the works to be inquired into.

MR. BROWN said that after the observations which had fallen from hon. members, and it being apparently the opinion of all parties—the Government on the one hand and the leader of the elected members on the other—that these works might be brought before the select committee by himself, without a formal motion being passed, he would withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

NEWSPAPER (LIBEL AND REGISTRATION) BILL.

On the order of the day for the third reading of this bill,

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) moved that the bill be recommitting.

Agreed to.

Bill recommitting.

Clause 16 reverted to:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman) said, as the law now stood, a printer had to print his name on the paper published by him, and also to sign it and retain a copy of it for six months; but since this bill was passed through committee he had found that a file of every newspaper published in the colony, with the printer's signature attached to it, had now to be sent to the Colonial Secretary's Office, to be filed there. This appeared to him to be a very useful arrangement, and, with a view to continue the practice, he had to move the following amendment to this clause: "That all the words between 'also,' in the 3rd line, and the word 'and,' in the 9th line, be struck out, and 'the following inserted in lieu thereof: 'within 24 hours after the publication 'of such paper, send to the Colonial 'Secretary one copy (at least) of every 'such paper, signed by such printer, 'and on which shall be written or printed 'the name and place of abode of the 'person or persons by whom he shall 'have been employed to print the same.'"

Amendment—put and passed.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported.

The House adjourned at half-past four o'clock, p.m.