

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 21st August, 1895.

Damage to the Fremantle Jetty—National Life Assurance in New Zealand—"Blocker" System of Land Settlement—Compensation for Damage by Dynamite Explosion at Fremantle—Association Incorporation Bill: first reading—Right to purchase Land in Eucla Division—Abolition of Aborigines Protection Board—Legislation re Fencing of Lands—Estimates, 1895-96: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

DAMAGE TO THE FREMANTLE JETTY.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) handed in a statement in writing, being a report by the Engineer of Existing Lines, made in reply to reflections which the hon. member for Geraldton had made in the House on the previous evening, in relation to certain damage done by the weather to the jetty at Fremantle, and the manner in which the Works and Railway Department had been repairing the same. This statement would also anticipate the question which was to be asked by the hon. member for South Fremantle—and he (the Commissioner of Railways), having read the statement asked leave to lay it on the table.

Ordered, that the paper lie upon the table.

NATIONAL LIFE ASSURANCE IN NEW ZEALAND.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the Government had caused enquiry to be made as to the success attending the system of national life assurance in New Zealand, as promised last session; and, if so, whether the result of such enquiry would be laid on the table of the House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government had made the enquiry, and the papers received would be placed on the table.

"BLOCKER" SYSTEM OF LAND SETTLEMENT.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the Government had caused enquiry to be made as to the working of the

"blocker" system of land settlement in South Australia, as promised last session; and, if so, whether he would lay the result of such enquiry upon the table of the House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) replied that the subject referred to in the question had not previously been brought under his notice in the Lands Department, but he would endeavor to obtain, by enquiry, the information which the hon. member desired.

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGE BY DYNAMITE EXPLOSION AT FREMANTLE.

MR. MOSS, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works,—(1.) Whether any, and if so, what claims were received by the Public Works Department from residents of Fremantle, seeking compensation for damages sustained to their property in consequence of the explosion of a quantity of dynamite on the night of the 1st or the morning of the 2nd January, 1895. (2.) Whether any of the claims had been paid or compromised, or agreed to be paid or compromised; and, if so, the names of the parties and the amounts paid or agreed to be paid to them.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

(1.) Yes, the following claims were received:—

	£	s.	d.
Messrs. M. Higham & Sons	64	11	6
„ Falk & Co.	1	12	0
Mrs. M. Paisley	1	0	0
Mr. J. A. Hicks	20	0	0
Mr. A. W. Cruickshank	0	10	0
Dr. Birmingham	0	17	6
Union Bank of Australasia			
(Limited)			(No sum named.)

(2.) The claims have not been paid, the Government not being liable.

ASSOCIATION INCORPORATION BILL.

Introduced by MR. RANDELL, and read a first time.

RIGHT TO PURCHASE LAND IN EUCLA DIVISION.

MR. JAMES, in accordance with notice, moved "That the Government should give a favorable consideration to the request of the lessee of lease 2,434, Eucla Division, by which he seeks to have extended the right to purchase the lands comprised in the

"lease: provided that the Government are "satisfied that the land is not auriferous, and "that in any case provision is made to secure "the payment of a royalty for all gold got or "won; and provided that the right of purchase be not extended beyond 1st October "next, and a substantial deposit be paid at "once." He said that about ten years ago a block of land, a little more than a quarter of a million acres, almost on the boundary of the Southern Division of the colony, was taken up on lease, with a right of purchase at 2s. 6d. an acre. The rent was paid regularly, and the lessees spent £6,000 or £7,000 in surveying and sub-dividing the land, with a view to settlement. The right to purchase under the lease expired at the end of December, 1893. At that time a financial crisis was affecting the banks and financial institutions throughout Australia, so that these lessees found it impracticable to obtain the financial assistance they required for purchasing this land. In view of these exceptional circumstances, he (Mr. James) assumed that if the Government were satisfied of the *bona fide* intention of the lessees to complete the purchase in accordance with the terms of the lease, that the only reason they did not do so at the time was the occurrence of the financial crisis in Australia, and that the lessees were now ready and anxious to complete the purchase by paying down a substantial deposit at once, the Government would show a reasonable consideration to these lessees by consenting to this course. He was informed that the land is a limestone formation, and is not auriferous; but, in case gold should be found there at any future time, his motion provided that a royalty should be paid by the purchasers of the land upon all gold obtained there; also that, to prevent any hawking about of the purchase right now asked for, the motion limited the period of purchase to a date not later than the 1st of October next. With these limitations, he thought the Government and this House would be doing only an act of justice to these intending purchasers, who had from the first acted in a straightforward manner towards the Government.

MR. RANDELL seconded the motion.

MR. MORAN opposed the request. He said the Government should be careful before consenting to sell the fee simple of this tremendous area of land, for, according to the present developments of the Kurnalpi and Dundas goldfields to the southward, there was

proof that the auriferous belt of country extended southward. Surely enough had been done in the alienation of large blocks of land, especially after what had happened in relation to the Hampton Plains and the mode of dealing with that valuable concession, which was now hampering the mining industry to the eastward, and the same might happen in dealing with this block in the south. The mere statement that this land is within the limestone belt, and therefore not auriferous, should not be sufficient to satisfy the House. It could be no hardship for the subject of this motion to stand over till next session. He objected to the possibility of this enormous area, when sold, being shut away from prospectors and miners.

MR. RANDELL, in supporting the motion, said these intending purchasers were deserving of the most considerate treatment. The Government, who knew perhaps more of this matter than members of the House, were disposed to look favorably on the request contained in the motion. These applicants had spent a large sum of money in surveying the land for subdivision, and the plan so made was now in the hands of the Government. The rent was paid punctually up to the expiry of the lease, and the applicants were now prepared to pay down a substantial deposit and to complete the purchase by the 1st of October next. He had heard there were other tenants in that neighborhood who did not pay the rent they undertook to pay, and that the lessees who took up this area were almost the only lessees who did pay rent in that part of the colony. The survey of the land had cost these persons £3,800, and eighteen months were occupied in making it. The financial collapse in 1893 was the only cause which prevented these persons from fulfilling the conditions imposed by the Government. In these circumstances, he hoped this Assembly would do the act of justice which was proposed in the motion. This land was not likely, otherwise, to be taken up by any one. The losses and difficulties which these persons had had to face did entitle them to the most generous consideration of the Government and the House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, as he knew a good deal about this matter, he would give all the information he possessed. This land was taken up by these applicants under the Land Regulations of 1882, which provided that lessees might

obtain the fee simple of their leased area by the payment of 2s. 6d. per acre, if purchased within the first seven years, and for 5s. per acre if purchased within the next seven years. All leases held under the Regulations of 1882 expired at the end of 1893, and these persons had the option, up to that time, to avail themselves of the right of purchase at 2s. 6d. an acre. He believed their intention was to dispose of this land, in surveyed blocks, for agricultural or pastoral purposes; and they got the land surveyed into blocks of 100 or 200 acres, and furnished to the Survey Office a map of the subdivisions. Then they made a proposal to purchase at 2s. 6d. an acre, and while striving to do that the financial crisis of 1893 came upon the banks, so that these persons were not able to carry out the purchase. However, they stuck to it strenuously, and the Government tried to help them by extending the time as long as they could under the Regulations. These persons were allowed six months longer, or perhaps it was to the end of 1894, to complete the purchase, but it was not completed. Eventually they were told the Regulations had expired, and that the Government had no further power to extend the time, even if the parties were ready to pay the money. They had since then been communicating with the Government at intervals up to the present time, and recently they applied for permission to pay a substantial deposit—£2,000, he thought—and offered to complete the purchase, but they were again told that the Regulations under which they could have purchased had expired, also that the Government had no power to sell the land at 2s. 6d. an acre, and that the only way of dealing with such an offer would be by special legislation, which the Government were not prepared to bring in. These persons had now been fortunate enough to obtain the assistance of the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) and the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James), and hence the motion now before the House. In regard to the nature of the country applied for, he could well understand why the hon. member for Yilgarn should express anxiety about the alienation of this area of land, seeing the experience of this colony in relation to the alienation of the Hampton Plains. When that land was sold to a syndicate, the general opinion, and his own also, was that the Hampton Plains were limestone country. However, as to this land

in the Eucla Division, he had travelled over it in 1870, and certainly where he went he found it was the ordinary tableland limestone country which extended to the Eucla border and inland for perhaps a hundred miles. There was an elevated plateau of country, from Point Culver to what was called Eyre sandpatch, and then on to Eucla. It was undulating in parts, but generally flat, and this character of country was found both above and below the limestone ridge, rising about 250 feet, and extending all the way from Eyre sandpatch to Eucla. The area referred to by these persons was about 330,000 odd acres, and embraced this bank and a considerable portion of the plateau, and the same character of country below the range. As far as his judgment went, he had no hesitation in saying there were no minerals there. It was limestone country—very fair country for grass, and, being near the sea, had the heavy dew; so that stock did very well there without much water, in some seasons. The water difficulty might possibly be overcome by sinking. This was all the Government knew about the matter. There was a good deal to be said for the applicants who had spent a lot of money on the lease. Their idea was to use it for agricultural and pastoral purposes, and as it was not at present utilised in any way it would be a good thing if they did so, and the colony would not then suffer in any way if the request were granted. All the land in this vicinity had been held for speculative purposes and not for cultivation for several years, and the Government had received some £30,000 a year from this Eucla District, while now it only returned a few hundred pounds per annum to the revenue. He considered it was not a matter in which the Government could move.

Mr. LEFROY said that the House would not go far wrong in granting an extension to the applicants, as asked by the resolution, but, nevertheless, the whole matter should be carefully considered before any decision was arrived at. He had found that millions of acres had been taken up in the vicinity of the land in question, and had been abandoned. That pointed to the fact that the land was not of very great value, and he thought that by selling it at 2s. 6d. per acre the country would gain, as the lease consisted of 338,000, which, if sold at 2s. 6d. per acre, would yield £42,000. If the applicants were willing to spend that amount of money in acquiring

it, they were not likely to neglect it. The matter could not be dealt with except under Clause 115 of the Land Regulations, which provided that "Special concessions may be made for the promotion of the settlement of the colony, in fee simple or otherwise. Provided that concessions under that clause shall be subject to the approval of Parliament." No action could be taken outside that provision without special legislation being enacted. Before proceeding any further he thought that the House should give more consideration to the subject. At the same time, if the land was not auriferous, no harm would be done if the applicants were allowed to secure it. It was not quite correct to call them the lessees of the land, as it now belonged to the Crown, but he was not one of those who objected to people holding large areas of land if they made good use of it. He hoped the matter would be further considered.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the motion was worthy of the consideration of the Government, but how far it should be complied with he was not in a position to say. In selling the land to the applicants the Government could easily provide that all minerals found thereon should be reserved for the Crown. He wished to suggest, however, that if the Government accepted £40,000 for the land they should devote it to the establishment of a University. It was rather hard that the applicants should not be able to carry out their original intentions in regard to the land, for they had proved their *bona fides* by paying rent for ten or twelve years. He pressed the suggestion he had made in regard to a University on the attention of the Government.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said a good deal of pressure had been brought to bear on the Government to induce them to bring in legislation that would enable them to dispose of the land in question, but the Government considered it was unwise to do so in the absence of definite information regarding it. It would cost something to prove whether it was auriferous or not, although it was well known that limestone country was not gold-bearing. Then the question as to what was the best use for the land arose, and it seemed to him that if the Government could get £40,000 for it, that amount would be of more value to the country than the land. Even if

the land did contain minerals, the Government could always protect themselves by introducing a Mining on Private Property Bill, and even now, when land of that description was found to contain minerals, the Government received £1 per acre for it. He therefore did not see any danger in the resolution, although there was a mystical feeling of superstition in regard to the alienation of Crown Lands. He suggested that the debate should be adjourned in order that hon. members might be furnished with the fullest information before the matter came up for discussion again.

MR. HARPER said he could not alter his opinion regarding the danger which the resolution threatened. Many people had resigned their rights to leasehold land, and if one set of individuals were re-instated many other people would apply for similar favours. The Regulations were liberal enough, and if people were not able to hold on to their land under those Regulations, it was their own lookout. With regard to the value of land, he said it might be doubled if the transcontinental railway were constructed. He would oppose the resolution.

MR. HASSELL said he would support the resolution, because the applicants, having paid the rent of the land for so long, and having met with reverses by the bank crisis, were entitled to some consideration.

MR. THROSSSELL said he confessed that he was prejudiced against the resolution, because it supported the bad principle of selling large blocks of land to one or two individuals. If the country were worthless, it was difficult to understand the anxiety of the applicants to acquire it, and he supposed that they intended to foist it upon the English market. If that were the object, the House was, in justice to the colony, bound to oppose the sale of the land. If it were wanted for agriculture, the House would not be right in alienating half a million acres from the people, even at 2s. 6d. per acre; while if that sum were given, it would soon be swallowed up in water conservation and the upkeep of the roads in the district. He hoped hon. members would be guided by the experience of the Hampton Plains Syndicate grant and other large grants, and that no more concessions would be made without a provision for compulsory improvement being included. If land were disposed of without that provision, they would be playing with the public

heritage and making a very serious mistake. He asked the Government to get the fullest information before they attempted to throw away nearly half a million acres of land, and, if it were parted with, it should only be under clear conditions for improvement. The whole history of land settlement had been utterly spoiled owing to the absence of that simple precaution, and he asked hon. members not to assent to the resolution before fully considering the dangers it threatened, and the great principle that was at stake.

MR. CONNOR said he would always oppose any motion, the object of which was to alienate any land belonging to the Crown. It was surprising that the hon. the mover, who was a nationalist of nationalists, should have brought the resolution forward. He held the opinion that to sell the land, as requested, would be equal to granting similar concessions to those which had already been made to railway syndicates. Whether the land was auriferous or not, it should be held for the people to apply for it under the Land Regulations, and as the resolution would create a bad precedent if it were passed, he would not support it.

MR. A. FORREST would like to say a few words in favor of the resolution submitted by the hon. member for East Perth. It would be within the recollection of hon. members that the gentlemen representing the lessees of this block had for some ten or twelve years regularly paid the rent, and they would have fulfilled all the conditions necessary to secure the right to purchase, but for financial difficulties over which they had no control. They had been granted an extension of time, and even then had been unable to conclude all the conditions imposed upon them, but now, owing to an improvement in their circumstances, they were able to pay the Government the amount of purchase money. For twelve years they had paid a rental, and held a right to buy the land. What they asked now was to be placed in the same position they held before their failure to comply with the conditions of purchase. There was now in the colony a sum of £40,000 for the purchase of the land, and that amount would be available to the colony, where as many shillings had not been available before. This large amount of money could now be added to the revenue of the country. People who knew the land applied for, were positive that it was not auriferous, but purely limestone

formation, and it would not be of value, even to pastoralists, unless large amounts were spent in getting water. It was a well known fact that the whole of the country from Isrealite Bay to Eucla was of a non-producing character, but they had now an offer of 2s. 6d. per acre for this land, after the syndicate had been paying rental for a number of years at the rate of 2s. 6d. per 1000 acres per. annum. For fifty years this country had been regarded as worthless, and there were many ways in which by which whatever money it produced could be employed. They were fortunate to get gentlemen who were prepared to pay £35,000 for a tract of country, when there was not the slightest chance of its being auriferous.

MR. SIMPSON: You said that about the Hampton Plains.

MR. A. FORREST: I did not say anything of the sort.

MR. SIMPSON: You said that you walked over it.

MR. A. FORREST admitted that was so, but he did not know as much about goldmining then as he did to day. This land was principally towards the coast, and it was generally recognised that no gold would be found near the coast. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: It is found on the coast in plenty of places.] It had not been found on the coast in this colony, or rather in this end of the colony. These people had been tenants of the Crown for a large number of years, and were tenants at the time the concession ended. They now desired to regain the position they had held, and were prepared to expend £40,000 in doing so. This land, as a matter of fact, was land hon. members would not care to give £10 for, for the whole lot. The colony was offered by a large London syndicate—[MR. MORAN: How do you know it is a London syndicate?] It was hardly necessary to explain that no one in the colony would find this amount. Now, the colony was face to face with the necessity to provide funds for two important matters. They had to clear off the Ecclesiastical Grant, and provide £30,000 for the settlement of the Education question. The accepting of the offer of this syndicate would mean that these two matters could be settled without the people of the country having to be heavily taxed to do so. If the hon. member for Geraldton, or Albany, or any hon. members in the House, held this land, and were offered half the sum the Government was now offered, they would gladly accept the offer.

Mr. LEAKE could not fail to express some surprise at the resolution being brought forward at all. It was certainly one he could not support. It was framed in an indefinite manner. It would be hardly right for hon. members to part with such a large block of land on the bare resolution of the House, although the carrying of the resolution might not have that effect, as he understood it would be necessary for the Government to bring in a Bill to grant the concessions now being asked for. It would be unwise for hon. members to commit themselves to any expression of opinion on the very indefinite information that had been placed before them on such an important question. It was hardly a question of mere right or wrong, but distinctly one of principle, whether the lands of the colony were to be given away in these huge blocks, and perpetuate a system that had been a subject of bitter complaint for so many years. Notwithstanding the feeling of the people of the colony on this matter, they were now asked to agree to the alienation of about 300,000 acres. The Government appeared to be very careful of the interests of a syndicate, and of a system which they had just session, been just as anxious to emphatically condemn. They were inclined to encourage the sale of land to speculators, and there was a great deal of force in what the hon. member for Northam had said on this point, when he suggested that in any concessions there should be a most stringent provision for settlement and improvement. Hon. members should be particularly careful not to be led into doing the wrong thing. He was particularly glad to hear the remark made by the hon. member for Beverley, that it was possible the land would be required for a transcontinental railway. A railway would enormously increase the value of the land, and that increase might just as well be retained by the Government, as handed over to any syndicate. Besides this, it was a fact that many people had forfeited their leaseholds in this district, and the purchase of land was prohibited. Under the present Land Regulations, the land could not be sold, and there was no reason for putting these people in a position like they might have been in prior to the passing of the Regulations. The sole reason advanced for placing these people in a position where they could make an excellent bargain was that they had been forced to forego their claims to the pre-

emptive right, owing to their impecuniosity. Personally he had never before heard of impecuniosity being a good plea or excuse for the non-fulfilment of a contract. There were plenty of people in these times unable to fulfil contracts in their business, and they had to go to the wall. What the resolution asked was that the House should agree to the right of forfeiture being waived in this particular case, but there could be no justification for this. These people had paid rent for twelve years, and it was strange that it was only now, when the circumstances of the colony were very much altered, that they thought fit to offer to purchase the block, and attempted to get back the concessions they had lost. If the request was granted, these people would be able to take up the freehold at 2s. 6d. per acre, while if it was held by the Government for a little while, as much as 10s. an acre or more, might be realised from it. The lessees had only paid a rental of 2s. 6d. per 1,000 acres per annum, and for the whole period that would not amount to £1,000. [MR. A. FORREST. They have spent £7,000 in surveys.] As a matter of fact, but for a boom in West Australian land, nothing would have been heard of the desire of this syndicate to carry out the conditions they were under in order to secure the right to purchase. Of course the syndicate was not to be blamed, but the House would be to blame if they were so negligent of the public interest as to listen to the resolution. The hon. member for West Kimberley was hardly the one to be relied upon as a mining expert, and when he declared that he knew this was not auriferous country, they had to bear in mind that he was not a capable geologist, and that, as a matter of fact, he did not know what auriferous land was when he saw it. This was not to be taken disrespectfully, but the hon. member was aware of the fact that he had travelled over a large portion of the country which was auriferous, and he did not know anything about it. [THE PREMIER: He knows now.] The House had no reason to suppose that the land was not auriferous, and hon. members should not commit themselves at all without a very special report giving more information than was now available. They should be well informed as to the geological formation of the country. There were many important arguments against the proposal, and hon. members should be most careful not to commit them-

selves until more definite information had been supplied.

MR. HOOLEY remarked that if there had been any assurance that the lessees of this ground desired to purchase with a view of turning it to some practical account, or intended to expend money in obtaining water, he would have felt inclined to support the resolution, but it really appeared as if they were simply desirous of taking advantage of the present boom in West Australian property. Their object in taking up the right of purchase would only be to re-sell the property, and the House should be very careful indeed how it proceeded. The dealing with this land on the London market could not be worth a farthing to this country, no matter how advantageous it might be to a syndicate. When large blocks were disposed of previously in the colony, the colony was in want of money. That was not the case now, and if the property was worth £45,000 to anyone now, it would be worth that to someone else a few years hence, and the Government would lose nothing by holding it. The present offer was most insignificant for such a large extent of territory. An hon. member had referred to the possibility of a transcontinental railway affecting this land, and the suggestion was certainly one that might not be such a great distance from realisation, and it was beyond doubt that such a railway would greatly enhance the value of that particular land.

MR. MOSS found the resolution one which he would have to most strongly oppose. He was surprised that the hon. member for East Perth had consented to bring such a proposal as that contained in the resolution before the House. The people who had this land, and the pre-emptive right, had had ample opportunity to secure the land. They had been treated most liberally, and now there could be no question their sudden anxiety to secure it was with a view of making large profits from the Government in the future. They were not going to give £40,000 for this land merely to use it for legitimate purposes, and, if it was worth this amount to a syndicate of speculators, it was worth it to the people of the country. It did seem to him absurd that any member should feel disposed to agree to so much land within the colony being locked up, more especially after the experience the colony had had with other companies. Members should recollect what

the experiences were, through giving the Hampton Plains into the hands of a private syndicate. [MR. A. FORREST: This is different land]. It was different for no other reason than that time had proved the Hampton Plains to be highly auriferous. At present the House had practically only the belief of the Premier that this land was not auriferous as well. The Premier had gone over this land twenty-five years ago, and must have a very imperfect knowledge of the geological character of the country. The House had certainly had no argument placed before it why it should give to these people what would be practically the fee simple of nearly half a million acres of land in this country. There must be some reason why the lessees of this land desired to secure the fee simple, and, as the colony was not in want of £40,000, they should wait so that whatever profit was to be got would go to the revenue of the country, instead of to a band of speculators whose only object was to enrich themselves without an iota of regard for the interests of the people of the country. If there was any Mining on Private Property Act in force in the colony the position would be slightly different, but in its absence, it was necessary for hon. members to be very careful how they dealt with such a large tract of country as 300,000 acres. Some good reason should be given to the House why the request should be considered favorably, and, until it was advanced, it was his duty to oppose to the very utmost any suggestion to permit of the alienation of such a large tract of country.

MR. SIMPSON thought the question far too important to be dealt with hurriedly, and, as the Government appeared to have information not before hon. members, he would move that the debate be adjourned for a week, in order that this information might be laid on the table.

MR. MORAN: Adjourn it for six months.

Motion, that the debate be adjourned for a week, agreed to.

ABOLITION OF ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Before the hon. member moves his motion I should like to state that a cablegram has been received from the Right Hon. the Secretary of State, to the effect that he desires to meet the wishes of the Legislature of the colony,

and suggests that Clause 70 of "The Constitution Act, 1889," should be amended so as to provide that £5,000 should still remain as an appropriation for the use of the aborigines, but that the expenditure of it shall be under the complete control of the Government of the colony. A despatch is promised to follow. I will place the cablegram upon the table to-morrow. The reason I did not do so before was that I thought it better, before taking any steps in the matter, that we should be in possession of the despatch. The cablegram does not give full information. It only says the Government shall have the expending of any moneys voted by Parliament for the aborigines, provided that £5,000 shall be an appropriation. I do not want to express an opinion upon the matter, but I would ask the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) to consent to withdraw the motion until the despatch arrives. It will certainly arrive before Parliament prorogues. We shall then be able to consider the despatch, and move as may be found necessary. I will ask His Excellency the Administrator to place the cablegram upon the table of the House to-morrow.

MR. SIMPSON: I am inclined to meet the suggestion made by the Hon. the Premier, but I do not exactly like the use of the word "withdraw." I prefer the word "postpone" until after receipt of the despatch. If I am in order I will move the adjournment of the motion until this day three weeks.

Motion put and passed.

LEGISLATION re FENCING OF LANDS.

MR. PIESSE: It will be within the recollection of hon. members that a question was asked the Premier by the hon. member for Northam, a few days ago, whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce during this session a Fencing Bill. The reply made by the Hon. the Premier was that the Government hoped to be able to do so. As this reply is rather indefinite, and as the matter is a very serious one for the settlers in the colony, I deem it expedient to move to-day the following motion standing in my name:—"That in the opinion of this House it is in the interest of land settlement in this colony that the Government should, during this session of Parliament, introduce a measure dealing with the fencing of lands upon the lines laid down by the Fencing Bill, as placed before this House last session." It will also be within the recollection of hon. members that a

"Fencing Bill" was introduced last session, in the early part of the session, and that it was from time to time put aside, although various amendments were proposed. It was taken into consideration for a time, and then put off until towards the close of the session, when the Hon. the Attorney-General decided not to proceed with it. I may tell hon. members that this Bill is one for which the settlers of the colony are asking, and especially the agriculturists. We are all aware that the present fencing law permit of the recovery of half the value of the fence, where the adjoining owner makes use of the fence. We want to compel the owner of adjacent land to pay half the cost of the fence whether he makes use of it or not, because, if the owner of a piece of land fences his portion, the owner of the adjacent land obtains the advantage of that fence at any time he pleases; and what we ask for is that provision should be made to enable the recovery of one-half the cost of the fence from the adjoining owner, whether he makes use of it or not. I think this will prevent what hon. members wish to see prevented, namely the dummieing of land, or the holding of it without using it. If we could bring something to bear upon those holding large estates to compel them to fence their land we should bring about a better state of things, and prevent a deal of land being unoccupied. If we could do this we should find a great deal of country fenced, which is not now the case. I should like to point out this particularly affects the small owner, not only in his boundary fence, but in the recovery of the amount. It is necessary also to have some amendment of the present law, so that provision may be made for the erection of a fence to prevent trespass. We want something more to protect the small settlers or owners from trespass and damage to property from large owners. For instance, a large owner may keep sheep, then the smaller one only keep large stock; and the small owner has not merely to fence to keep his own stock in, but he has to fence to keep his neighbor's sheep out, and under the present Act he has no redress. There are many things that need to be taken into consideration, and I think the Bill placed before the House last session would meet the difficulties of the case. If hon. members who object to the retrospective clauses would only agree to the introducing of a Bill on similar lines as last year, with the retrospective clauses left

out, we should be able to frame a Bill to the satisfaction of the settlers in the different districts. No doubt it would offend some land owners, both large and small, to enable others to recover from them one half the cost of the erection of an adjoining fence. I would be quite willing to have the retrospective clauses struck out of the Bill, if it would then meet the wishes of hon. members. If we had a Bill introduced to enable men to recover one half the cost of fences to be erected in the future, it would be fair and equitable. I think it would meet with the approval of this House, and be acceptable to the country. I certainly think the time has arrived when a Bill of this kind should be brought in. I have been asked by many country residents who are land owners, to push forward this measure, because they are certainly suffering from the effects of the old legislation under which we are now existing. I certainly think the Government should take early steps to introduce a Bill of this kind. Although the Premier has promised the Government will not lose sight of the matter, I consider the reply is indefinite. I certainly consider that a Bill should be introduced, if not quite on the same lines as the past Bill, yet dealing with the future erection of fences, and the recovery of a portion of the cost. Such a Bill would be acceptable, and might embody a clause dealing with trespass. With these remarks I beg to move the resolution standing in my name.

MR. THROSSELL: I have pleasure in seconding the resolution. I need not repeat the arguments for this measure, as we had them all last session. It goes without saying that a resolution of this kind is in the interest of land settlement. I am in utter ignorance of the reason why the Government abandoned their measure last session. It seems to me they were afraid of their own measure, and there is no doubt but the sore point was the retrospective clauses. I wish they would give us a good fencing Act, even without the retrospective clauses in it. We are anxious, not only to have a moral remedy, but a legal one, against a neighbor who refuses to bear half the cost of a fence that enhances the value of his land. It is not right that fencing should be compulsory upon the small owner, while old and large estates are allowed to go free. The small owner who fences his land adjoining a large estate ought to be able to compel the owner of that larger estate to bear half the cost of the

erection of a fence. Under the existing law that cannot be done, and so the small men suffer an injustice, while the large owner holds his land for speculative purposes. I have had experience in this direction. I once bought an ancient estate of 5,000 acres, and was surrounded by men holding their 100 acres—men who are the bone and sinew of this colony. They often looked upon that large estate with hungry eyes. They all had to fence in their land whilst the large owner went scot free, and the only difference between them was the boundary line. The small owners could look over their fences and see the larger area nearer the town all unfenced. I hope the Government will see and recognise the justice of this resolution, and will bring in a Bill this session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The answer I gave early in the session was that the Government hoped to be able to bring in a Bill. I think it was a very fair answer at that time. We are still prepared to introduce this measure. In fact we decided to do so long ago, but we cannot do everything at once. We propose to introduce a Bill without the retrospective clauses, allowing it to be only prospective. It seems to me that that will take away a great deal of the objection that hon. members had to the Bill last year. There will be sure to be some cases of hardships, but, altogether, the Bill is a reasonable one. There is very naturally always a desire to avoid the payment of money as long as one can do so. We have a law in towns whereby, if you erect a fence, the adjoining proprietor has to pay one half the cost. That is the law in towns, and I think it should be the same in the country. I do not think any one could say the retrospective clauses were unfair. They were fair enough, but would have caused a great deal of trouble, and would have placed a burden upon certain people they did not expect to have to bear. For that reason the Government has decided to introduce a Bill without the retrospective clauses in it, and will introduce it in a few days. I hope it will be satisfactory to hon. members. I would advise the hon. member for the Williams not to move so many amendments as he did last year. Let us get the Bill upon the Statute Book. If every one wants to move a lot of new clauses to the Bill, it is just possible it may share the same fate as last year. Let us get it upon the Statute Book, because it will be a useful measure in many respects, and if it does not

meet all the requirements, it can be amended hereafter.

Motion put and passed.

At 6.20 p.m., the Speaker left the Chair.

At 7.30 the House resumed.

ESTIMATES, 1895-96.

Consideration of the Estimates resumed at Part VI.—Colonial Treasurer's Department.

Office of Colonial Secretary, £8,945 :

Mr. HARPER, referring to Item 2.—Chief Clerk and Registrar, salary £400, increase £50—moved that the amount be reduced by £25. He said considerable discussion had been caused by the large increases which were proposed in the Estimates for officers in the higher branches of the service, as being out of proportion with the increases in the lower grades; and he now proposed to test the principle of these large increases, by reducing the first item in which a large increase occurred. Of course he was not attacking the particular officer, but seeking to affirm a principle which should apply to all the large increases; and, if successful in carrying this reduction, he would follow it up, or other members would be prepared to propose consequential reductions in other large increases throughout the Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this salary was increased by £50 because this officer had been 23 years in the service and was very efficient, as he (the Premier) knew personally. This officer, being Chief Clerk in the department, had to perform the duties of Under-Secretary whenever that officer was away from the office. Mr. Geoffrey Eliot's long service, and the efficient manner in which he carried out his important duties, entitled him to the increase which the Government had recommended. A salary of £400 for this position and length of service was not extravagant; and Mr. Eliot had to perform very confidential duties.

Mr. SOLOMON did not object to this amount of increase, but to the principle of making large increases of salary in the departments; for, if adversity followed upon the present period of prosperity, the necessary curtailing of high salaries would cause hardship. He supported the reduction.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH said he did not complain of this, or any increase, to an officer who had worked his way up and proved his efficiency; but suggested that when an officer was promoted to a higher vacancy it should not be understood that the younger

officer must necessarily receive the same high pay as was previously given to the older officer in that position. Let the younger officer have the opportunity of earning it by length and efficiency of service. The Government should pay efficient men well, and get the work done with fewer servants.

Mr. A. FORREST opposed the reduction of this salary, because he was glad to see this old and efficient officer was at length being rewarded as he deserved to be. This officer had performed efficiently the duties of Under-Secretary while that officer (Mr. O. Burt) was absent from the colony. It was well-known that the members of the family from which this officer (Mr. Eliot) came, were born to the profession, being among the best officers in the public service, and he hoped they would long continue so. This officer was worthy of any increase the House could vote to him.

Mr. CONNOR supported the reduction, as the principle ought to be affirmed, and he was opposed to indiscriminate expenditure, which might have to be followed by severe retrenchment.

Mr. MARMION opposed the reduction. Having had a long acquaintance with this, and other officers in the departments, he knew that this officer, who had been described as one of a race of heaven-born officers, was in a sense deserving of that compliment. The responsibilities attaching to this officer were increasing yearly, and he had always performed his duties in a zealous, careful, and scrupulous manner.

Mr. L'OTON supported the reduction, on principle, because on looking through the Estimates he found the increases of salary were chiefly to those officers who were near the head of each department. Very few increases were given to the large majority of junior servants, whose service might have extended over ten or twenty years. Those hon. members who had had to work their way up in life would know the difficulties which junior servants had to contend against, in trying to improve their position and pay. If this officer was to receive this year an increase of about 15 per cent., many other servants receiving smaller salaries should be entitled to proportionate increases. He believed this officer was efficient, and that all the officers from this family were efficient. But there must have been other openings in the service to which this deserving officer could be promoted; and it was in this direction that the increase of

salary should be made, so that the higher duties to which a deserving officer was promoted might carry the extra emolument.

THE PREMIER (Hon Sir J. Forrest) said it might appear desirable to promote deserving officers from one department to another, but this could not be easily carried out in practice. At a rule, each department liked to promote its own officers within that department, when higher vacancies occurred; and it was not pleasant for the officers in a department to find that, when a desirable vacancy did occur, an officer from some other department was brought in to fill it. Such a method of transfer and promotion would be inconvenient in many ways, as he had found from experience; nor were the advantages so great as some members might suppose. Officers gained experience in a particular department, and looked to being promoted within that department with the duties of which they were familiar, and in which they would be more useful than if transferred to another department. He questioned whether the suggested moving of officers from one department to another would work well. In some other sections of the Estimates, it would be noticed that the Chief Clerk of a department was to have his salary increased to the same amount as in this instance. He believed in having the chief officers efficient and well paid, for, if there were not good senior officers, the House could not expect to have good juniors in the department.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was unfortunate that the first salary attached was that of an old officer; but there were certain highly paid officers who were being pushed on by these increases with undue haste, while others who had not been so long in the service did not get increases. Unless all increases were attacked in this House, it would hardly be worth while to attack any. He believed this officer deserved the increase, but other increases would have to be dealt with later that were not so well deserved; therefore, if this increase were passed, the others would have to be passed. [THE PREMIER: Although you say it is deserved!] As soon as an officer came under the Treasurer's direction, it was noticeable that increases went up all round. It was the same in the Works and Railway Department. He regretted that he must vote for this reduction, on principle.

MR. MARMION said the argument of the

last speaker was peculiar and strange indeed for it was that because a number of deserving officers were getting increases, which were deserved and should be given, therefore he must oppose the first deserving case, because one or two others which were coming on later were not so deserving. Would the hon. member deal in that way with a staff in his own employ?

MR. HASSELL said that as the Accountant in the Treasury, and the Chief Clerk in the Lands Department were receiving £400 each, this officer should be increased to the same amount.

MR. RANDELL asked what was to be the maximum amount of salary to Chief Clerks. Was it to be £400, or was the office held in each of these cases considered to be of that value? It was not so much a question of the particular officer, or his length of service, as the principle that was sought to be affirmed in the motion for this reduction. The personality of the officer should be left out of the question, and the office itself be dealt with. In the Audit Department one officer held a position probably as responsible as this one—that officer being also to some extent an officer of this House—and yet his salary was only £225. The object of the motion was to affirm the principle that increases in these salaries should not be beyond £25, and he was in accord with it to a large extent. He had been struck with apparent anomalies in the salaries, and, where there was anything out of the ordinary £10 or £15 increase, it was desirable that the Government should give information as to the principle which had guided Ministers in making these increases.

MR. MARMION said one reason why a difference was made between this and another officer referred to was that this was an old officer, whereas the other was comparatively young in the service.

MR. HARPER regretted that some members were dealing with the personalities of officers. What a great number of people did object to was the principle of the large increases to officers who were in fairly good circumstances as compared with others.

MR. LEAKE opposed the reduction, and said those members who generally attacked the Estimates had not been in the public service, and did not know the difficulty of maintaining a decent position on a small salary. If they did know, they would realise the value of

£25 or £50 added to a small salary, out of which a large family might have to be maintained. It was very fine to talk about being actuated by principle solely. [THE PREMIER: Oh!] Yes; the Premier was quite right in that—he would make the same observation himself. These officers were supposed to keep up a respectable position, and they should at least be paid enough to keep them honest. He did not know of a single increase in these Estimates that he would oppose. Indeed he would like to see the salaries of Civil servants increased, but he did not imply that he would support the increase of the staff. If they paid good salaries and employed fewer men, the work would be better done.

MR. MORAN said he would not support reductions of salaries, because he believed it was the intention of this Parliament to reconsider the whole system of Civil Service appointments in the future. While the colony was flourishing, he would not begrudge a little extra remuneration to those Civil Servants who were deserving. It would be judicious to make appointments and promotions upon merit, and merit only, whereas the system here was rather haphazard.

MR. RANDELL said it was fortunate for the country that not many members of this House had been in the Civil Service, if the House might judge from the utterances of the hon. member (Mr. Leake) who was now the leader of the Opposition in that House, or else the country would soon find itself involved in very heavy expenditure. There was a feeling among the public that the Civil Service expenditure was becoming very large, and must necessarily grow with the extension of settlement in the colony. If the policy just announced was to be the future policy of the leader of the Opposition it would be a long time before that hon. member got on the Government benches, either as Premier or Attorney-General.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), referring to the question as to maximum salaries, said he was not in a position to pledge the Government on that point; but in a short time, there would be a Civil Service Bill for regulating salaries, so that the Government, as well as the officers would know exactly what to expect, and how they stood. The present system was not a good one, because, when the Estimates came round, every officer wanted an increase. He had been less troubled this year, as Treasurer, than in

previous years, by applications for increases, because he let it be understood they were not going to make many increases, except in those departments where the officers were generally regarded as being under-paid. In the Postal Department there had been some increases, but there were very few increases beyond the ordinary £10 increase. The general rule was that where an increase had been given last year, none should be given this year. It was, however, a question where these increases were to stop, and he often wondered that the salaries were not larger, on account of the continuous efforts made to obtain increases.

MR. MOSS opposed the reduction, after the testimony given by the Premier as to this officer's efficiency and long service.

MR. LEAKE said that, in view of future possibilities, he would inform the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) and other members on that side of the House that he had no desire to encourage lavish expenditure; but that, in speaking as he had done, he merely wished to affirm the principle that this House should vote a reasonably decent salary in each case, and should insist on getting the most work they could out of Civil servants. He did not think £400 a year for an office of trust and responsibility was too great; but if the Government could see their way to place a limit on some of the higher salaries, the object which all hon. members had would be attained.

MR. R. F. SHOLL was pleased to hear the Government were likely to bring in a Civil Service Bill. He hoped they would bring it in this session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We cannot do that. The Civil Service Commission has not yet reported.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that Commission was doing no good, and should be quashed.

MR. A. FORREST said the House must be pleased with the remarks of the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake), because that hon. member had had practical experience in the public service; and he (Mr. Forrest) believed that one reason why the hon. member left the service was the smallness of the salary he received. The colony had thus lost a most efficient public officer, but this House had gained an hon. member who was an ornament to it.

Motion—that the amount of the salary

(Item 2) be reduced by £25—put, and division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	6
Noes	16

Majority against	10
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. Burt
Mr. Loton	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Randell	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. R. F. Sholl	Mr. Hannell
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Harper (Teller).	Mr. Leake
	Mr. Lefroy
	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Moss
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. H. W. Sholl
	Mr. Simpson
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Moran (Teller).

Motion negatived and item passed.

MR. RANDELL asked what was the reason of the large increase in the last item—No. 13, "Preparation and revision of the electoral rolls and expenses connected with elections, £1,800; previous vote, £500"—which showed an increase of £1,300.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that although only £500 was voted last year, the amount actually spent was £1,177 2s. 7d., and the amount which would have to be expended for the purposes of a new Electoral Act was expected to be still larger. Of course the amount voted this year would not be expended unless required. A new and elaborate system of electoral registration could not be carried out without considerable expense.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he was glad to hear that an Electoral Bill was in preparation; but, in reference to registration, could the Government explain why 70 voters in the Murchison district, who registered within the prescribed time, last year, and whose voting papers were sent to the proper officer, at the proper address, were shut out from the Murchison roll when made up; also why certain other election claims sent from Cue were served in the same way.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that under the present Electoral Act the names must be received not later than the 15th of February, and the names of the claimants referred to were not so received. The instructions to put those names on the roll were, he remembered, given by himself, when the matter was reported to him, as he then thought that a little difficulty about the

date could be overcome; but further objection was raised by the returning officer in that place, and by officers in other districts where similar cases had occurred, as to some papers not having come to hand by the 15th of February.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Registrar in that case was not at the office to receive them when they arrived. That is the fact of the matter.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the post did not arrive till one or two days after the date fixed in the Act; so that, as these claims were not received in due order, and as other returning officers were confronted with the same kind of difficulty, the result was that only those names which had been received within the statutory time were put on the rolls. He was glad, however, to be able to inform hon. members that, under the new Electoral Bill, all these difficulties would disappear.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said some of the returning officers—the Sheriff, for instance, when acting as returning officer in Perth—had been paid extravagant fees for leaving their well-paid duties and presiding at elections. Ten guineas was an excessive amount to be paid in such a case. He did not object to ample fees in cases where a returning officer had to travel a long distance, as on the goldfields.

MR. MORAN said the main requirement was to get a proper system of electoral registration, and the expense was a subsidiary matter. It should be the duty of the police in this colony, as it was elsewhere, to travel round among the voters, and compile the register fully and carefully, without putting the people to any trouble in making claims. He complained that certain voters in the Yilgarn district had not been duly registered last year, because objection was raised by some election agent at the registration court at Southern Cross, and notice by post of the objection made did not reach the parties affected until after the revision had been completed, so that these claims, although made in regular order and in good time, were not entered on the revised roll.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), referring to the fees paid to a returning officer, said the presiding at the poll was not the only duty to be done, as he rolls had to be made up under his supervision. A good deal of the £1,800 put on these

Estimates would be required for carrying out the machinery to be provided by the new Electoral Bill.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it had not occurred to him that the returning officers did other work besides the duties on polling days.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he wished to state, with reference to what the hon. member for Yilgarn had said, that it was not possible for anyone to object to any name going on the rolls in the manner he had described, because objections had to be made in due form, and on payment of a fee of 5s.

MR. RANDELL said his object in rising was to obtain information, and not to cavil at the increase of the item.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Audit, £3,005 :

MR. RANDELL said it seemed to be a general principle running through the Estimates to gradually increase the salaries of junior officers, and that principle he thought should be embodied in the Civil Service Bill. He asked if the salaries fixed in this department were the maximum amounts that would be given.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not think the salaries proposed were the maximum amounts.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Medical, £32,407 :

MR. LEAKE, referring to item—"Principal Medical Officer and Colonial Surgeon, Perth, £475"—asked if anything had been done with regard to the proposed Medical Board, and how much the appointment of the Board would affect the salary of the Colonial Surgeon.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government would probably appoint the Board in the course of a week, for the Perth Hospital, and the Principal Medical Officer and Colonial Surgeon, Dr. Waylen, had sent in his resignation, feeling that, as he was 62 years of age, he was entitled to retire. The Government proposed to accept the resignation, and to appoint a principal medical officer to advise the Government on all medical matters, to visit the charitable institutions and police stations in Perth, and generally supervise and control, under the Minister, all the medical officers throughout the colony.

MR. RANDELL: Will he be allowed private practice?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he would, because the salary would not be very large. He would have nothing to do with the hospital, but, the details of the matter had not been finally settled. It was thought at one time to do away with the the principal medical officer in Perth, and allow private practitioners to do the work connected with the charitable institutions; but, after consideration, the idea was abandoned, because it was considered that in view of the necessity for vaccination and quarantine along the coast, it would be necessary to have a medical officer who would be head of the department. The new officer would have a clerk in his office, and would thus be able to do more departmental work, although there was no one in the service who did so much clerical work, considering the time at his disposal, as the present Colonial Surgeon. For many years that officer did an immense amount of clerical work without assistance, and it was only recently that a clerk was appointed to assist him. In the retirement of that very old officer, Dr. Waylen, the Government felt that they were losing a loyal and efficient officer. It was not proposed to invest his successor with the title of Colonial Surgeon.

MR. ILLINGWORTH suggested the disuse of the word "Colonial" in the titles of the Colonial Surgeon, Colonial Treasurer and Colonial Secretary, as it smacked too much of Downing-street. Now that the colony was self-governing the titles should be Chief Secretary and Treasurer.

MR. HASSELL, referring to item, "Resident Medical Officer and Quarantine Officer, Albany, £200," asked what were the duties of that officer.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did all the work of the Government. He had the Hospital, the Government officials, the Police, and the "gentlemen without means" to look after, and also the Quarantine Station.

MR. HASSELL wanted to know whether this officer was supposed to look after the patients at the Quarantine Station and to have a deputy at 5 guineas per day.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was not aware that any deputy was paid, and a request to have a doctor at the Quarantine Station was refused, the Medical Officer being instructed to visit the Station daily.

MR. SIMPSON asked if Civil servants were

entitled to medical attendance from the Government medical officers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest) said that up to 1886 they were, and that, since then, only those who were in the service before that year were entitled to receive medical attendance from the Government officers.

MR. SIMPSON, referring to the Quarantine Station at Albany, said he did not wish to reflect upon the Resident Medical Officer at that port, but he wished to draw attention to the circumstances connected with the recent quarantining of certain passengers. He had no hesitation in saying, from information conveyed to him by people who were quarantined, that it was a ghastly disgrace to the administration of the colony. The hardships that tender women and others had to endure through the want of accommodation and the absolute farce of a quarantine ground, were a disgrace.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest) said no arrangements were made for the reception of the passengers on the occasion referred to, because the Orient Company failed to inform the Government from Colombo that there was disease on board the *Lusitania*. In reply to a communication on the subject from the Government, the Premier of Victoria had said he had communicated with the Company, and also with the Government of Ceylon, expressing the desirability of the Governments of Australia being notified of any cases of disease on board the vessels when leaving Colombo. No explanation had been received from the Orient Company, and he believed no intimation of the existence of the disease was sent to the agents in Australia. If the existence of small-pox on the *Lusitania* had been telegraphed from Colombo, the Government would have had everything prepared at the Quarantine Station at Albany to receive the passengers. It could be easily imagined that to land 30 passengers on a rough and dark night, under such circumstances, would make matters uncomfortable for a while. Notwithstanding all that had been said about the Quarantine Station, he was inclined to think, having visited it, that it provided good accommodation for a limited number. Every effort was made to secure the comfort of the quarantined passengers.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether, in view of those circumstances, it was not an opportune time to establish the system of Federal Quarantine, and failing the other colonies co-

operating, to erect comfortable buildings for the purposes of a Quarantine Station.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have provided for that on the Estimates.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked if it was a fact that the employees in the Fremantle Locomotive Workshops were receiving medical attention from Government medical officers.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: No.

MR. HASSELL, said with reference to the quarantining of the *Lusitania's* passengers at Albany that he believed the Orient Company attempted to smuggle the ship though by the captain stating, only after the medical officer had insisted upon seeing the health bill, that there was only a supposed case of small-pox on board.

MR. MARMION, referring to the item—"Resident Medical Officer, Beverley, £150" (increase £50), asked if the Government were guided by any principle in proposing increases to Government medical officers, because he noticed that in nearly every instance increases were proposed. Not very many years ago the general opinion was expressed that the time had arrived when it was advisable to do away with Government medical officers in the various districts, and the only reason why it was necessary to continue them was that there were certain Government officers who required medical attendance, and that it would pay better to give a small fee to those officers than to pay the expense of providing medical attendance for Government officials.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the principle adopted had been to increase the salaries of Government medical officers in districts where there were hospitals, and where the private practice was small. It was ridiculous to expect a medical officer to look after a big hospital for £100 a year.

MR. MARMION: Is there a hospital at Beverley?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there would be one. Difficulty was experienced in inducing gentlemen to take the positions in districts where the private practice was small.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that the private practice would be larger in a district where a hospital was required. The time was coming when Government medical officers would be done away with in the centres of population,

and it would be well if all the small districts were controlled by the Medical Board.

MR. A. FORREST said he was of opinion that there should be no Government medical officer at all, in a district where the population was large enough to support a doctor. He did not object to the increases, because if a man was not worth £150 a year, he was not worth anything. The time had arrived when small hospitals should be built all over the colony. The vote under debate appeared to be yearly increasing, for when he first entered the House it was £8,000, and it had swollen to £32,000.

MR. PIESSE said he would support the increases to medical officers, especially those stationed in districts having a small population, and where they had to travel long distances in cases of accidents. Settlers in new districts required medical assistance very often, and as a rule were not able to pay much for it, and he hoped no objection would be taken to the proposed increases, especially in regard to places provided with hospitals. The question of abolishing medical officers in the centres of population could be thrashed out on a future occasion, but ample provision should be made for the districts in this respect.

MR. CONNOR rose to speak.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is no item before the chair.

MR. MARMION said he thought the discussion had arisen over the item—"Resident Medical Officer, £150." That was the last one under consideration.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for West Kimberley spoke on the item—"Resident Medical Officer, Coolgardie, £200."

MR. CONNOR: He spoke generally on the vote.

MR. A. FORREST: Yes, that is so.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members must, if they want to speak generally on the vote, do so before the items are considered.

MR. MARMION said it was just as well that hon. members should understand what they were doing. He wished, with all due respect, to disagree with the Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I rule that the item—Resident Medical Officer, Beverley, £150—was the last item under consideration.

MR. RANDELL referring to the item—Resident Medical Officer and Quarantine Officer, Broome, £100," asked why no increase

had been proposed to this, as well as three other salaries.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the officer at Broome held a number of offices, and was very well paid, getting £600 or £700 a year, which was made up as follows:—£500 a year under the Magistracy, £100 a year as Resident Medical Officer and Quarantine Officer, and about £72 for forage, or perhaps more.

MR. CONNOR referring to the item—"Resident Medical Officer and Quarantine Officer, Bunbury, £200" (increase £100), asked why the salary of this officer had been doubled.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the explanation of the Colonial Surgeon was that the officer in question, Dr. T. H. Lovegrove, had been in the service for many years, and was senior medical officer, and that, being in charge of a district hospital, he should receive more pay than those who were not. It was just possible that some arrangement would be made by which the amount asked for would not be paid in full as it was proposed bring the officer to Perth to fill the position he had described, in succession to Dr. Waylen. If that were done the salary would not be as high as that received by the Colonial Surgeon.

MR. CONNOR moved to reduce the item by £50, in order to test the question as to whether indiscriminate increases should go on for ever.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he thought that, in this instance, the Government were departing from the principle they had laid down, that where a Medical Officer had a good private practice the salary should be small; but at one jump the salary in question was raised from £100 to £200. He would support the amendment.

MR. FORREST said that although he objected to the increases to medical officers, he was sure no one would grudge this particular officer £500 a year. However, as it would not do to increase one salary and not another, he suggested that the Government should accept the amendment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he would accept the amendment, as the officer would not be affected by the reduction, in view of his being offered the position he had referred to.

MR. LEAKE asked if there was any need to

increase salaries at all if the officer was not to benefit by the increase?

MR. MARMION asked if the gentleman who would be appointed to the position vacated by the officer appointed in succession to Dr. Waylen, would receive the same salary?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes, if the item is reduced he will get £150.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked what salary it was proposed to give to the gentleman who would succeed the Colonial Surgeon.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is not settled yet.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he hoped an able man would be appointed to the position.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are now dealing with the reduction of the vote, and not the appointment of a principal medical officer.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he did not think that the fact that he was an old officer qualified him for the position.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. MORAN referring to the item—"Resident Medical Officer, Coolgardie, £200" said the officer at Albany also got £200 a year, and he considered that the duties at that place were not so heavy as those which fell upon the officer at Coolgardie, whose district included all the mining centres with the exception of Southern Cross. He did not suppose there was any comparison between the work at Albany and at Coolgardie.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is a big private practice at Coolgardie.

MR. MORAN said the medical officer there had no time for private practice. He asked the Government to consider the desirability of having medical officers at all the mining centres, as long as the system prevailed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hospital at Coolgardie was now under the Hospitals Act, and was managed by a committee. It was not the duty of the Government to appoint a medical officer at Coolgardie, because the matter was under the control of that committee, which also had complete control over the Hospital, and were responsible for the finances. The arrangement with the Government was that the committee should pay the expenses in connection with the hospital, and the Government contributed £2 10s. per week for every destitute person in the institution, provided the buildings, and assisted in every way possible. He believed there was some arrangement between the Committee and the

Government Medical Officer. The Coolgardie Hospital was the only one under the Act, as some difficulty had been experienced in bringing others within its jurisdiction. In the first place the people wanted to have the sole power to elect the committee, while the Government found them funds with which to carry on the work of the institution. A request of that description came from Cue, and it was found necessary, therefore, to leave the matter in the charge of the Government Medical Officer. The Coolgardie Committee appeared to carry out their duties thoroughly, and it was refreshing to observe the means adopted to raise money for the hospital. The Government preferred that those hospitals should be managed by private committees, where possible, in preference to making them Government institutions. Committees of that description were in existence at Day Dawn, Mount Magnet, Hannan's, Kalgoorlie, and White Feather. In some of the hospitals, notably that at Kalgoorlie, a lot of money was spent at the beginning in excess of what was received, and the Government had had to pay off their debts amounting to some £500 or £600, but after all, the Government, recognising the great difficulties existing on the goldfields in the providing of relief for the suffering, did not think it wise to adopt a niggardly policy towards the people. The accounts were paid on the certificate of the Warden, and although many large demands had had to be met, matters were now working very well.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he wished to express the general feeling of satisfaction on the Murchison field with the arrangements made by the Government in regard to the Hospitals, especially those in the small centres.

MR. MORAN said he wished to endorse what the hon. member for Naamie had said, for it was only right that the Government should be given credit for what they had done. He desired to thank the Attorney-General, who, in the absence of the Premier, on one occasion, took prompt action to meet the request of the people of White Feather for assistance urgently needed.

MR. PHILLIPS, referring to the item, "Resident Medical Officer and Quarantine Officer at Dongarra, £100," asked the Premier to explain the terms upon which the officer was engaged. There was much dissatisfaction at Dongarra with the manner in which he discharged his duties.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was appointed Resident Medical Officer for the Dongarra district in the ordinary way.

MR. PHILLIPS: Was he appointed for any term.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was not aware that he had been appointed for any length of time. He was sorry to hear that he did not give satisfaction to the district; but no representations had been made officially to the Government. If any charge were made against the officer that he was not fit to hold the position, the Government would enquire into it.

MR. PHILLIPS said he did not wish to take the extreme course of moving that the item should be struck out, but he thought the Government should enquire into the matter.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) promised to do so.

MR. A. FORREST said the Government should take prompt action, for if the officer was not fit to hold the position, his services should be dispensed with without delay.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What is his name?

MR. PHILLIPS: Bartlett.

MR. LOTON was glad there had been a discussion on this matter, and there was no question that the reasons given by the Government for the various increases were generally satisfactory, because, no doubt, circumstances had led to very great increases in work. So far as the complaint made by the hon. member for the Irwin was concerned, it was plainly one the Government should take notice of, for the simple reason that nothing was more necessary than that whatever officers were employed should be efficient. The matter was one of which the Premier should not only take notice, but prompt action as well.

MR. RANDELL was of the same opinion. He noticed there had been no increase in the salary of the medical officer at Dongarra, but that was probably because vessels did not stop at that port now.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We heard of something else as well.

MR. HASSELL would have liked to see some provision for a medical officer at Esperance Bay. It was an important place, and a medical officer should be appointed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): was not aware that the claims of Esperance Bay had been brought before the Government, but

he would assure the hon. member that if a medical officer was necessary, arrangements in that direction would be made.

MR. HASSELL expressed himself quite satisfied with this assurance.

MR. RANDELL enquired the reason for the votes for medical officers at the Murray and at Vasse.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) explained that at both places the resident medical officer was also the resident magistrate.

MR. RANDELL enquired the meaning of the item "Gardener at 4s. per diem, Perth Hospital."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the gardener was only paid by the day, although last year he had worked full time.

MR. RANDELL thought it would be better for the wage to be stated as so much per year, instead of so much per diem.

MR. MARMION noticed there was a decrease in the amount provided for warders at the Lunatic Asylum.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) pointed out that the reason for this was, that the warders were obtained without having to be paid the amount previously placed on the Estimates for their services.

Contingencies — Provisions, washing for patients, etc., in Hospitals, £10,000:

MR. MARMION asked for information on this point. Last year only £4,600 was provided on the Estimates, and the increase was enormous. It was true, the expenditure was £8,839, but there were exceptional circumstances that might not occur again, and it hardly appeared necessary to provide for such a very large increase.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought the increase was not large as compared with the actual expenditure last year. If the money was not required, it would not be spent.

MR. MARMION did not regard this as a good argument, for if the same principle was followed in other directions they might provide for large expenditure that would never take place. In 1893 only £3,000 had been required, and the increase appeared too large.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) had nothing to do with the increase. It was a departmental one, and was stated to be necessary owing to the growing increase in hospitals. These increases arose

from the demands of the goldfields, and, when the proper authorities asked for an increased rate to deal with sickness, the Government would not be justified in refusing the request.

Mr. H. W. SHOLL thought that if hon. members looked at the increase in population they would see that the increase in hospital expenditure was necessary, and that the Government was justified in making it.

Mr. RANDELL regarded the stand taken by the hon. member for Fremantle in seeking information, as a right one. These increases were an indication of the state things were coming to. It was a good thing to call attention to these items, while the Government was quite right in providing all the funds necessary to meet the necessities of the situation, and no hon. member desired to unduly restrict the expenditure in this direction. When the increase of population was considered, the officers of the Department were right in seeking to make increased provision over that of the expenditure of the previous year. At the same time such an increase in any item was almost unprecedented in the history of the colony. Very great care should be taken to see that this large amount was really necessary. In other countries these things were done by private enterprise, and the whole burden was not cast upon the Government. The proportion of population since 1893 was not so great as the increase in this vote, and there should be some means whereby officers should certify to the expenditure in outside places being necessary. Medical officers were likely to be even more lavish in expenditure than might be actually requisite.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) pointed out that, inasmuch, as the vote was so much per head there could be no possibility of the Government paying more than was necessary. While the Government did not refuse assistance where it was necessary, he could assure the House that money was not extracted from the Treasury without a good deal of trouble.

Mr. MARMION still thought no reason had been advanced for this continual increase. Last year was no criterion of what the future was likely to be. The population had not doubled in the two years, while the expenditure under this head had. What was more was that the proportion of people requiring assistance was greater before the great influx of the population than it was now. The item was

only for people in hospitals, and dealt principally with provisions. If the increase was going on in this way, what would it be in a few years hence? There was to be a new head to the Department administering this vote, and increased caution would have to be exercised to prevent undue extravagance. If care was not taken, the medical vote would soon go beyond their resources altogether.

The COMMISSIONER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Veun) pointed out that the increase in expenditure had been caused by the large population of the goldfields and the over-crowded state of the fresh hospitals. Four fresh hospitals had been opened during the year. Some of the hospitals had 50 and 60 people in them. The new hospitals had to be provisioned, and furniture provided, while every care and supervision possible was taken to ensure the money being properly expended. It would be most unsatisfactory for hospitals to require money in order to carry on their work, and the Government no provision for meeting them.

Mr. A. FORREST regarded the hon. member for Fremantle as being in the position of one who had discovered a mare's nest. He appeared to have lost sight of the fact that it was only during the last two years that the upkeep of the hospitals on the goldfields had become necessary, and that prior to this there were very few hospitals required. Under all the circumstances the increase was not disproportionate. They would always have to provide for the needy sick, and provide them with everything that was necessary to keep them alive, and the hon. member for Fremantle would be the first to cry out if the Government did not do its duty in this respect. The population of the colony had increased at the rate of 20 per cent. per annum, and they had to expect a large increase in sickness and hospital work in consequence. Of course everyone hoped that Government would not require this money, but last year, after providing £4,000, they had to spend £8,000, and this year while £10,000 was provided, if £15,000 was necessary it would have to be found.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH trusted that the expenditure would not be necessary, and that they would not have the sickness to require it, but if it was required it should be found. His own experience was that the Government was most careful of the expenditure and saw

there was no waste or excess. This House would be the first to blame the Government if sufficient funds were not found to meet the wants of the hospitals. In many places the need must be immediate to do good and the saving of valuable lives was of more importance than the expenditure of a few thousands.

MR. RANDELL would like to say that every member of the House was anxious to do all he could to relieve the sick. The hon. member for West Kimberley had thoroughly misunderstood the position the position of the hon. member for Fremantle, but then he was in the habit of misunderstanding members. It was possible that, the attention of the Government having been drawn to the matter, increased care would be taken in keeping the expenditure within bounds.

MR. MORAN enquired if this was the proper time to refer to the request of the Mayor of Coolgardie for the provision of sanitary arrangements outside of the boundaries of the municipality.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is not before the Committee. You can bring it on later.

MR. MORAN desired to say a few words on the general question. Hospitals had sprung up in large centres of population, and the expenditure, being necessary, should not be restricted. It was only during the last year or two that the goldfields had become so thickly populated, and rendered these hospitals necessary.

MR. LOTON did not dispute the necessity for this expenditure, but thought it showed there was another side to the golden picture of the goldfields. It was now evident that if they gave a big revenue they had a big return in expenditure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH enquired why no provision had been made this year for a Hospital at Day Dawn.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the necessary expenditure was provided under another item in the Estimates. It came with the provision of £2 10s. per head for patients.

MR. MARMION desired to refer to a rate already passed.

THE CHAIRMAN: It cannot be done now. It is too late.

Upon the question, "Medical, £32,357," being put, MR. MARMION desired to speak on the general question of the department.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is too late for that now. We have gone beyond that. I have been very anxious to allow members every opportunity, but we must have some order.

MR. MARMION: Then I must say that the hon. gentleman is the most critical gentleman I have ever known to occupy the chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must sit down.

MR. MARMION: Certainly, but you will see me rise again.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have already pointed out there is a proper way to criticise any decision of mine, and, unless that is done it must not be insinuated that I am wrong.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 10.5 p.m., adjourned until 4.30 p.m. next day.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 22nd August, 1895.

Classification of Lands under Homesteads Act—Visiting Magistrate for Esperance Bay—Marine Survey for Esperance Bay—Telegraph Conveniences at Dundas—Lease of Abrolhos Islands—Supply of Railway Trucks—Arbitration Bill: third reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill—Despatch from Secretary of State—Medical Act Amendment Bill; second reading—Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Bill: second reading: in committee—Railway and Theatre Refreshment Rooms Licensing Bill; first reading—Duties on Deceased Persons Estates Bill; first reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

CLASSIFICATION OF LANDS UNDER HOMESTEADS ACT.

THE HON. C. A. PIESSE, by leave, without notice, asked the Minister for Mines, whether the officer now engaged in classing lands under Part II. of "The Homesteads Act, 1894," had