

Mr. SHENTON complained that they were always voting money for new machinery and type. The character of the work was no doubt a credit to the colony. The official printing of the other colonies could not be compared with it. His complaint was that the work was done too well. They could not afford to have the work done in such a style. They should "cut the cloth according to their pocket."

Mr. A. FORREST said that the expenditure on this department was heavy and increasing. It would be cheaper, he thought, to give the work out to private firms. The work turned out by the Government Printer was, no doubt, very good, but the cost of the department should be reduced.

Mr. VENN thought that the quality of the paper used was generally too high. Such expensive paper was not used in the other colonies.

Mr. PARKER said that a considerable amount of printing would be necessary in connection with the printing of the new Rules of the Supreme Court.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) hoped it would not be necessary to print the volume; he did not approve of the new Rules.

Mr. RANDELL thought that the use of cheaper paper would not effect any great saving, and it would not be worth while to make any change in this direction.

Mr. MARMION thought they had no need to find fault with the expenditure in this department, because they had a really able man at the head of it. The Government Printer would, no doubt, save any expenditure that was possible. He would oppose any economy which would reduce the quality of the work turned out by the department. He did not think it worth while to raise a quibble over this item, as, had it not been required, it would not have been asked for.

The vote for the Printing Department was then passed as it stood.

Educational Department, £150:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) moved that this item be increased by £100.

Mr. HENSMAN said that, while not opposing this vote, he would on a future occasion call attention to certain matters

dealt with in letters to the newspapers, by a gentleman who was in a position to speak with some authority, with regard to the school system.

The increased vote for £250 was then passed.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at forty-five minutes past ten o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 25th July, 1897.

Rule to be observed in voting upon a Division—Discussed meat sold at Dongara—Vote for gold-prospecting at DeGrey and Fortescue—Report of Select Committee on Message (No. 4): Classification of Clerks—Fire Inquiry Bill: in committee—Clackline-Newcastle Railway Bill: second reading—Report of Select Committee on "Hansard" reports—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

RULE TO BE OBSERVED IN VOTING UPON A DIVISION.

THE SPEAKER called attention to the order to be observed when a division takes place. Once or twice some little difficulty and inconvenience had arisen in consequence of members finding themselves on a side of the House opposite to that where they intended to vote; and he thought some rule should be laid down to prevent any confusion in future. The rule which he proposed to adhere to was this: after the division bell rang, hon. members should cross to that side of the House on which they intended to vote, before the tellers were nominated. After the tellers were appointed, no member could pass the gangway; he must record his vote on the side on which he should then find himself. If he moved from one side of the House to the other after the tellers had been appointed, his vote would still be counted with the side on which he was when the tellers were nominated.

DISEASED MEAT SOLD AT DONGARA.

MR. HENSMAN asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Commissioner of Police had received any official complaint or representation upon the subject of certain diseased meat reported to have been recently sold at Dongara for human food, and if so, whether any and what steps had been taken in the matter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) replied: Such was reported. I am advised that there is no statute affecting the sale of diseased meat, except the Public Health Act, 1886, which is only operative in Perth and Fremantle, and places to which it may be extended.

VOTE FOR GOLD-PROSPECTING AT
DEGREY AND FORTESCUE.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place upon the Supplementary Estimates the sum of £300 for the purpose of giving assistance in the work of prospecting for gold or for other valuable minerals in the neighborhood of the Upper DeGrey, Oakover, and Fortescue Rivers; and that the Director of Works, in making the necessary arrangements for carrying out the objects of the vote, be requested to first communicate with Mr. McPhee, giving him the preference of any offer of such assistance. The hon. member said he hoped he should receive the support of almost every member of the House on this occasion. They all knew how necessary it was in this colony that we should take every means in our power to give assistance in the work of gold-prospecting and of the exploitation of the mineral resources of the country. We could not hope ever to become a great agricultural country. He hoped we should always be able to grow enough for our own wants, and perhaps a little extra; but for the colony ever to become a great agricultural country was, he thought, out of the question. He thought, however, it was perhaps quite on the card that Western Australia might become a great mineral country; and he thought that, for the sake of a few hundred pounds, we ought to do as much as we possibly could to encourage *bonâ fide* systematic prospecting. It

would be in the recollection of the House that a few evenings ago a sum of £250 was voted for prospecting for gold eastward of Newcastle; but, he thought—without wishing to institute any invidious comparison between the two districts—that the prospects were much more encouraging in the district in which he desired the vote now asked for to be expended. They had had rumors of gold discoveries in these Eastern Districts for years, but they had had something more than rumors in the Northern Districts. The part of the country which he had now in view was contiguous to the old settled district of Roebourne, and, in the event of a discovery being made, and trade springing up, we were bound to participate in it to the fullest extent. There was no danger of the trade being diverted to any other channel, as at Kimberley. With regard to Mr. McPhee, to whom it was proposed to give the preference as regards any offer of assistance, his name was well known to all who had read the published reports of the gold discoveries in the Kimberley District. In the district itself his name was, he might say, a “household word.” He was a man of large experience, and he believed he had spent nearly all he possessed in prospecting. Lately he had discovered some very encouraging indications of the presence of gold on the Upper DeGrey and Fortescue rivers, and he had expressed a desire to return there, and further prosecute his search if he received any assistance from the Government. He (Mr. Richardson) hoped that assistance would be forthcoming, and that no opposition would be offered to the present motion.

MR. McRAE had much pleasure in supporting the motion. In Mr. McPhee they would have a thoroughly practical man at their disposal; and he knew himself that gold had been found in the neighborhood in question.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said they had already arranged for the introduction of a Geologist into the colony, and they had voted a considerable sum of money for a geological survey; and the question was whether it would not be as well to wait until this survey was undertaken. They were aware that prospecting was already very assiduously carried on in the

Northern district, and that a very tempting bait was held out in the reward offered by the Government for the discovery of a payable goldfield; and it was for the House to say, looking at the demands that were made on the public purse in all directions, whether they could afford to offer any more bonuses of this kind. With regard to Mr. McPhee, he agreed with every word that had been said as to his qualifications for the position of leader of any party of prospectors. He believed him to be a most indefatigable explorer, and he only hoped he would yet reap an abundant reward for the time and trouble he had expended in prospecting. He had no wish to offer any strenuous opposition to the motion, but he asked the House to bear in mind that our funds were not very flourishing.

Mr. MARMION was inclined to view this address favorably. The House had already agreed to grant some assistance for prospecting in this part of the colony, and he thought our Northern friends had an equal claim for assistance in the same direction. A favorable opportunity of having the money judiciously expended offered itself—an opportunity which might not occur again for years—and he thought they would be acting wisely in availing themselves of it. He should like to ask the hon. member who had brought forward the motion, whether it was intended that the settlers of the district should furnish any assistance, beyond what was now asked for.

Mr. RICHARDSON said that Mr. McPhee had expressed himself willing to go out again if the Government would give him any reasonable assistance. If they didn't, the probability was we should lose his services.

Mr. MARMION: Is there any time named for the prospecting party to remain out?

Mr. RICHARDSON: No.

Mr. MARMION said it was rather indefinite; but, considering Mr. McPhee's experience, and the fact that he had devoted so much time and money in this work, and that he had a thorough knowledge of the country, no doubt if the Government gave him this assistance he would do the best he could with it, and endeavor to do justice to the district and to the colony.

The motion was then put and passed.

CLASSIFICATION OF CLERKS: (MESSAGE No. 4).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) rose to move the consideration by the House of the report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the question of the clerical staff of the civil service, pursuant to His Excellency's message. The hon. gentleman said it might be well that he should draw the attention of the House to one or two of the recommendations contained in the committee's report. In the first instance it would be seen that they recommended that all applicants for admission to the public service, as probation clerks, should qualify for the position by an examination, to be conducted by some duly appointed body—that was to say that every youth who desired to join the clerical staff of the civil service should be able to show that he had attained a certain proficiency in education. This the committee considered very desirable. They thought that by making the qualifications rather high it would encourage and stimulate those youths who aspired to join the public service, to attain the required proficiency. The committee hoped this was a proposal which would commend itself to the House. At present no examination had to be submitted to, and it was considered that it would be in the interests of the public service that a system of examination should be introduced. That was the first innovation proposed. The committee had also—though perhaps the subject was not exactly within the scope of their instructions—ventured to express an opinion upon the question of the compulsory assurance of the lives of civil servants, a law to provide for which was promised in His Excellency's speech. The committee were of opinion that no officer hereafter admitted into the public service as a clerk should have his appointment confirmed until he had effected an insurance on his life with some local insurance company, so as to make provision for his family after his death. The committee then proceeded to consider the question put before them in the Governor's message, and they had drawn up a scale of salaries, which they recommended to the House as being fair and reasonable. That scale was as follows:

" Probation Clerks to commence at £60 a year, and to rise by annual increments of £10 each to £100.

" Third Class Clerks to commence at £110 a year, and to rise by the same rate of increase to £150.

" Second Class Clerks to have a minimum salary of £160, with £10 a year rise to £200.

" First Class Clerks to begin with £210, rising £10 a year to £300.

" Chief Clerks to enter on their duties at a minimum salary of £310 a year, rising in £10 annual instalments in addition to £350; then after three years, provided a Chief Clerk's total services amount to twenty-eight years, he should advance £25, and after five years further continuous service the salary should be further increased to £400 a year; but this only on the completion of a continuous service of thirty-three years."

Hon. members would observe, on reference to the committee's report, that a condition attached to these appointments, as regards those entering the service, was that a probation clerk shall be *de facto*, on probation, and that his services might be dispensed with at any time, should the exigencies of the service, or any inefficiency or misconduct on his own part, warrant such a step. In other words he was not to regard himself as being on the permanent staff until he attained to the position of a third class clerk, with a salary commencing at £110 a year. The committee, it would be observed, proposed that all clerks should have their salaries risen by the same annual increment of £10. Of course this would not prevent an officer who had shown particular merit to succeed, should the occasion offer, to a better appointment in the service. The House would further observe that the committee proposed that this classification scheme should not take effect until the middle of next year, the reason being that it would therefore not be necessary to make provision for any increases of salary under the scheme this year. He hoped these proposals would commend themselves to the House. They had been most carefully considered by the committee; and the committee were satisfied that the public service would benefit if their recommendations were given effect

to. There was one other thing which he might draw attention to, and that was this: the committee deprecated any further claims for gratuities being entertained; and they recommended that, in case of the misconduct or inefficiency of a clerk—not such misconduct or such inefficiency as would justify his services being dispensed with altogether, but if a clerk displayed a want of energy, or showed himself inattentive, or otherwise misconducted himself in a way which might not be regarded as sufficient to warrant his dismissal—the committee recommended that in such cases the annual increase of salary which such a clerk would otherwise have been entitled to, might be withheld. He hoped—they all hoped—such cases would be rare; still the committee considered that such a regulation would operate as a wholesome corrective, and that the principle was one that it would be in the interest of the service to establish. Another recommendation was as regards Government office hours. He believed that in all departments of the service if there was work requiring to be done after office hours, the clerks were prepared to do it; but the committee thought it would be as well to make it a rule of the service that, when work was required to be done after the usual office hours, a clerk must perform it as directed by the head of the department, and that no claim for extra pay could be entertained. He did not think he need say any more at present. The report embodied, in outline, what changes the select committee considered necessary to improve the service, so far as stimulating the younger members of the service went; and the committee hoped that their labors would meet with the approval of the House. He begged to move that the report of the committee be adopted.

MR. MARMION: May I ask what becomes of the original proposition as regards individual officers, which was attached to the draft scheme sent down to the House by the Governor?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): This report supersedes that.

MR. HENSMAN submitted that the classification of clerks in the civil service ought not to be taken into the consideration of the House at this time. The

present Council was an expiring Council. The House was probably meeting for the last time—they did not know. That rested with other powers. They might or might not be called together at a future time. If they had reason to believe that they should be called together once more for another business, that business would probably take up all their time; therefore they were now meeting, practically, he might say, for the last time under the present Constitution. Under these circumstances, it appeared to him it was not right that that House should re-organise the civil service of the colony. [Mr. VENN: Not re-organise.] Well, that they should go into the question at all, with the view of altering or improving the civil service of the colony. By that time next year they might be living, possibly, under another form of Government, and he thought as the present system of civil service had lasted so long a time it might as well last a little longer, until another Council sat there, representing the people under another state of circumstances. He did not know why they should leave it to the Government of the present day to re-organise the civil service on the eve of a change in the Constitution. It appeared to him more natural that those who would be there to manage the affairs of the colony under another form of Government should have the opportunity of making such re-organisation, or such change; and, although there were many things in the scheme now before them which he could not consent to himself, and many which required consideration, yet—seeing that no other hon. member appeared disposed to speak upon the subject—he would say no more with regard to it than this: as he should probably have no other opportunity than the present one, in the present House, to do so, he now rose for the purpose of saying that he opposed the consideration of this somewhat important matter in a Council which was now about to expire, and that he thought it was only right that a matter of this kind should stand adjourned until they got a Council which would represent them under a different state of Government, and that a question which may affect the colony for many years ought to be considered under a state of things that would probably last for ever,—he

might say for ever, for they were not likely to go back again to a Crown colony.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he should like to offer one or two remarks on the report. It was very little he had to say, for it was very little he knew about the scheme itself. He thought the report of the committee was not what such a report should be. He should imagine that the members of the committee must have had this classification scheme explained to them, and that they were able to obtain full information on the subject; but all they had given the House was a bald statement of their opinions,—opinions which, apparently, differed very little from the lines laid down in the Government scheme. What they wanted was the information upon which these opinions were formed, or, at any rate, that information boiled down (so to speak). But the committee did not explain the matter in any way, and he must say himself he failed altogether to understand this classification scheme. He did not know whether it was a hard and fast classification scheme, or whether it was one under which selection would be at all possible. It appeared to him it was intended that a probation clerk could not be advanced to be a third-class clerk until all above him had been so promoted; and the same way with the other grades—that there was no chance of advancement to a higher class for the last comer until every senior clerk in the place had been advanced. A hard and fast scheme like that offered no inducement whatever for a good man. Again, on the other hand, no doubt that free selection gave rise to a good deal of what appeared to be favoritism; but he thought there was not much to be complained of in this colony on that score. [Several hon. members: "Oh, oh!"] There might have been a few appointments made—appointments which he approved of himself, but which the outside public had strongly disapproved. But some of those that had been most strongly disapproved, he considered, himself, among the best made. With regard to the present being an inopportune time for dealing with this question, he thought we should be in a very much better position to judge

how to classify the public service when the change had been adopted. He thought it would be necessary then to divide the civil service from the Executive. By that time we should find how this classification system had worked in Victoria—for he believed the scheme was framed upon the Victorian system. Many hon. members were aware that that system had worked very badly so far. There had been a great many deputations of dissatisfied civil servants going to Ministers, so that the system appeared to be a very unsatisfactory one to the civil servants themselves. From what he could ascertain, he thought the present scheme, as here laid down, would be very much disliked by the public servants of this colony,—the schedule attached to the draft scheme they specially protested against, as having been framed on a wrong principle. He did not think that House should recommend that a delay in granting these increases of salaries should take place, for these public officers had been led to believe that they would take place; but he thought it would be a great pity if the House were to decide upon any hard-and-fast scheme of classification at present.

MR. SHENTON said that during his time there had been two or three different schemes brought forward for the classification of clerks, but, from his own knowledge, none of them had ever been carried out. The Government when it suited their purpose broke through them; and he quite agreed with other hon. members who had spoken, that at this session it would be unwise on their part to make any alteration in our civil service arrangements. In view of the approaching change of Government, he did not think it would be advisable for that Council to try their hands at this work. If the present report were adopted, in all probability the whole scheme would be altered again in a very short time. He thought they had better go on as they were, so long as the present Constitution lasted.

MR. MARMION said he had not paid as careful attention to the subject as he should have wished, but it seemed to him there was very little in the report of the committee. The change was a very slight one from the system at present in vogue,—only an opportunity of putting a few increases on the salaries of a few officers.

From what he heard from public officers outside, they were dissatisfied with it altogether, inasmuch as it deprived them from receiving that fair reward which their merits, or special good conduct, or industry, ought to entitle them to. A good servant would receive no more consideration under this scheme than a worthless servant. The industrious would get no better treatment than the negligent. They all reached the top of the tree by the same degrees. There was, in fact, no incentive for a man to put forth his energies in the service. For that reason, the scheme was one that did not commend itself to him. With reference to the suggestion of the hon. baronet, the member for Plantagenet, as to a promise having been held out to certain officers of an increase of salary, so far as he (Mr. Marmion) was aware, the only promise made had been in view of the issue of this classification scheme. But that House was not in any way responsible for the scheme. As to favoritism—when people talked about favoritism, perhaps if they were behind the scenes, and knew the particular merits of many a so-called favorite, they might be the very first to acknowledge that the promotion was well deserved, and that those over whose head the appointment had been made were not so efficient. When the Estimates for 1888 came before them, the House would have an opportunity then of showing in what particular cases it considered that an increase of salary was well deserved. He had found that the Government were always only too ready, as a rule, to agree to the recommendation of the House in these matters. Under the circumstances, and seeing what a very slight alteration the scheme now before them contemplated upon the system already in vogue, he did not feel inclined to support the report of the select committee, at the present period.

MR. SHOLL said that, as one of the members of the select committee, he should like to say a few words. He believed in classification, himself; but he must say he did not believe in the scheme now before them, although he was one who helped to frame the report. If hon. members would look at the first paragraph of the report they would see that the committee came to the conclusion that their duty was not to include any

re-organisation of the various public departments, but simply to consider the scheme of classification placed before them. He thought that scheme would be most unpopular amongst those most concerned,—the civil servants themselves. He approved of a system of classification that would put an end to favoritism; but the present scheme would tend to secure the preferment of those who had already been so fortunate as to have experienced what favoritism is. Under the present scheme, officers who had been long in the service would not be likely to rise any higher in the service for years—some not at all, whereas others less deserving would enjoy the benefit of a rise. He thought it would have been much better to have referred the whole subject to a commission, to take evidence, and to inquire into the whole system. But the committee found they were unable to do that. They found that all they could do was to offer any recommendation they chose upon the scheme of the Government. That was not what he wanted to see done, and he regretted, although he was one of the committee, that he could not vote for their report.

MR. A. FORREST was in favor of the report passing into law. Of course they might expect that some few clerks would suffer some little hardship under it; but, taking it on the whole, he thought a man would be more safe, and in a far better position altogether, under this classification scheme. He should have wished, however, to have seen the scheme extended to the officers employed in the Survey Department, who were as much entitled to consideration as any of those included in the scheme. He was surprised that the hon. member for the Gascoyne, if he did not agree with the recommendations of the committee, did not enter his protest against it as a member of the select committee. They could not expect to devise any scheme that would please everybody, and it was only natural that, amongst a large body of men, many of them should be dissatisfied because they saw no chance of being promoted over the heads of others. The only objection he had to the scheme was that there might be cases where a second class clerk might not be so well fitted to be put at the head of an office as a third class clerk, when a vacancy occurred in a

chief clerkship. Still he approved of the classification as a whole, though he would have preferred to see it extended to officers employed in the Lands Department.

MR. SCOTT—who was one of the members of the select committee—said the committee were told they had only to consider the scheme laid before them. He could not say that it was a complete scheme. He thought with the honorable member for Kimberley there were other officers in the service who required classifying. He also thought the committee wanted more material to work upon. Still, taking the classification system on its merits, he did not think there was very much to complain of it, inasmuch that it would not do any harm to those coming under it; and, in some instances, it would do good. Some honorable members had said they had heard objections from public officers to the scheme. No one had complained to him, in that manner, exactly; but there had been frequent complaints as to officers serving a great number of years in the public service, and not having their claims fairly recognised. To a great extent this scheme would do away with any grievances of that kind; and, if that report were carefully looked at, it would be found to be based on a good deal of common sense. Some disappointment appeared to be felt because the committee had not gone into the whole question of civil service reform. But the committee, after inquiry and a good deal of discussion, were forced to the conclusion that their duty did not extend so far as that, and that all they had to do was to consider the scheme of classification placed before them. They found that no exact or precise system was at present carried out, and that the classification schemes introduced some years ago had never been followed. The committee were all agreed as to the necessity for insisting upon all candidates for admission to the civil service showing their qualifications by undergoing an examination before some duly appointed examining board. The committee also considered that no candidate admitted into the service should have his appointment confirmed until he had effected an insurance on his life. He thought this would be a very good principle to introduce into the civil service. With regard

to what had fallen from the member for the Greenough, he could not quite fall in with it. He did not see why because the present Council was what the hon. member called an expiring Council, it should not nevertheless continue to do as much useful work as it could. Personally he did not care whether the scheme was adopted or not, but he thought it was a pity that some hon. members who had spoken that evening had not spoken before the matter was referred to a select committee. Certainly, if the public officers themselves objected to the scheme, and he knew it, he should oppose it. At the same time he thought there was a great deal in it worthy of the consideration of the House.

Mr. PARKER said he intended to oppose the adoption of the report, for the simple reason that he objected to the report, and he objected to the classification scheme, as indicated in His Excellency's message. He knew there were objections to a classification of clerks in the public service; in the same way as there were objections to a public service that was not classified. These objections were obvious. Under a hard-and-fast system of classification, a man possessed of a considerable amount of energy and ability saw that he could not possibly be put forward and take the position which his talents, or his skill, or his ability, would have won for him had no such system existed. He was obliged to move in a certain groove, and at a prescribed rate of progression—so many years in one class, so many years in another class, until perhaps somewhere towards the end of his natural life he blossomed into a chief clerk. All this was very disheartening to a really good man. On the other hand, where there was no classification, they always had the cry of favoritism; and no doubt there always was that one great objection to a service that was not classified. But, on the whole, he could not help thinking himself that the classification system was one which was so much calculated to damp the ardor, and to chill the energies of many of those working under it, that it must be regarded as being still more objectionable than the present style of dealing with our civil servants, under which a man's ability and skill might be recognised. He also objected to this particular scheme of

classification for another reason. It had been said that under it there would be no favoritism, but he thought there was a great mistake in the way in which it was proposed to classify some of the clerks. Take, for instance, the clerks to the Attorney General and to the Crown Solicitor. Up to within some years ago, the position of Crown Solicitor's clerk was considered the more important office of the two, and he received a higher salary; and no doubt he did perform more important functions than a clerk to a counsel. But at his suggestion, some years ago, the salaries of these two clerks were made the same,—that of the Attorney General's clerk being raised. But by the scheme of classification now before them the Attorney General's clerk was made to rank higher than the Crown Solicitor's clerk, the former being placed in the second class, and the latter in the third class. He thought this was altogether anomalous and unreasonable. Then, again, there were the clerks to magistrates in country districts. He need hardly point out that in those districts where Courts of Quarter Sessions were held, the position of the clerk to the magistrates was one that entailed greater responsibilities and required a greater amount of competency; but he noticed in the schedule attached to the scheme,—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): May I remind the hon. member that it is only the report of the select committee that is before the House? I take it that the scheme sent down by His Excellency, with the schedule of salaries attached to it, is defunct; and the result of adopting this report will be that, in preparing the Estimates for 1888, the recommendations embodied in the report will be closely followed, and any item will be open to challenge by the hon. member if he finds any departure from the recommendations made by the committee, and their scale of salaries.

Mr. PARKER: If the hon. gentleman will look at the select committee's report, signed by the hon. gentleman himself, he will see that the committee refer to the classification scheme sent down by His Excellency; and in the 4th paragraph they say: "It is further recommended by your committee that this classification shall not take effect until after the end of the present year."

What other classification scheme did that refer to?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): That referred to in the previous paragraph,—the scheme formulated by the committee.

MR. PARKER: I am sorry if I have misunderstood the report; but it is not my fault. The report is very obscure, and it draws no distinction between the scheme sent down by the Governor with the schedule attached, and the scheme of the select committee. The schedule is, in fact, part and parcel of the scheme itself, and, if the committee approved of the scheme, the only natural conclusion is that they also approved of the schedule.

MR. SCOTT: We (the committee) had nothing whatever to do with the schedule or with the Governor's scheme: we were told so by the Colonial Secretary.

MR. PARKER: If the Colonial Secretary told you that, he told you what was not a fact. If the hon. member will look at the draft scheme sent down by the Governor he will see that His Excellency distinctly says—referring to the schedule—"The following table of classification will apply to the different departments named." This was accompanied by a message, in which His Excellency said: "The Governor has the honor to enclose, herewith, copy of a draft scheme for the classification of the clerical staff of the civil service. The Governor will be obliged if the Council will take this draft scheme"—*this* draft scheme—"into consideration, and will favor him with their views thereon." That message was referred to the select committee whose report was now under consideration; and, if the Colonial Secretary informed the committee they had nothing to do with this scheme of the Governor's, I should like to know what they had to consider. I submit that with this report of the select committee before us we are entitled to go into the whole of the draft scheme sent down by the Governor for our consideration, including the table of classification attached to it.

THE SPEAKER: What was referred to the select committee was His Excellency's message, which was in these terms: "Referring to paragraph 19 of the speech with which he opened the session, the Governor has the honor to enclose, herewith, copy of a draft

"scheme for the classification of the clerical staff of the civil service. The Governor will be obliged if the Council will take this draft scheme into consideration, and will favor him with their views thereon." That being so, the hon. member is in order in referring to the Governor's scheme.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): May I be permitted to say that the question before us is the adoption of the committee's report? The consideration of that report was made an order of the day for to-night, and I prefaced its introduction with some remarks explanatory of the report. The question before the House now is the adoption of the report of the select committee, and not the consideration of His Excellency's message.

THE SPEAKER: The select committee was appointed to consider His Excellency's message, and it is the report of that committee that is now before the House. I must rule that the hon. member for Perth is in order in referring to the scheme sent down by His Excellency with that message, which scheme was referred to the select committee.

MR. PARKER, continuing, said he was endeavoring to point out, when he was interrupted, that in the table of classification which formed part of the draft scheme there appeared to be some very strange anomalies as regards the classification of magistrates' clerks. Where there were Courts of Quarter Sessions the importance of the position was recognised in some instances, but not in others. At Albany, for instance, the clerk to the magistrates was ranked in the first class, whereas at Roebourne and Geraldton, equally important places, the clerks ranked in the second class, while at Bunbury, where also there was a Court of Quarter Sessions, the magistrates' clerk was put in the third class. All this appeared to him somewhat anomalous. It indicated, as he had already said, that if there was no actual favoritism under the proposed system of classification, there were at any rate some singular incongruities. He objected to the scheme because he thought there did not appear to be any principle upon which these clerks were to be classified. He objected to it still further when they were told that the

Colonial Secretary had informed the select committee they had nothing to do with the schedule attached to the Governor's draft scheme—the most important part of the whole scheme. If they adopted this report, would not the Governor naturally conclude that, with some slight modifications, they had adopted the whole of his scheme—schedule and all? He had a further objection to the report of the committee. It was proposed that probation clerks entering the service at the minimum age of sixteen should commence at once with a salary of £60 a year. So far as his own experience of sixteen-year old clerks went, they required to spend six months in the office to learn to write. If they came from a Government school, probably they might know how to write; but if they came from the High School, where the art of caligraphy was not considered of much importance, the probability was that for the first six months after entering the service they would be fit for nothing except spoiling good paper. He thought these probationers ought to receive no salary at all for some time. They ought to be well satisfied with having passed into the service. He regretted, with the hon. member for Plantagenet, that the committee had given no reason for arriving at the conclusion which they did. They had vouchsafed no information at all to the House. The House was really hardly any wiser now than it was before the matter was referred to the committee. Under all the circumstances, he proposed to move, as an amendment upon the motion for the adoption of the report, that an humble address be presented to His Excellency informing him that the House, having taken into consideration His Excellency's message, and also the report of the select committee, were of opinion that it was inadvisable at the present time to make any alterations in the regulations affecting the civil service.

Mr. HARPER, without comment, seconded the amendment.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said he did not agree with the hon. and learned member for Perth that one word in the 4th paragraph of the report referred to the Governor's scheme. He should imagine that the scheme there referred to was

the scheme sketched out in the next preceding paragraph. He thought they might reconcile what took place in committee in this way: the committee may have begun their deliberations by considering the scheme referred to them, and afterwards dismissed it from their consideration, and then entered upon the consideration of a scheme of their own, which differed in one respect—as regards the amount of the annual increment—from the Governor's scheme, the annual increase proposed by His Excellency being at the rate of £12 10s., whereas the committee recommended that the salaries should rise by an annual increase of £10. He thought, himself, that the committee were quite justified in not adhering closely to the scheme submitted to them. It was a very important question they had to deal with. He thought that what His Excellency, in sending the draft scheme down to the House, wished to know was whether the House favored a system of classification. It had been whispered that, under the existing mode of appointing and promoting civil servants, favoritism was sometimes shown. He was not now going to argue whether, under that form of Government towards which they were drifting, these whispers would not grow louder. Experience would show. What he said was that the essential principle of classification was the abolition of favoritism, and that clerks might know where they were, and that they might depend upon rising regularly from grade to grade. It had been asked, why not apply the same principle to the heads of departments as well as to clerks? They could not, he submitted, apply the same principle to the occupants of positions who must necessarily be men of higher intelligence, men charged with greater responsibilities, discharging altogether different functions from those of a mere clerk. That was a point at which any system of classification must necessarily stop short, and the principle of selection take its place. As he had already said, what His Excellency wanted was an expression of opinion not upon any particular scheme—it might be a bad scheme—but upon the question of classification. Did they want the principle of classification introduced into the public service of the colony or not? The hon. member for Perth, with that fair-

ness which distinguished him, admitted there was something to be said on both sides—that there were advantages attached to classification, and that there were also disadvantages. What that House, as a consultative and deliberative body, was now asked to do was to lay down some broad, general principle of classification, to prepare the way, and indicate upon what lines they wished to go, rather than to inquire into whether one particular clerk ought to get £5 a year more than another clerk. He did hope that, in some form or other, the House would answer the question submitted to it by His Excellency, by a plain, straightforward aye or no; and not shelter itself behind the amendment of the hon. and learned member opposite. As for the argument of a pending change in the Constitution, of the present being a moribund Council, and that in two or three years the colony will probably be under another form of Government, and that therefore it would be unwise at present to introduce any reform into our civil service system,—that appeared to him a very weak argument. He might as well argue that because he was going to pass the rest of his existence in another world he should neglect his duties in this. Let them do their duty, he should say, to the last moment, under the present Constitution, while it lasted. So long as it was capable of doing good and useful work let them endeavor to get as much good and useful work out of it as possible. The amendment shirked the whole question, which was “aye” or “no.” Was the system of classification in the abstract—without regard to the claims of A or B—good or bad in itself?

CAPTAIN FAWCETT said he was going to argue that it was bad. He was opposed to the scheme of classification here proposed for a reason which every hon. member would agree with. He was opposed to it, on principle, because he observed that the clerk to the magistrates at Pinjarrah would get no increase of salary at all under it.

MR. VENN—who was one of the members of the select committee—said he was placed on the committee certainly without any desire on his own part, because it appeared to him that what had been referred to them was not a classification scheme but a classification of

persons. The committee entered upon their duties in rather a dubious frame of mind, not knowing exactly what they had to do. They had been told on more than one occasion, by the hon. member for Plantagenet, what the duties of a select committee were, and that amongst other things they ought to give the reasons which had led them to the conclusions embodied in their report. As regards this particular question, the classification of clerks, he thought it would be admitted that it would have been rather difficult, within the prescribed compass of a report like this, to have given the reasons which led the committee to make their recommendations and to formulate the scheme now under discussion. He might, however, now state some of those reasons. When the committee entered upon their deliberations, he put one or two that he conceived to be pertinent questions to the Colonial Secretary, who was the chairman of the committee. He asked him, in the first place, whether there was any regular system of promotion in vogue in the civil service now? The reply was that there existed no regular system of promotion. The next question he put was—there being no regular system, did the present practice call for a change? The reply was “Yes, certainly, the present practice does call for a change.” The committee found, on hunting up certain reports made by select committees and commissions on the subject years ago—as far back as 1871, signed by Mr. Barlee, and in 1878 by Mr. Steere—they found that as long back as that certain recommendations were made to the House with reference to the classification of clerks. The recommendations of 1871 were abandoned, and in 1878 the question again cropped up; but the scheme then put forward was also abandoned, and the result was that at the present time there was no system of classification or promotion in vogue. The committee, therefore, deeming it desirable to inaugurate some regulations—and he thought these were regulations rather than a scheme—had submitted the report now under consideration, and he thought the report was one that deserved some attention on the part of the House. They must make a commencement somewhere with this question of civil service reform; and, if they did not make a start now, the diffi-

culties in the way would only increase as time went by. The committee had to shut their eyes entirely to the claims of individuals, just as much as if they had never existed. What they had to consider was the best scheme for a basis for future operations, without regard to individual claims at all, which he regarded as purely a question of Executive functions. As to the argument that, because we were on the eve of a change in the Constitution, this question ought not to be dealt with now, he did not realise the force of that argument. He failed to see why, because we were on the eve of a change in the form of Government, we should cease from any attempt at passing useful legislation. He thought it was the duty of that House to make the most of its opportunities while the Constitution lasted. This scheme in embryo (as he might term it) would be of service to those who, under the new Constitution, would have to deal with this subject more exhaustively. It had been drafted very much on the principle in vogue in Victoria. They had heard that evening that it did not work very satisfactorily in that colony; but he should like to know what scheme of this kind ever did, or ever would, work satisfactorily all round. He had not made himself acquainted with the fact of whether the proposals were likely to be received with satisfaction or dissatisfaction by the public servants themselves. He regarded it as a good scheme, so far as it went, and it was his intention to vote for its adoption. He thought it would do away with a great deal of unpleasantness and irritation arising out of what might be called favoritism, as regards future appointments. It might, to some extent, have a tendency to ignore superior merit and to crush laudable ambition; but he ventured to think that, under any system, individual merit would assert itself, and that really good men had nothing to fear from this or any other scheme.

MR. LOTON said the select committee had not been called upon to inquire into the working of the various departments of the public service, with a view to their re-organisation. Their province was to formulate a graduated scale of salaries to be paid to certain classes of public servants—the clerical

staff of the service—and to recommend some fairly equitable system of classification. In some respects the system proposed was not a hard-and-fast one. It did not follow that in all cases a clerk should receive the increase belonging to his year: that depended upon his own conduct. There was provision in the report for withholding promotion. Nor did it necessarily follow that the officer who had been in his class the longest should receive promotion. That depended upon the nature of the promotion, and the discretion of the appointing board. The scheme, however, provided a general system of classification which, he thought, would be beneficial in the interests of the service. It was not an elaborate scheme, but it would answer our present purpose, and, under it, every clerk in the service would feel that, so long as he did his duty, he was bound to rise in the service, slowly, perhaps, but surely, until he reached the top of the ladder. Under the circumstances, if the matter went to a division—there being at present no recognised system of promotion or classification—he should vote for the adoption of the report. Under the present practice, if a vacancy occurred it was given to the first person who succeeded in claiming attention, or, more possibly, to some favorite; and, if only to put some check upon this practice, he thought it was very desirable they should adopt some system of classification and promotion. There was no reason why even next year, under another form of Government, the scheme should not be elaborated; and, should it be considered desirable to increase the ratio of the annual increments, there was nothing here to prevent it. The present scheme would be a basis to work upon. He thought it very desirable that some system of promotion within the service itself should be adopted. He was altogether opposed to appointments being made from outside, and this scheme would have a tendency to discourage such appointments.

MR. CONGDON said he would certainly oppose the adoption of the report. It failed to recommend itself to his mind for many reasons. He should have preferred to have seen a commission appointed, dealing exhaustively with the whole subject of civil service reform; and

had this been the report of such a commission, instead of that of a committee dealing with only one particular phase of the question, and dealing with it in a way which he thought was calculated to do injury to deserving public officers, he might, perhaps, have been inclined to give the report his support,—or at any rate a more favorable consideration. But he should certainly oppose the adoption of the present report.

Mr. MARMION thought the select committee had made a great mistake in not dealing with the details of classification as arranged in the schedule, which illustrated the principle upon which the system was intended to work. That was evidently what the Executive intended to fall back upon; and would they not do so still, in the belief that, if this report were adopted, the House approved of the schedule which accompanied the draft scheme. The select committee had not thought proper to find any fault with it, and the natural conclusion in the mind of the Governor and of the Executive would be that the Legislature concurred in the table of classification which had been sent down for its consideration. He had had the honor of sitting upon several Commissions dealing with this question, and they had devoted a great deal more time to the consideration of the whole subject than this select committee could have devoted to it. They examined the various heads of departments, and, in some cases, the juniors; and he thought it was only by going exhaustively into the whole question that any committee could possibly arrive at any conclusions which were likely to lead that House to accept them. He could hardly understand the committee not having taken the schedule into their consideration. The mere fact of their not having attempted to show the relative positions which the various grades of officers in the service should be placed in, led him to believe that they had accepted the table of classification submitted by the Governor, in illustration of the principle upon which the whole scheme was based.

Mr. HENSMAN said he should support the amendment. In doing so, he was sure no member of the select committee would think that the House was not much obliged to them for their report, or that if the House did not

adopt the report it was out of any want of respect for the conclusions of the committee or of confidence in their judgment. Four of the members of the committee had supported the report, and one of them in the frankest manner had said that he was not inclined now to support it. Since the amendment had been moved, the matter had been put to the House in a way which, at first sight, might mislead the House. It had been said that by adopting the report the House would be simply saying "yes" or "no" to the question of whether classification, in the abstract, was desirable or not. He entirely differed from that view. The question was nothing of the sort. The question was—whether the classification scheme sent down by the Governor, with the elaborate details, which had been reported upon by the select committee, with the schedule attached to it—which was clearly as much a part of the scheme as any clause of it—should be adopted by that House or not. Clause 11 of the draft scheme said this: "The following table of classification will apply to the different departments named"—then came the schedule. If they turned to the report of the committee they would find them recommending "that this classification scheme shall not take effect until after the end of the present year;" so that clearly the schedule was part of the scheme that had been reported upon. As to whether classification, as an abstract principle, was desirable or not, he presumed no one would say it was not. Many, however, might say it would be very difficult to carry it out; and there were many things to be said on both sides. Of course it was desirable to classify clerks, as it was desirable to classify things in natural history,—if they could do it. But if they found there were difficulties in the way of classification, they must then modify their scheme of classification or abandon it altogether. But that was not the question now before the House. They had got a particular scheme before them, with all its details, and they were asked to adopt the report of this committee, to whom that scheme had been remitted; and although the committee's scheme somewhat varied in its recommendations from the scheme of the Governor, it in the main supported it.

The principal reason why he did not desire to go into the details of this elaborate scheme was that the Government of the colony was about to change. It seemed to him somewhat out of place that those who were working a Constitution that was on the eve of being superseded by another and a different Constitution altogether should take upon themselves to re-organise the public service, and hand down to their successors a cut-and-dried scheme like this. What would they say of some old gentleman—he might be a venerable Bishop, or what not—who for forty or fifty years had managed an establishment, but who was suddenly told that he would have to vacate in a year or two,—what would they think of this old gentleman, just as he was on the eve of clearing out, if he were to set about framing a new scheme for the establishment in future, regulating the domestic and other servants of the establishment, fixing their salaries, and determining their future position in the establishment? Would they not think it was rather premature on the part of the old gentleman? Would they not be inclined to say to him, "Had you not better leave all this to your successor." In the same way he thought it would be better if they were to leave this task of re-organising the civil establishment of this colony to their successors, under that form of Government which the colony was about to enter upon, rather than they should attempt it now, during the expiring days of the present Constitution. As to what had fallen from the hon. member Mr. Loton, as to appointing outsiders to offices in the colonial service, he was sure that under Responsible Government they should find enough good men in the colony, without going to England or anywhere else for them. For the reasons he had mentioned, it was his intention to support the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Perth.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he should like to offer one or two remarks before a decision was arrived at. He had no intention of traversing all the arguments which had been brought forward by hon. members, who, of course, were entitled to their own opinions, as to whether the scheme now before them was the select committee's scheme, or whether they were

both identical. He submitted that there was original matter in this report—original matter which emanated entirely and solely from the committee. When the draft scheme accompanying His Excellency's message was placed before the committee, he drew the attention of the committee to it, and expressed his opinion that their duty lay in considering the general question of the classification of the public servants, and not the re-organisation of the service—a duty which he submitted belonged to the Executive Government. The committee first considered whether the time had arrived for introducing the system of competitive examination, before admission into the service; and they came to the conclusion that the time had arrived—in his opinion it had arrived some years ago. This was entirely a question apart from the scheme sent down by His Excellency the Governor, and a new feature altogether. Nor was this the only element of dissimilarity between the committee's scheme and the draft scheme. It was unnecessary for him now to point out the distinctive features of the committee's proposals. The scheme which they had submitted was not an elaborate scheme—it did not purport to be so; nor was it intended to be so. It was only a skeleton. But he submitted—and he spoke with some authority, after an experience of thirty years in the public service—he submitted it provided all that was necessary in the present condition and circumstances of the colony, and he ventured to say it was framed upon lines which would not only prove an incentive to the youth of the colony, but also beneficial to the public service generally. As to whether it met with the approbation or disapprobation of the clerks themselves, he thought that was not the question which they had to consider. One would hardly go to the boys of a public school to ask whether they approved or disapproved of any new rules which the governing body proposed to introduce for the better government of the institution. As to the scheme making no provision for rewarding conspicuous merit, if hon. members would only examine the scheme they would see that it left the door open not only for dispensing with the service of inefficient clerks, or otherwise mulcting them, but also for rewarding exceptional merit. It

was not a hard-and-fast system. As to the schedule, he would only add that the Estimates would be framed entirely upon the recommendation contained in the report of the select committee, without regard to the schedule. He believed himself it would be in the interests of the clerical staff, not only pecuniarily but otherwise, if the report of the committee were adopted.

The House then divided upon the amendment introduced by Mr. PARKER—that it was inadvisable at the present time to make any alterations in the regulations affecting the civil service. The numbers were—

Ayes	13
Noes	10

Majority for ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart.	Mr. E. R. Brockman
Mr. Congdon	Mr. Forrest
Captain Fawcett	Mr. James
Mr. Harper	Mr. Lotou
Mr. Hensman	Mr. Randell
Mr. Keane	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Layman	Mr. Scott
Mr. Marmion	Mr. Venn
Mr. McRae	Hon. C. N. Warton
Mr. Pearse	Hon. Sir M. Fraser
Mr. Shenton	(Teller.)
Mr. Sholl	
Mr. Parker (Teller.)	

The amendment was therefore affirmed.

FIRE INQUIRY BILL.

The House went into committee for the consideration of this bill.

Clause 1.—“That every Coroner and every person entitled to act and acting as Coroner shall have, by virtue of his office, jurisdiction to inquire into the cause and origin of any fire whereby the life of man or beast has been lost or endangered; or whereby any building, ship, or merchandise, or any stack of corn or hay, or any growing crop, or any trees, saplings, bushes, shrubs, plants, grass, stubble, or scrub has been destroyed or damaged.”

MR. HENSMAN submitted that the words “every person entitled to act and acting as Coroner,” were unnecessary, in view of the provisions of the Shortening Ordinance.

THE COMMISSIONER OF TITLES (Mr. J. C. H. James) saw no objection to their standing. The 19th Vic., No. 10, made it lawful for every justice of the peace, by virtue of his office, to exercise

the privileges and powers of a coroner; and it was for that reason that these words were inserted.

MR. HENSMAN said if every justice was entitled to exercise all the privileges and powers of a coroner, he was to all intents and purposes a coroner; and the words appeared to be superfluous. There was no harm however in them, and perhaps it was as well to be careful and cautious.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said that at present there was no one in the colony who was a coroner, by appointment as such; and therefore provision was here made to meet that state of affairs. Hereafter coroners might be appointed, and the clause would apply to them as well as to those who were now entitled, by virtue of their magisterial office, to act as coroners.

MR. PEARSE was very glad to find full powers given under this clause to magistrates to hold these inquiries. The necessity for investing them with these powers had been felt, to his own knowledge. Some time ago a fire occurred at Fremantle under very suspicious circumstances, but no inquiry was instituted, because it was considered that a magistrate had no statutory power to hold such an inquiry. He thought the bill would prove a very useful measure.

MR. RANDELL: How is a coroner to initiate these inquiries,—of his own mere motion?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton): There is no regular machinery provided for bringing matters before a coroner. No doubt, in case of a fire occurring under suspicious circumstances, the matter would be brought under his notice somehow or other, just in the same way as when a death occurs suddenly, or under suspicious circumstances. Or, if he saw cause himself for holding an inquiry, he would be at liberty to do so, upon his own mere motion.

The clause was then put and passed.

Clause 2: Coroner may issue warrant: Agreed to, *sub silentio*.

Clause 3: Short title: Agreed to.

MR. HENSMAN pointed out that there was no clause in the bill enacting that the bill may be construed with the

other Acts which provide the necessary machinery.

THE COMMISSIONER OF TITLES (Mr. J. C. H. James) said if it was thought that the machinery was not carried along with the bill he should have no objection to the introduction of a clause to that effect; on the contrary, he was obliged to the hon. member for his suggestion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) thereupon moved the following new clause, to stand as clause 4: "That the Ordinances of the 19th Vic., No. 10, and 27th Vic., No. 1, be read and construed with this Act."

Agreed to.

MR. HENSMAN said as the bill, unless otherwise provided, would come into operation as soon as it was assented to, would it not be well to allow time—this being a large colony—for its provisions to become known?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said the bill interfered with no rights not already known. It was merely an enabling Act, and by postponing its operation they might be deprived of an opportunity of acting under it.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported.

A POINT OF PROCEDURE: THE REPORT STAGE.

MR. PARKER thought it would be well to establish a practice here which prevailed in other Assemblies, of appointing a future day for the adoption of reports of the committee of the whole House. The present practice was to move the adoption of the report the moment the report was made. He thought it would be desirable to allow some time to intervene between the report being made and its adoption by the House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) was glad the hon. member had brought the matter to the attention of the House. In the House of Commons there was a committee stage and a report stage,—the committee stage being before the Chairman of Committees and the report stage before the Speaker, the latter stage affording an opportunity for the further consideration of a bill, after passing through committee, if necessary.

Here, where they had no second Chamber, this course appeared to him to be still more desirable.

THE SPEAKER said he had always been in favor of the proposed procedure, which he thought would be a very desirable practice to adopt. Of course it would only be necessary to adopt it when amendments had been made in committee. Although their Standing Orders did not provide for it, there was nothing to preclude the House from adopting the practice, for, in all cases not provided for in their own Standing Orders, they could have resort to the forms and usages of the House of Commons.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said there was only one difficulty that he could see in the way of adopting the practice referred to, and that was this: according to their rules he had to certify to the Speaker, before a bill could be read a third time, that the bill was in accordance with the bill as reported to the House after its passage through committee. If any subsequent amendments were made, during the report stage, when the Speaker was in the chair, the Chairman of Committees would be unable to certify that the bill was in accordance with the bill as it passed through committee.

THE SPEAKER said he would require some little time to consider that point. He could see there was a difficulty, but probably it might be obviated.

The report stage of the Fire Inquiry Bill was then made an order of the day for Monday, August 1st.

CLACKLINE-NEWCASTLE RAILWAY BILL.

Read a second time, *sub silentio*.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON "HANSARD."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) brought under the consideration of the House the report of the select committee appointed to consider certain questions connected with reporting the proceedings of the Legislative Council. The committee suggested that a second *Hansard* reporter be provided to take part of the work which the present reporter had entirely upon his hands, the committee being of opinion that the strain

of reporting single-handed throughout the present long sessions was too great. The committee thought the contract for providing two reporters should be made with some reliable third party, who should be responsible to see that the arrangements for the work were punctually and satisfactorily carried out. Since the committee had made these recommendations he had received an offer from Messrs. Stirling, Bros., & Co. for carrying out the work of reporting and printing the debates upon terms which hon. members had before them in a printed form. The matter was entirely in the hands of the House. He would move, as chairman of the select committee—"That this Council approves of the recommendation contained in the third paragraph of the report of the select committee appointed to consider certain questions connected with the *Hansard* reports."

MR. PARKER said he was happy to second the motion of the Colonial Secretary, and, while doing so, he should like to draw the attention of hon. members to this offer of Messrs. Stirling, Bros. They were now paying £200 a year for the *Hansard* reporting, and another £100 was proposed to be paid for that purpose, whereas Messrs. Stirling offered to do the whole work of reporting, printing, and binding for that amount. Again, at present the *Hansard* reports were placed in the hands of hon. members some months after the session had closed, but Messrs. Stirling proposed to issue them weekly. He could not help thinking that this was a most liberal offer, although he did not know that it would pay the newspaper. He thought, however, that the acceptance of such an offer was an Executive matter, but it was one the Government ought to take into its most careful consideration. It would involve a great saving to the country and tend to reduce the large vote they were annually making for the Government Printing Office; and he thought if the Government accepted the offer of Messrs. Stirling they ought to endeavor to get a contract made with them for as long a time as possible. While making this suggestion, he thought it was his duty to point out to the Government that he thought it was the universal wish of the House that the claims of the present reporter should be considered. Mr. Jones had been the

Hansard reporter for the last twelve or thirteen years, ever since the *Hansard* was started, and he was now permanently employed by the Government, under a contract, at a salary of £200 a year, with some further emoluments. Under these circumstances, if the Government accepted the offer of Messrs. Stirling, Bros., or made any other arrangements with any other firm, he thought—and he believed he was expressing the unanimous wish of the House—it should be a condition of the contract that the present reporter should be employed by the contractors at his present rate of salary and other emoluments. He thought that in fairness to the reporter who had served them for so many years they were bound to consider his claims.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said, with regard to the last observation of the hon. member for Perth, he thought that every member of the select committee who had considered this question agreed that whatever arrangement was made it should be done without prejudice to the present reporter. As the hon. member had stated, the present *Hansard* reporter had acted in that capacity for twelve or thirteen years, and he thought that on the whole his reports had given very general satisfaction. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Perth that the question of accepting this offer of Messrs. Stirling, Bros., was one solely for the Executive; but he would like to point out to the Executive—he had gone very carefully into the matter—that it would cost at the least £800 to do what Messrs. Stirling offered to do for £300; and the Executive should consider what their object was in offering to do it for this small sum; and that if any contract was made with them, it should be for a number of years.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he was only too glad to add to what had been said by the hon. member for Perth and the hon. member for Plantagenet as to the value of the services of the reporter who, for so many years, had done the *Hansard* reporting; and he trusted that in any arrangement that might be made his services would be retained, feeling sure that such would be the wish of the House. He hoped that any arrangement that might be made for the future would be satisfactory to the

present reporter, and that his services would still be retained.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said he thought there was a little incongruity and inconsistency in the remarks of the hon. member for Perth, when he said that if Messrs. Stirling, Bros.' offer was accepted it should be a term of the contract that Mr. Jones should be employed. If the firm referred to came forward with an offer for £300 to do what was obviously worth more, he did not see that Mr. Jones's claims would be considered by them. The moment they made their contract with the Government they would say they did not care a half-penny about Mr. Jones. Messrs. Stirling, Bros., were promising things which they could not fulfil. They were offering what was absurd on the face of it; and if the suggestion of the hon. member for Perth were carried out, that the services of Mr. Jones be retained by the contractors at £200 a year, the contractors would simply turn round, if the work was not done satisfactorily, and say "How can you expect us to do better, when you compel us to pay £200 out of the £300 to one reporter?" He would say this: if there was one thing that astonished him when he came to this colony more than anything else, it was when he saw the volumes of *Hansard* in his chambers, and noticed the excellent style in which the work was turned out. He did not believe anything could be better than the style in which these reports were done. He never saw better printing, and he was quite certain there was no colony near us where the reporting was better done. As for the time it took before the volume was ready for publication, good work to be well done must take time. *Hansard* in England was not published at the end of the session, nor for some time afterwards. He hoped the House would keep the reporter who for twelve years had acted so well, and that in case of illness he should be allowed a substitute. He should be sorry to see the House led astray by an offer to do the work which Messrs. Stirling offered to do for £300. The offer was preposterous in itself.

MR. HENSMAN said this was a matter which had been brought before

the House on the report of the select committee, and he could hardly agree that this was a matter particularly for the Executive. The House claimed the right to appoint the Speaker and Chairman of Committees, and they were paid out of the general revenue. He ventured to think, also, that the appointment of a Reporter was particularly a matter which should be in the hands of the House,—a view that he thought was taken by the House of Commons in England. He had only just seen the copy of Messrs. Stirling's offer, and he thought if the House was to be called upon to express an opinion on the subject, members should have some time to consider it. He was unable, not having any knowledge of printing work, to speak with any authority as to what the cost of this would be; nor could he speak with the authority of the Attorney General and say it was "absurd" for the Messrs. Stirling to offer to do what they offered. He did not know what authority the Attorney General had for saying it was absurd. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Simple arithmetic.] This was an offer made by business men,—men whom he presumed knew what they were doing, and on that account it was well deserving of their careful consideration and attention. It seemed to him that it was an offer which, if accepted, would be of considerable advantage, but he wished more time had been given them to consider it. He took it that the offer was made in order to—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton): In order to get hold of the contract.

MR. HENSMAN did not know what was meant by that remark. These gentlemen were willing to undertake the work and to enter into a bond to the satisfaction of the House for the proper carrying out of the work; and, as the hon. member for Perth had said, there would be great advantage in getting these reports out earlier. He thought the House should take the matter of appointing a Reporter into its own hands. But at present he would suggest the adjournment of the debate, so that hon. members might carefully consider the matter.

MR. VENN would like to know whether this offer was put before them

to consider in conjunction with the report of the select committee. If so, he was inclined to support it, for no doubt Messrs. Stirling, Bros.' offer presented advantages they had never previously had. With all due respect to what had been said by the Attorney General, they had a straightforward business offer, and they ought to carefully consider it. If accepted, it would relieve the Government Printing Office of a great deal of work.

THE SPEAKER said there was one remark made by the hon. member for Greenough which he was bound to take exception to,—that the House had the appointment of all its officers.

MR. HENSMAN said he merely meant to say that, as the House had the power of appointing its own Speaker and its own Chairman of Committees, it had the same power as regards the appointment of an official reporter.

THE SPEAKER thought it was quite within the province of the House to decide as to the manner in which it wished the reporting done, and the remuneration to be paid.

MR. MARMION moved the adjournment of the debate.

Agreed to.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 27th July, 1887.

Public Health Act—Excess Bill, 1886 (amended): first reading—H.M.S. Liquor Bill: first reading—Life Policy Protection Bill: report of Select Committee—Message (No. 20): Replying to Addresses—Gratuity to Mrs. Ashton—Gratuity to Mrs. Smith—Receipts and Expenditure from Harbor, Jetty, and Light Dues—Supplementary Estimates, 1887: further consideration in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1886.

MR. SCOTT, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government intended to bring in any measure in lieu of the present Public Health Act?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) replied: The Government do not propose further legislation at present. The hon. member's question no doubt refers to the difficulty which has arisen in administering the existing Act in Perth. It is hoped, however, that this difficulty may shortly be overcome, and that it may be found that the Act can be worked in Perth as well as in Fremantle. The Perth Local Board of Health have resigned, but it is proposed to re-appoint the Board, and to constitute it in a manner which will probably obviate any collision with the Municipality, who have at heart the welfare of the city, and who are no doubt fully alive to the danger of delaying action in sanitary matters.

EXCESS BILL, 1886 (AMENDED).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser), in accordance with notice, moved the first reading of a bill to confirm the expenditure for the year 1886.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

H. M. S. LIQUOR BILL.

THE COMMISSIONER OF TITLES (Mr. J. C. H. James), in accordance with notice, moved the first reading of a bill to prevent the bringing of spirituous or fermented liquors on board Her Majesty's ships.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

LIFE POLICY PROTECTION BILL: REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. RANDELL moved that the report of the select committee appointed to consider the Life Policy Protection Bill be adopted; and that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to cause a bill, dealing generally with life assurance societies, to be introduced at the earliest possible date. It would be noticed by the report, the hon. member said, that the committee having carefully considered the bill, and having also read