same clause the English drafting is too closely followed. We may possibly create a little inconvenience for ourselves if we provide that an enquiry shall not be held in any place ordinarily used as a police court. No doubt, this provision crept into the English Act because in all places in England where enquiries are likely to be held there are any number of halls and rooms available; but in outlying districts in this colony it would very likely be found that the only available place was the local police court. Under the circumstances it would be better not to embody this limitation of the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If there is no other suitable building, then it would be better to hold an enquiry in the police court.

MR. LEAKE: It would be better to leave it to the court itself to say where they would hold the enquiry. Then in sub-clause 3 of clause 11, reference is again made to the Board of Trade, and, as in the other instance, I think the Governor or the Minister might be substituted.

THE PREMIER: These reports are sent to the Board of Trade now.

MR. LEAKE: But that is through the medium of his Excellency the Governor. The Board of Trade does not recognise our jurisdiction.

THE PREMIER: I believe the Collector of Customs sends directly to the Board of Trade, and also to the Governor.

MR. LEAKE: Then in sub-clause 3 of clause 12 it is provided that where an investigation or enquiry has been commenced in the United Kingdom, an enquiry in reference to the same matter shall not be held in a British possession. That provision, I think, ought to come out, because we cannot legislate for other British possessions. The sense of the sub-clause would be sufficient if it stopped at the word "act." No doubt the words of the sub-clause as it now appears are those of the English Act, but they have been left in by mistake. Then, again, there is a clerical error in the marginal note of clause 16, where reference is made to section 743 of the Imperial Act. The number of that section is really 473. These matters, should, perhaps, more properly be mentioned in Committee; but I hope the Attorney General will make a note of them, and in order to save time will make the suggested alterations before the Committee stage is reached. I support the second reading of this measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.32 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 7th July, 1898.

Question: Printing of "Hansard" Reports by private contract—Public Education Bill; in committee, Clauses 1 to 39; Want of a Quorum—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION: PRINTING OF "HANSARD" REPORTS BY PRIVATE CONTRACT.

MR. KINGSMILL, for MR. WOOD, asked the Premier:—(1) Whether it was correct that the composition for *Hansard* was being done outside the Government Printing Office. (2) Whether a contract had been entered into, and under what conditions. (3) The reason for the adoption of this course.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—(1) A trial is being made of an offer from the proprietors of the *Morning Herald* to set the type by their new rapid-working machinery, which, it is contemplated, will admit of the weekly advance issue of the debates with more regularity than was possible during the last session of Parliament, and at a reduced cost. (2) The formal

contract has not been entered into, until the practicability of the arrangement has been ascertained. (3) To expedite the issue of *Hansard*, and to lessen the cost of its production.

PUBLIC EDUCATION BILL.

The House resolved into committee to consider the Bill.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Short title and commencement:

THE MINISTER OF MINES (in charge of the Bill) moved that the word "January" be struck out, and the word "October" inserted in lieu thereof. This would bring the Act into operation on the 1st of October next, instead of the 1st of January.

MR. MORAN: With what object?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The school boards would retire by effluxion of time in December next; and in order to bring the Act into operation, and have the elections under the new statute, it would be necessary to provide that the Bill should come into force on the 1st of October, so as to get the machinery into working order by the end of the year. The Government had promised to bring in an Education Bill; therefore, it was only right that this measure, when passed, should be brought into operation as soon as possible.

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, as a further amendment, that the word "nine" at the end of the clause be struck out, and the word "eight" inserted in lieu thereof. This was a consequential amendment upon the last.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

MR. ILLINGWORTH expressed his great satisfaction with the Bill as a whole, and asked the Minister in charge to give some definition, or throw some light on that portion of the interpretation which said: "Secular instruction in State and other schools established under this Act includes general religious teaching as distinguished from sectarian theology."

MR. LEAKE said the interpretation of the word "justice" would clash with the fact that justices had limited jurisdiction.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The interpretation of "justice" in that form appeared in nearly all the Acts of Parliament.

MR. LEAKE said he had not seen the word "justice" in an interpretation clause before.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There was an Act of Parliament dealing with justices and their jurisdiction; 14 Victoria, No. 5. No doubt the draughtsman knew what he was about when he put the word "justice" in the interpretation clause.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked for some definition of "secular instruction." This had been a burning question in Victoria, when the Education Bill was being discussed there, and was the subject of very important debate and amendment. The difficulty in Victoria was that the term "secular" was used for the purpose of teaching the dogma of secularism. An effort was being made to exclude from the school books any reference to God or Christ, or the Bible as a sacred book.

MR. MORAN: Quite right, too.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The consequence was that the Act was used for the purpose of teaching the dogma of secularism, when it excluded every other dogma. The object of the clause in the Bill before the House no doubt was to prevent such a desecration of the Act as that which took place in Victoria. At the same time, he wanted to suggest that this clause was one of administration and ought not to be in the Bill. To say that a school teacher should have the right to give religious instruction, provided he did not teach theology, placed the teacher in an improper position. What one person considered to be dogmatic theology another one did not. We wanted to see the State school teachers leave religion alone. There was a provision in the Bill for properly qualified teachers of religion to go into schools for three-quarters of an hour on two days in the week, and teach the children of those parents who had separate convictions, the views which the parents held, and which they would like their children to be taught. The State placed the teachers in an invidious position by this interpretation; for, supposing the teacher to be a Jew, what was his dogmatic theology in regard to the New

Testament? Supposing he was an Agnostic, and denied altogether the inspiration of the Scriptures, what position would such teacher be placed in if called upon to give religious instruction of a non-dogmatic character? There lay behind this clause something to which he (Mr. Illingworth) had great objection. If it was intended to introduce into State schools of this colony certain books now in use in New South Wales, which were supposed to have been so carefully revised as to exclude all dogmatic theology, then he objected altogether, because he had had the opportunity of reading those books, and he affirmed that they were about the most dogmatic works it was possible to find. Some of the statements in those books contained the purest dogmatism, and he wanted to know from the Minister whether it was intended to use those books, which were supposed to be free from dogmatic theology, in the State schools of this colony. If a State school teacher taught secular education, his duty to the State and to the children had been accomplished. It was then the turn of the religious teacher to impart to the children that particular form of religious teaching which their parents desired. We should get into hopeless confusion in this colony if we allowed it to go forth that the teachers were expected, or were at liberty, to impart any form of religious teaching. An over-zealous teacher, holding settled convictions, might give religious teaching in such a manner as to throw the whole school into confusion. He wanted to have it clearly understood what was involved by "general religious teaching" before he went any further. He wanted to know what the Education Department really proposed to do with reference to religious teaching that was not dogmatic.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he was not aware that the Education Department had any intention of introducing the book or books used in New South Wales, to which the hon. member had referred. The clause objected to by hon. members had been in operation in this colony for some time, and he had not heard a single word of objection to it. The present Act provided that in all Government schools the teaching should be strictly non-sectarian; and the interpretation clause stated that "secular instruction" would be held to include "general religious teaching."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What did that mean?

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he understood by the term "general religious teaching" that a child might be instructed as to where it came from and where it was likely to go to.

MR. MORAN: That was really dogmatic teaching.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he understood by the term that the ordinary tenets of Christianity would be taught. The present Act stated that "secular instruction in State and other schools established under this Act includes general religious teaching as distinguished from dogmatic or polemical theology." As the phrase "dogmatic or polemical" would not be generally understood, it was thought better to substitute the word "sectarian;" that was to say, that no religious teaching would be given which was considered to belong to any particular sect. This was the law at present. He had not heard that the Act in this particular had been abused in the past; and it was not the intention of the Government to allow it to be abused in the future. The existing Act had been found to work very well. When he was Minister of Education, he never had any intention of introducing such works as the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) had referred to. His desire had been simply to have the children taught the ordinary laws of Christianity.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What were they?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We had a right to acknowledge this to be a Christian country. The ordinary laws of Christianity were carried out by all sects. He did not mean any particular laws of theology, but those general principles which were accepted by all sects. Clause 36 stated that the secular instruction given should be strictly non-sectarian. As the hon. member had asked him the question, he would reply that he was not aware that it was the intention of the Education Department to introduce into the schools any books such as those which had been mentioned.

MR. ILLINGWORTH assured the Minister that this was a most important

subject, fraught with great danger, and likely to cause heart-burning over the country at large. The House had a right to have, and must have, a very clear ununderstanding of what the Bill involved. The teacher must either teach from a book or impart his own religious ideas. If a teacher were called upon to teach religion, surely the country should decide what religion should be taught; and if he was not to be called upon to teach from a book, then the safest thing was not to let him teach at all. If a man possessed the qualifications for a teacher, the Education Department would presumably admit him without asking if he was a Jew or a Gentile, or if he had any faith at all. Certainly, so far as the State was concerned, the department had no right to ask a teacher about his religion, but he had a right to be received as a teacher without undergoing any such examination. It would be most inconsistent to ask a Jew to teach something about the New Testament or about the person of Jesus Christ; and it would be equally difficult for a Roman Catholic to give religious instruction that would satisfy an Independent or a Congregationalist. We should draw strict lines in these matters. The secular teacher should mind his own business, and the religious teacher should mind his. If we followed this course, we would not get into any difficulty. But, if we laid it down that secular teaching should be given, and that the secular teaching should include general religious teaching, we must place in the hands of our teachers some book which defined what that religious teaching should be. Such an attempt had been made in New South Wales, and the book used there was accepted by a large number of religious bodies as being undogmatic; but he considered it, nevertheless, to be the most dogmatic book he had ever seen. There was no doubt that a school teacher, in giving what had been called "general religious instruction," would colour that instruction with his own opinions. In fact, it would be impossible to do anything else, if a man were honest in his religious belief. It would, therefore, be putting the State school teachers in an equivocal position to ask them to give religious instruction. Opportunities were given to clergymen and others to go into a State school at certain times and teach the varying phases of religion in which parents believed; and that provision was about as far as legislation should go. There was in this city a Parsee of much culture, and he was a splendid linguist. Was there any reason, under this Bill, why he should not become a religious teacher here, and give a particular colour to the instruction he might impart to children in the State schools? It was to be hoped that in this colony we were not in this matter about to give rise to the trouble which had happened in other colonies. In order to test the feeling of the House, he moved, as an amendment, that the definition of secular instruction be struck out.

MR. LEAKE supported the amendment, and said the object of the Bill was that instruction should be free, secular, and compulsory; therefore everything should be done to avoid the introduction of the religious element. It was admissible now for clergymen to go in during school hours to teach their particular religion to children in State schools; and if the interpretation of this "secular instruction" was allowed to stand, it would authorise the teaching of religion in some particular form.

THE PREMIER: Would it not be permissible for State school children to read the Bible?

MR. LEAKE: No.

THE PREMIER: It would be permissible, under the Bill.

MR. LEAKE: That could be done outside school hours.

MR. SIMPSON: To which Bible did the Premier refer?

MR. EWING: There were the revised version and other versions of the Scriptures.

MR. LEAKE: If power were given to a teacher to give general religious instruction, it would be easy for that teacher to slide from generalities into particularities. Given a teacher of a particular faith, it was only human to suppose that when he had indulged for some time in generalities, he would unconsciously, from his own particular point of view, slide into particularities. This remark would apply alike to Protestant, Catholic, and other teachers of religion.

THE PREMIER: The present law permitted of religious teaching, and there was the same law in New South Wales.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That was the present law in Western Australia.

MR. LEAKE: The present law had not had a fair trial.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The present law had had a trial for some years.

MR. LEAKE: It would be found that if the object of the Act was to exclude religious instruction from schools, teachers ought not to be authorised to impart general religious instruction.

MR. VOSPER: It was a curious circumstance that members of all creeds, or no creeds, should be found rising to oppose the inclusion in the Bill of the definition under discussion. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) was a gentleman who took the Bible as the standard of his faith. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) adopted another form of faith, and he (Mr. Vosper) had a third form. He was not aware as to the position of the leader of the Opposition in this matter, but no doubt that gentleman's idea of religious faith differed from all that had been mentioned. There was no such thing as a general religious principle. There could be, no doubt, a general moral principle. At the time of the Chicago exhibition there was a Parliament of religions, and if that Parliament of religions had sat from then until now it would not have been able to define a general religious principle. As a matter of fact, that religious Parliament could not have agreed upon so fundamental a matter as the conception of the Deity. In any attempts at a definition of religion one must become dogmatic, and it was impossible to have religious teaching without dogma. A protestant teacher, for instance, although he might be thoroughly conscientious and honest, would be bound in giving religious instructions to say something causing offence to the Roman Catholic parents of Catholic children, and the same remark would apply to Unitarians and members of other denominations. Any definition of religious principle must be according to the person defining it. He himself, if he were to attempt to give some idea of his religious principles, probably would not agree with one in ten of the members in the House.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member must agree with somebody.

MR. VOSPER: Not necessarily, because he (Mr. Vosper) never felt himself bound to agree with anybody. There were people who held the belief that only clergymen were entitled to teach religion; and there was some reason in the contention that if we had to have theology we ought to have it from theologians.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The intention was not to give instruction in theology.

MR. VOSPER: Could the Minister of Mines show any difference between religious principle and theology?

MR. SIMPSON: The Minister no doubt meant general theology.

MR. VOSPER: Of course, but there was a difference. Could a single item of theology be taught without involving some dogma?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes, certainly.

MR. EWING: There would have to be a definition of God.

MR. VOSPER: The mere assertion of the existence of the Deity was not conclusive proof of His existence, but an acknowledgment that the Deity existed. If children were taught that God existed, and teachers were called upon to give some proofs of the fact, then as soon as a teacher proceeded to give proofs he must give a conception of the Deity, which might differ diametrically from that held by the parents of the children. It would be impossible to get two men to give a like definition of their conception of the Deity. That being so, the only course to adopt was to leave all those questions to the religious teachers selected by the various denominations. Teachers appointed by the State had no qualifications for imparting religious instruction. The Minister of Mines had suggested that the children should be taught whence they came and whither they were going. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) had pointed out that there was a very learned and cultured Parsee in the city, and he (Mr. Vosper) himself knew of many Hindoos and Mahommedans of like attainments.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) would not allow a Parsee to hold

a miner's right, but would allow him to become a schoolmaster.

MR. VOSPER said he had not put forward any such contention, but was dealing with the definition of general religious instruction. As a matter of fact there were many English Buddhists who asserted that life was a recurrence, and that a man who was alive before would be alive again. Then there was the evolutionist, who held the opinion that there was a translation from a lower life to a higher; and again there was the Roman Catholic, who believed that a man went into purgatory and afterwards into paradise. Some Protestants believed that when a man died he remained dead until the Judgment Day, while other Protestants believed that when a man died he went direct to heaven. He (Mr. Vosper) believed, with the member for Central Murchison, that it would be an outrage on the feelings of a majority of the people to entirely exclude religion from State schools; but religious instruction must be given either by proper religious teachers or by means of books. The interpretation in the Bill was a snare and a pitfall; and he supported the amendment.

MR. EWING supported the amendment, because he believed it was almost impossible for a person holding certain religious views to teach in a broad sense what the Bill contemplated. A man's mind religiously was absolutely fettered by training and his own religious beliefs. A Roman Catholic could not teach a Protestant child in the way in which the parent of that child would like it taught; nor could a Protestant properly instruct a Roman Catholic child in religion. One hon. member said that the teacher could, at any rate, read the Bible to the children, but there were many kinds of Bibles. There was the Bible that was used in the Protestant churches, and they would find another person who belonged to another sect saying that there was another version called the Douay version which was the correct version. Personally, he believed that the Bible as used by Protestants was the Bible as it should be. But he did say, out of respect for his fellow-citizens who did not believe as he believed, that we should not compel their children to attend a public school where a certain version of the Bible was read. It was one of the fundamental principles underlying education that a person should send a child to school without having that child's views influenced one way or another. He knew a Roman Catholic had refused within his own knowledge to be sworn on the Protestant Bible, because that Roman Catholic said that it was not the Bible, and it was not a correct statement. The very reason that that person refused to be sworn on a court Bible because it was a Protestant Bible would cause a Roman Catholic to object to that Bible being read to his child. If there was a difference of opinion on the basis of all our Christian religions, then necessarily there was a difference of opinion in the dealing with these different Christian religions. Believing it was impossible to teach religion in the public schools or elsewhere without dogma, or inflicting the dogma in the mind of the person teaching into the pupils, as the Bill provided, he would support the amendment. Children should be taught by proper religious teachers. Ample provision had been made for the teaching of religion in State schools. He was sure that any teacher who taught a child advanced his own dogma. Therefore, he would take away from the public school teacher the right to teach religion.

THE PREMIER advised caution in dealing with this matter in the way proposed. In 1895 the Act 57 Victoria, 1895, became law, and in it this provision substantially found a place. Parliament was at that time, he thought, acting with the concurrence of a large section of the community. He remembered Mr. Parker, the then Colonial Secretary, taking great interest in the Education Bill; and a great many deputations from various sections of the community waited upon him with regard to it. The Assembly was able to carry the Bill without any opposition; and that Bill followed the principles of the law of New South Wales, which seemed to have generally commended itself to the people of that great colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where they had a religious school.

THE PREMIER: The Act in New South Wales was giving a great deal of satisfaction. Many years ago it became the law in New South Wales; and, as far as he

knew, it was the law of that country still, and was accepted as satisfactory to all. That being the case, and also the same provision having been in force here since 1895, and having worked satisfactorily here, as he had never heard a single complaint against it, the House should now require some good reason for interfering with this provision. Not being the Minister of Education, he did not come into contact with the Education Department as the Minister in charge did; but he was certain that not a single person in the community had ever spoken to him in regard to this provision, with a view of objecting to it. It had absolutely given satisfaction, as far as silence could be said to give assent.

MR. LEAKE: What necessity was there for the provision in this Bill?

THE PREMIER: No demand had been made by any section of the community for a change.

MR. VOSPER: There had been a demand for secular education, or we should not have the Bill here.

THE PREMIER: This was a consolidation Bill. There was not much new in it, except that it provided for free education.

MR. VOSPER: But secular education was wanted.

THE PREMIER: The community did not want education to be absolutely secular. At the present time the education in the public schools was substantially secular, but he thought that it had been generally decided that the absence of all religious instruction from the State schools was not the wish of the community. The Bill provided that clergymen or other religious teachers could go to the public schools within certain times and teach religion.

MR. VOSPER: That was quite sufficient.

THE PREMIER: This provision had worked well in New South Wales for very many years, and it had worked well in this colony for four years; and for his part he was not going to assist to have it struck out unless good reason was given for so doing, and he had not heard any good reason yet. The hon. member for Central Murchison would strike out anything about religion, because he was a religious man. He (the Premier) did not pose as a teacher of the Gospel, but he wanted religion, as far as it could be, taught in the schools, and as far as the community would allow it to be taught, because he believed that it taught children to become better citizens than if they were allowed to grow up without any knowledge of a future state or Christian dispensation. This was a Christian country, and we were legislating for Christian people; and that being the case we could not take into consideration what persons desired who were not Christians. If this was a Christian country, we must hold, as far as we could, to the principles of a Christian people. He did not believe in dogma, but he believed in the principles of Christian faith being taught in the public schools.

MR. SIMPSON: Would the right hon. gentleman say what they were?

THE PREMIER said the clause was not likely to be abused in the way suggested. Those in authority, or the Minister, would never allow it to be abused to any greater degree than was the case in New South Wales.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What about that book which they had in the public schools of New South Wales?

THE PREMIER: That book, he supposed, had been very carefully arranged; and what had been done in that colony with satisfaction could be done in this colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Was the Education Department going to introduce that book here?

MR. SIMPSON: Would the right hon. gentleman tell the House what were the Christian principles which were to be taught?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member could tell the House what his religious principles were. He (the Premier) was not there to define the different dogmas. He was a broad Christian, and believed in doing the best he could to all classes of people, whether Jew or Gentile. At the same time, he did not wish to strike out a clause which had been found to work well for many years in New South Wales, and which he believed was very much admired. It was generally considered that the New South Wales Act was about the best that could be passed. The people had enjoyed the system here, without dissatisfaction, for four years;

and unless he heard some good reasons for striking out the clause, he would not vote to do so.

MR. MORAN: Two or three years ago, this House, as representing the people of the colony, decided that religion and the State should be kept apart. At that time he was one of those who supported the proposal that assistance should be given to those persons who desired to establish their own schools and teach religion therein. But the Assembly would have nothing of the kind, and it decided to establish schools in which religion should not be taught. The interpretation of secular instruction in the Bill said that secular instruction was religious instruction. There was no definition of secular instruction at all. The Bill simply said that secular instruction should include general religious instruction; in other words, that black was white, and that white was no colour at all.

THE PREMIER: This provision was in the Act of 1895.

MR. MORAN did not care about that; but the policy of the Government was that secular instruction should be given by the State; and Parliament had further provided that a clergyman could use the public school buildings in which to teach religion. If any man thought he could teach general religious principles without dogma, let him try it in a mixed community. He (Mr. Moran) failed to see the slightest reason for keeping this clause in the Bill. He knew the trouble there had been in Queensland over this matter; and there the trouble was the greatest with Jewish children. If the Education Department here intended to give secular instruction, let it be secular: let it be reading, writing, and arithmetic, and not religion at all. The welfare of a child's soul should be left to its proper teacher.

MR. GEORGE supported the amendment, as he desired to see this interpretation struck out. He remembered the struggle which took place in Queensland between the religious bodies and those persons who were bold enough to say they did not wish their children to be taught religion. Hon. members had to consider whether children of parents who believed in no religion, according to the teaching of the religious churches, should be instructed in religion by State school teachers. These persons might be as good Christians as Christ himself; only they did not believe in the religion which was taught in the churches. If a man's conduct in life was governed by a proper sense of his duty to his neighbour, and if that man was honest, he was quite as good as any of the canting Christians who attended any religious institution in the colony. In business, if a professedly religious man came to him, he (Mr. George) immediately required cash down. There had been more robbery and jobbery done under the cloak of religion than ever harm had been done by the simple profession of atheistic principles. So long as we had schools for which the State had to pay, he maintained that we had no right to allow any State-paid teacher to inculcate in those schools what he was pleased to call religious instruction. If we allowed ministers of religion to attend schools during a certain time set apart for the purpose of teaching the children, well and good—he did not object to that. He thought that would probably be a good thing. But in the case of parents who had no religious opinions, in the ordinary accepted use of the term, we had no right to force on their children an interpretation of religion by a school teacher, whoever he might be. He had been brought up in the Church of England, and if he attended any religious institution at all it would be the Church of England. But he would not care to have certain passages of Scripture explained to his children by a Jewish teacher or by a Roman Catholic; and if he were an Agnostic or an Athiest. he would not care to have his children given any religious instruction at all. He did not wish to pose as one antagonistic to religion, but he thought that religion should be kept to its proper place. The clergy had their Sunday schools where the children could be taught, but he objected to our State schools being made semi-religious institutions where the religious scruples of parents would be interfered with. He considered the Bible to be one of the best books we could possibly read. There was plenty of good common-sense instruction to be obtained from it. Any one travelling in an eastern country would find that the instruction and the illustrations given

in the Bible were as true to-day as when the books were written. He should oppose the definition being left in the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Judging by the speeches made by hon. members, they seemed to think that it was intended to do something dreadful by this clause. He had already explained that the word "secular" was interpreted in the Act of 1895 in a similar way to what it was in the present Bill.

MR. GEORGE: That was no argument.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It was a very good argument, because there had been no objection raised to the working of the Act, and there had been no abuse of the term to which hon. members had taken exception. That showed there was no harm in it. Hon. members seemed to think that the Bible was read in the schools, but that was not so. No harm had arisen from the working of the Act in the past, and he did not think there was any likelihood of any harm arising in the future. It was better to define what religious instruction meant than to allow the teachers to define it for themselves. This had been done in the Regulations. In the Regulations, among the general instructions to the school teachers, there was a clause, and if hon. members liked it could be inserted in the Bill, providing that "No sectarian or denominational publication of any kind whatsoever shall be used in the school by the teachers, nor shall any sectarian or denominational doctrine be inculcated by them." That was plain enough. He was sure that even the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) would not wish to have anything plainer than that; and the hon. member might agree to such a clause being inserted.

MR. MORAN: What did the word "secular" mean? Did it mean religious?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The word "secular," he should say, applied to this world as opposed to the spiritual world. He considered it was our duty to teach the ordinary rules of morality in the schools; and that was all that was wanted.

MR. GEORGE: The Bill went further than that.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: People had many different ideas of morality, and their morals were very different too. One man considered it honest to do something, yet another man thought the action was not honest. If we differed on these terms we might well differ as to the meaning of a word like "religion." He did not think there was any necessity to take out this definition, which had been in the Act for years. It had worked well; it had done no harm; and the House would do well to leave the definition as it was. It had nothing to do with any sectarian teaching or theology. The teachers taught the children the ordinary rules of morality. The intention of the department was distinctly laid down in the Regulation to which he had referred; therefore it was not the intention of the department to use such books as the member for Central Murchison had mentioned.

MR. GREGORY: Before making education compulsory, it was advisable to ensure that it should be unsectarian; and the House should not be satisfied with the interpretation of the word "secular" in the Bill. As the Minister of Mines had pointed out, it was practically the same as that of the Act now in force. Possibly no fault had been found with the definition hitherto; but we had seen errors made by other Ministers in making regulations, and it would be possible, under this definition, to make a regulation compelling teachers to teach religion in State schools. There was a general desire that we should have free and unsectarian education in this country. Having heard the regulation read defining what was meant by religious education, hon. members should not be content with that provision. He (Mr. Gregory) wanted to draw special attention to this fact, that the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) might become Premier, and it was quite possible that we might have the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) as Minister of Education, or the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), or perhaps the member for the Murray (Mr. George), each of which gentlemen might place a very different interpretation on the powers given to him by the Act, unless it were carefully guarded. He would support the amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Religious instruction in State schools, as conducted

in New South Wales, meant that a standard book was taught in the schools; that this was not in school hours nor by the school-teacher, but at a time set apart, and by the clergy of the different denominations. The object of that book was to prevent any specific dogmatic theology being taught. State school teachers had enough to do to impart ordinary secular education, without being called upon to impart religious instruction. There were more children in this colony, and in all the Australian colonies, attending Sunday schools than attending State schools; consequently, the exclusion of religious education from State schools did not mean that the system pursued was an irreligious one, as the children could receive special religious instruction at the Sunday schools, if their parents wished to send them. He would also like the public to get hold of this fact, that a teacher might be trained to teach geography, grammar, science, or any other secular branch; but he was not trained to teach religion. The Government had no right to undertake to teach religion by means of untrained or unqualified teachers; and the State school teachers did not possess the necessary qualifications for inculcating religious education. The consequence was that religious teaching must be left to those who had had religious training, and it was for each church to supply for itself individuals who possessed teaching qualifications. The State ought not to undertake to teach through persons who were not qualified, and it was to be hoped the clause would be struck out.

MR. KINGSMILL said he was of opinion that the clause should be excised, as proposed by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth). It was a superfluous clause which contained a distinct contradiction in terms. If "secular education" were defined, he did not see why every other phrase in the Act should not also be defined. The term was plain enough, and did not convey the idea of the interpretation, and no interpretation should be placed on a phrase with the direct view of destroying the meaning. Most children had the advantage of getting their religious instruction in their own homes, which was the proper place. Four hours a day were not too much to be devoted to what ordinary people called "secular instruction," and he would support the amendment.

MR. WOOD supported the clause as it stood. He was opposed altogether to what was called free, secular, and compulsory education. He believed in compulsory education, but had always been opposed to what was termed "secular education," pure and simple. The idea that children could be taught religion in their own homes had been exploded long ago. Working people had no time to give such instruction to their children; and he was inclined to doubt the statement of the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), that there were more children attending the Sunday schools in this colony than were attending the State schools.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was an absolute fact.

MR. WOOD: Anyone going down by the River Swan on Sundays would see the shore lined with children.

MR. VOSPER: What was the hon. member doing there? He ought to have been at church.

MR. WOOD: Religious teaching ought to be imparted in State schools, because there was afforded the only opportunity that the young people had of hearing of God. Many a man of the world could say that all the religious teaching he had ever had was given to him in the public schools.

MR. HIGHAM supported the amendment, because there was danger in the definition as it stood. The idea of the Bill was to perfect a system which had been in contemplation for many years; that education should be compulsory, free, and secular, subject to the condition imposed in clause 37. That clause, taken in conjunction with clause 36, rendered it incumbent on every teacher to give four hours to what was called "secular education." So far as he knew of the scholastic profession, most teachers were 75 per cent. dogmatic, and 25 per cent. religious.

THE PREMIER: The teachers were not to give dogmatic instruction.

MR. HIGHAM: But they were to give religious instruction, which must be impregnated with the dogmas held by the teachers. Clause 37 provided

all that was necessary, and he hoped the definition in the Bill would be excised.

Amendment—to strike out the definition of secular instruction as including general religious teaching—put and passed, and the definition struck out.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—Minister controlling education constituted a corporation sole:

MR. LEAKE: The Minister had given to him certain corporative rights, amongst which was that of acquiring and disposing of property without any limitation. He moved, as an amendment, that after the word "power," in the ninth line, the words "with the approval of the Governor" be inserted.

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

Clauses 5 to 7, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 8—Minister to have control of educational funds:

MR. LEAKE: This clause gave a pretty wide discretion to the Minister, without any limitation involving the approval of the Governor. There was a class of schools called "efficient" schools, and it would be strictly within the letter of the Bill for the Minister, on his own motion, to give a subsidy to what he considered an "efficient" school. That, it might be supposed, was never contemplated by the authors of the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No doubt the idea was that the Minister could use moneys only for the purposes set apart by Parliament in the Bill.

MR. LEAKE: The clause gave the Minister too much power, allowing him to give money away without consulting anybody.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Minister had the funds at his disposal as placed on the Estimates, and distributed these funds as he might consider necessary to certain schools for the purposes of teaching "or otherwise." Surely it was not contended that the Minister ought to go to the Governor every time he wanted to spend ten shillings.

MR. SIMPSON: Did the clause give the Minister power to make grants to industrial schools and reformatories?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No; only for the purposes of the Bill. There were funds set apart for ordinary State schools, and the Minister would be able to use the money only for such purposes.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Could the Minister use the money for a technical school?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The money could be used only for a high school or for purposes specified. If a wealthy person endowed a school, the endowment could be used by the Minister only for the purposes of that school.

MR. GEORGE: There should be some safeguard, because there might not always be an honest Minister.

MR. SIMPSON: What was the meaning of the words "or otherwise"?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Bill was exactly the same as the present law.

MR. LEAKE: That did not make the provision any better.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What was the use of bringing in a new Bill, if no alterations were made?

MR. GEORGE: Leave out the words "or otherwise."

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No; the words "or otherwise" might be necessary. The words "or otherwise" did not do any harm.

Put and passed.

Clause 9—Annual report to be made by Minister:

MR. GEORGE said it appeared to him desirable to insert an amendment, in the eighth line, that after the words "maintenance of such schools" the words "from all sources whatever" be inserted. The words should refer only to funds there might be in hand, and not money that might have been spent.

MR. SIMPSON: The words "all funds" governed the clause.

THE PREMIER: The member for the Murray (Mr. George) would find the clause all right.

Put and passed.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Appointment of officers:

MR. JAMES: Did the Minister not think it was tying his hands too much, when he had to seek the approval of the Governor every time a teacher was appointed at £50 a year?

MR. GEORGE: It was to be hoped the Governor would not appoint anybody at such a miserable "screw."

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It had been the custom to make such appointments through the Executive Council.

MR. JAMES: It was a bad custom.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Officers appointed liked to see their names in the *Gazette* as having been appointed by the Executive Council; as they regarded it as a great honour.

Put and passed.

Clauses 12 and 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Qualifications of members of boards:

MR. JAMES: What was the object of the disqualification attached to a man by reason of his having been convicted in some part of the British dominions?" According to the clause, the disqualification would not attach in a case where a man had been convicted in some other part of the world. Why should the disqualification not attach, no matter where a man had been convicted?

At 6.30 p.m. the CHAIRMAN left the chair.

At 7.30 the CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

MR. JAMES (resuming) moved, as an amendment in line 3, that the words "in some part of the British dominions" be struck out.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: With what view?

MR. JAMES: Why should a man, who had been convicted in a foreign country, have a qualification which he would not possess if he had been convicted in the British dominions?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Constitution Act of this colony laid it down that no person should be qualified to be a member of either House of the Legislature who had been, in any part of Her Majesty's dominions, tainted or convicted of treason or felony.

MR. VOSPER: This Parliament need not perpetuate such a distinction.

MR. JAMES: It had better remain in the Bill, if that was provided in the Constitution Act; but it seemed a rather stupid distinction.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member's views would probably be met by inserting after the word "dominions" the words "or elsewhere."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn, and the clause passed.

Clause 15 — District board to be elected:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, as an amendment, that the word "five" be struck out of the first line, and the words "not more than seven" be inserted in lieu thereof. The present Minister of Education (Hon. G. Randell), who had had considerable experience in large centres of population, thought it might be desirable to have seven members in populous places.

MR. JAMES: Would it not be better to have a minimum?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Not more than seven.

MR. MORAN: "Not more than seven nor less than five" would be an improvement.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Quite so, and he would accept the suggestion.

Amendment, by leave, amended accordingly.

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

Clause 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Qualification of electors:

MR. VOSPER moved, as an amendment to the 2nd sub-clause, third line, that after the word "Government" the words "or efficient" be added, making the sub-clause read:—

> The father or, if he is dead or absent or otherwise incapacitated, the mother of any child attending a Government or efficient school within the district for such time as is prescribed by the regulations made under this Act.

The mere fact that a man paid taxes ought to entitle him to a vote, even though he gave tuition to his child at home, or had the child taught at a private school which had been declared efficient under the Act, or taught at a conventual school elsewhere. In any circumstances of that kind, such a man ought to have a voice in the control of the Government school in his district.

MR. JAMES: Surely we could not allow men who did not send their children to State schools to vote at the elections

for members of the district boards! The justice of this was not apparent. Why should persons who sent their children to schools over which the district boards had no control have a right to interfere with the State schools? If such a person were a householder and a taxpayer, he would be qualified under the first sub-clause, no matter where his children went to school. Surely this was sufficient.

MR. VOSPER: Everyone was a taxpayer.

MR. JAMES: Sub-clause 2 provided a personal qualification, that every person who sent his children to a Government school should be entitled to exercise some control over their management; but what reason was there for giving this personal qualification to those who did not send their children to a Government school? If such qualification should be given to every taxpayer, the whole clause would need remodelling. Parents of children going to non-Governmental schools should not have a right to say how the children in Government schools should be educated.

MR. MORAN: Certainly they should, because they paid taxes.

MR. JAMES: This qualification did not involve the question of taxation.

MR. MORAN: The point of the hon. member's contention was not clear. He (Mr. Moran) agreed with the amendment. It did not follow, because some people chose to have their children educated at their own expense, owing perhaps to some scruple of conscience, that they therefore did not take an interest in the public schools. Everybody had to pay his share of taxation, and had to send his children either to a Government school or to an "efficient" school. The hon. member regarded the question from a narrow and sectarian point of view. There was no question now of giving assistance to the outside schools, that question having been settled by recent legislation; but surely the House would not go further, and altogether disfranchise such people. Surely the popular and liberal member (Mr. James), who introduced the female franchise and had always been a consistent champion of liberalism, would not now prove to be a narrow-minded advocate of a retrograde step of this sort! Although people had no children attending public schools, they were made to pay taxation for the upkeep of the public schools. If a parent educated his children at a private school, he still had to pay his share of the general taxation; and, if a distinction of this kind were now made, it would be unfair, as it would mean the disfranchising of a certain portion of the population.

MR. JAMES: Why not strike out sub-clause 2 altogether?

MR. MORAN moved, as an amendment, that sub-clauses 2 and 3 be struck out. It would not be wise to introduce any invidious distinction.

MR. JAMES: There would be a difficulty in framing rules under sub-clauses 2 and 3; and it would be far better to have a simple qualification, such as that of a householder.

THE MINISTER OF MINES would assent to the striking out of the two sub-clauses, if hon. members so desired; as the department would be saved a great deal of trouble. The Bill might be just as efficient without the two sub-clauses.

Amendment, to strike out sub-clauses 2 and 3, put and passed.

MR. VOSPER moved, as a further amendment, that in sub-clause 1 the word "householder" be struck out.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Committee had already passed that portion of the clause.

MR. VOSPER: The Committee had dealt with a subsequent portion of the clause, but had not disposed of the clause as a whole.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Committee could not go back.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member could move his amendment as a new sub-clause.

MR. VOSPER moved, as a further amendment, that the following be added, to stand as sub-clause 2: "Any person whose name appears on the Parliamentary roll for the district."

MR. JAMES objected to the further amendment, as some taxpayers had no children, and ought not to interfere in school management. This was not entirely a question of taxation. The district board could not spend a penny unless Parliament first granted the money; and it was rubbish for members talking about taxpayers having a right to vote in the election of school boards. Why should people interfere when they had no children to be educated? It was impossible to

have a system of franchise that did not create some inequality. As a rule, the householder was the head of a family; and in 999 cases out of 1,000 those who were not householders were not parents. It should be left to the parents to determine who should be members of the school board.

MR. VOSPER: A large proportion of parents were not householders; and, in the suburbs, as hon. members would find, two or three families occupied one house. If the clause were left as it stood, only one person in the house would have a vote, although there might be other occupiers of the same house.

MR. JAMES: How could two or three families live in a house of the value of £10 a year?

MR. VOSPER: One of the families might own the land, and have a vote by virtue of the ownership; and then a tenant family living with the owner would not have a vote.

MR. JAMES: It was not a question of paying rent, but of occupying a house.

MR. VOSPER: There was some doubt as to whether each occupier should not have a vote. In levying local rates, the rating body recognised only one occupier of each house; therefore, how could three or four persons claim to be the householder of one house?

MR. MORAN: It would be easy to say in the clause "a dwelling."

Further amendment, by leave, withdrawn, and the clause, as previously amended, agreed to

Clause 18—Number of votes:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, as an amendment, in line three, that the words "five candidates for membership of such board" be struck out, with a view to inserting the words "number of candidates not exceeding the number of members then to be elected."

MR. JAMES: The amendment ought to say "not exceeding nor less than."

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The words he moved to insert were in the present Act.

MR. GEORGE: But a new order of things was coming on now.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Why should the hon. member always object to anything that exists now? Surely there was something healthy and sound left yet?

MR. KINGSMILL: If the words proposed were inserted, the system of plumping would still be allowed.

Amendment, to strike out the words, put and passed.

MR. JAMES moved, as amendment on the amendment, that the words "nor less than" be inserted after "exceeding."

MR. MORAN: Was the Assembly prepared to adopt that principle or not? It meant the overwhelming of the minority. Supposing the whole of this Assembly were returned by one electorate throughout the colony, would hon. members be prepared to have the principle of the amendment applied in such a case? It was a most tyrannical principle, for it meant that every voter had compulsorily to vote for every one of the candidates. The minority would have no representation whatever. If the House passed the amendment, it would be establishing the principle that minorities should have no representation; and if this principle were good for a school board, it was good for the election of a municipal council, and for the Legislative Assembly. Were hon. members in favour of disallowing to a minority any representation on a school board, and of allowing some clique to have the whole of the representation, or were they willing to give every party a fair chance?

MR. LEAKE: A majority must rule.

MR. MORAN: But the majority should not tyrannise and absolutely exclude the minority. That was the difference. The member for Albany knew that the only chance for a minority to get a fair share of representation was to stick pretty closely together; and, if they did that, they would always have a chance of getting some representation. He believed that the majority should rule through their representatives, but that the voice of the minority should also be heard.

MR. VOSPER said he was thoroughly in accord with the amendment. If a minority chose to plump for three out of nine persons to be elected, that minority would stand a good chance of getting those three persons returned.

MR. MORAN: What chance had they of doing that now?

MR. VOSPER: Not much, it was true. If the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) had his way, he would allow a clique to rule.

MR. MORAN: How so?

MR. VOSPER: By combination, a minority of voters would be able to establish a majority of representatives. The proposed amendment was a sound one. The Minister of Mines had accused him of wanting to disturb everything that existed. He (Mr. Vosper) had spoken impatiently a few moments ago, because when he asked the Minister the reason for something in the Bill, the Minister replied that it was in the old Act, or in the New South Wales Act, or in the laws of the Medes and Persians, or in some other antiquated deed. That was not a sufficient reason. Hon. members wanted to know how the clause worked, and it was not sufficient to tell them that the clause had been copied from some old Act.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The hon. member himself frequently used a similar argument, and read extracts in support of his views.

MR. VOSPER said he read extracts from authorities of world-wide repute, but not from musty old statutes. It was not a sufficient reason for perpetuating a principle to say that it was contained in some old Act; and he protested against such an excuse being given.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hon. members had not, perhaps, considered all the issues involved in this particular case. He was exceedingly opposed to plumping; but if this amendment were passed, it would not be possible to elect a board other than an Anglican board in any district, because the Anglicans were the largest body, or the most numerous, in the community, and if they voted in accordance with their convictions they could elect every member of a school board. He did not think that was desirable, but that other bodies should also be represented. The smaller bodies could not possibly secure the whole of the members of the board, whereas the larger body of religious people could do so. But surely a smaller body ought to have some representation. In the present case, persons ought to be allowed to vote for as many candidates as they pleased, and that would allow a minority to get some representation on a school board. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) had said if this were allowed, the minority could elect the whole board; but really that would not be possible, because the minority could elect only one or two members of the board, whereas if this amendment were carried the larger body, if they chose, could elect the whole board. The question was whether minorities were to have any rights at all. In other colonies it had been decided to have single electorates, in order that the people might be equally represented; but it did not always follow that the majority were represented under the single-electorate system, because there might be several candidates, and the minority candidate, perhaps, might succeed in getting elected. The board should not be placed in the hands of one section of the community.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was not much in the arguments used, because the object desired to be attained could be achieved whether the words proposed to be inserted by the member for East Perth were inserted or left out. All that it was necessary to do to enable a minority to plump would be to propose a considerable number of candidates, and for the minority to vote for the one or two or three whom they wished to elect, and for those who had no chance of being returned. This had been done in the election of delegates to the Federal Convention by this Assembly. Members had voted for those whom they wished to get returned, and for others whom they did not wish to be elected, and thereby increased the chances of their own friends. It had also occurred, to a very large extent, he believed, in the election of delegates to the Federal Convention in some of the other colonies. They were bound to vote for ten, and there being, perhaps, twenty candidates, the electors voted for three or four who were certain, and threw away their other votes on persons not likely to be elected, so that the same result was obtained. The people were not up to this move until a little while ago: but if ever Western Australia were voted in as one electorate, it might be found that what he had now said would be generally acted upon. Whether the

amendment now proposed were carried or not would make no difference. Plumping would go on just the same, if "the game was worth the candle," although his opinion was that the game was not worth the candle. The difficulty would be to get persons to become candidates for seats on the board. The powers given to the board were few. They had no right to expend money, but only to vigilantly inspect and supervise the schools which came within their jurisdiction.

MR. MORAN: It was recognised by everybody that minorities should have a chance of representation, and he could not see the logic of the remarks of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) as to plumping. On the previous evening that hon. member had quoted the law of England on prison reform; and it would be just as well to now inform the House that plumping was allowed in the election of English school boards. England was the greatest country in the world, with the best Parliament and the best laws, and there the principle was fairly established that minorities should have a representation and a hearing in every public deliberative body. Would it be denied that it was meant to exclude the minority, when the amendment was proposed?

THE PREMIER: That could not be done, anyhow.

MR. MORAN: The Premier, with all his innocence, had shown himself to be a better tactician than the two leading Opposition members who were supporting this amendment. Those members often told the Premier he was a bit slow, and could not see far ahead; but the Premier could see as far through a brick wall as most men. The point put before the House by the Premier did not strike him (Mr. Moran) at once, although he knew that it was an old game, if one's opponent were a strong man, to coax another man to come forward to fight an electorate. That was a matter well-known to all politicians and to would-be politicians, except, of course, that paragon of honesty, the member for the Murray (Mr. George). Although he (Mr. Moran) believed he was in the right, he would not divide the House on the question. The rights of a religious minority should be considered. The State had absolutely done away with any reason why a man should go on a board for religious purposes. Yet social and political reasons entered into affairs of this kind, and there was no doubt the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) was right when he said there was a disposition on the part of people of one mind to cling together under certain circumstances. There would be a certain amount of influence attached to the position of a member of a school board, and the minority should have a voice in the conduct of the schools.

Amendment (Mr. James's) upon the amendment (the Minister's) put and passed.

Amendment, as amended, also put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Appointments to District Boards by Governor:

MR. MORAN: This clause should not be allowed to pass as framed, because it contained an anomaly. Was there any reason why the board should not be elected for the first time?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes, there was a reason.

MR. MORAN: Granting there might be a reason for appointing a board at first, yet sub-section (*d*) contained an anomaly, providing as it did that the Governor might fill any vacancy which occurred. If the electoral registrar deliberately neglected his duty, the Governor could appoint the whole of the board himself.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The clause was all right.

MR. MORAN: The clause was all right if one happened to be a friend of the Governor; otherwise it would be all wrong. Where did the principle of election come in under this clause? He moved that sub-clauses (*b*) and (*d*) be struck out.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The law as laid down in the clauses proposed to be struck out had worked very well for the last 20 years.

MR. MORAN: Oh, there!

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Surely there was no objection to his saying that the law had worked well in the past, and had proved satisfactory?

MR. GEORGE: People were getting educated now.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The provision was simply that, if there was any neglect, the Governor should have power to appoint a board; and the Governor had power to dissolve a board in the same way as he had to appoint one. In the case of any neglect or mistake as to the election of a board, it was simply intended by the clause that the Minister of Education would inquire as to who would be suitable persons in a district to fill the positions.

THE PREMIER: And the appointment would be for only one year.

MR. GEORGE: The Government did not seem to have much faith in the people.

MR. EWING: It was not proposed by the amendment to take away the power of appointment from the Governor, should the people fail to elect a board.

THE PREMIER: It would take some time to get the first board together.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If the people desired to have a board, they would be quite satisfied to allow a vacancy to be filled up *pro tem.* by the Minister. Supposing a board were elected for three years, and within the first twelve months a member resigned, the Governor would under this clause have power to appoint some one to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

MR. EWING: That power was given by clause 27, independently of the clause under discussion.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Without referring to the Act, he knew that what he had stated was the law on the subject. An analagous case would be the manner of filling a vacancy in the Legislative Council; such election being only for the unexpired portion of the term for which the retired member had been elected.

MR. EWING: That was the gist of the whole question. Under this clause it was an appointment by the Governor without election.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: People desired that there should be such boards as were proposed under this Bill, and that they should have a voice in the Government of the country so far as these bodies were concerned. It would be an unpopular move to do away with district boards, which had worked well in the past.

MR. GEORGE: The Minister of Mines reverenced old age.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The sub-clauses might well be left in the Bill as printed; although they would cause more trouble, because when a vacancy occurred the whole electoral machinery and expenditure connected with it would have to be set up for the purposes of each vacancy.

MR. GEORGE: Notwithstanding the explanation made by the Minister, it was not made clear why sub-clause (*a*) was required. If all the present district boards were deemed to have been duly elected till the end of 1899, as provided in the clause——

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That provision was going to be struck out.

MR. GEORGE: That altered the position to some extent; but the boards would presumably be elected until the end of 1898, and if the electoral rolls were made up by that time, as he presumed they would be, why should not the people in each school district have a right to elect the first board for the management of the district school? Sub-clause (*a*) simply meant that where a new board was constituted the people should have a right to elect the school board for looking after the school to which they sent their children, and there should be no necessity to nominate a board before the electoral machinery was ready for the first election.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he was willing to strike out sub-section (*a*).

MR. GEORGE moved, as an amendment, that sub-clause (*a*) be struck out.

MR. EWING: With regard to the effect of sub-sections (*b*) and (*d*), hon. members would see that clause 20 provided that the Governor might appoint to any vacancy when it occurred, and presumably that meant a vacancy occurring either by effluxion of time or otherwise. The consequence would be that if the Minister of Education did not desire the election of a board in a particular district, he would ask the Governor to appoint, so that the having or not having an elected board would be absolutely in the power of the Minister for the time being. The power to appoint was fully preserved to the Governor by clause 27, which gave all the power the Minister was now urging the House to grant. The Governor

could, under that clause, appoint or remove; and, if the Minister so desired, there need never be an election. If the people in a district failed to elect a board, then the Governor had power to appoint under sub-section (*c*); and, further, the 27th clause said if any vacancy occurred through death or otherwise, the Minister might fill the vacancy by merely appointing.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There could not be an election in a district, unless the electoral roll was prepared for that district.

MR. EWING: The Minister would doubtless take care to have the roll prepared; or, if he did not intend to have a roll made up, the elective board system would be an absurdity. It would be unwise to strike out the first sub-section, because, if a long time were occupied in preparing a roll in any district, the first nominated board would have to remain in office until the roll was prepared.

MR. VOSPER: The usual procedure in establishing a school was for the people in the particular district to ask the Government to erect a school there; and, when the school was so erected, the people should have energy enough to look after the supervision of that school. So long as the Governor was given power to make amends for any neglect on the part of the people by appointing to vacancies, this was all that should be required. The registrars, whose duty it was to prepare electoral rolls in the several districts should be compelled under penalty to do their duty, as they were paid for doing it; whereas this sub-section practically protected the negligent registrar, after he had received payment for doing the work and had failed to do it.

MR. LEAKE: The discussion consisted mainly in beating the air. He felt disposed to support the clause as it stood, because experience showed there was a difficulty in getting people to take positions on school boards in many districts, and contested elections would be very rare.

MR. GEORGE: Plenty of elections were contested in some districts. His own district (the Murray) was a live one, though some others might be politically dead.

MR. LEAKE: What man was likely to aspire to powers provided in this Bill, when the only powers of a school board were to inspect and recommend. All this talk was a fuss about nothing.

MR. MORAN: Then what was a board wanted for?

MR. LEAKE: A school board was a board of advice only. Its members could make recommendations and suggestions, but had no administrative power; therefore, whether those members were elected by the people in the district or appointed by the Governor did not really matter. If people could be got to take these positions, so much the better; but this House should not put obstacles in the way of their doing so.

MR. GEORGE: Clause 26 enabled members of a school board to delegate their powers to such persons as they might think fit, and it appeared they could turn over their powers and duties to one person.

MR. SOLOMON said he could confirm what the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) had said, for he remembered that quite recently great dissatisfaction was felt in Fremantle, and on one occasion it had found expression by all the members of the school board refusing to put up again for election, because, having found they had no power beyond that of recommending something to be done, but not having authority to do it, or to incur any expense, they were not willing to act any longer. If a pane of glass in a school window got broken, the school board could not order the damage to be repaired, as they had no power to incur expense even to that extent; and the board in Fremantle became so disgusted that the members would not act any longer.

MR. MORAN: All that the Parliament had to do was to give school boards the power to put in windows, to mend chairs, to cut drains, and so forth—in fact, to establish a small Public Works Department, and in time Western Australia would be worse off than it was at the present time. Every hon. member who knew anything about these school boards said it was difficult to get members to sit upon them; therefore, what was the use of school boards? They were antiquated, and such bodies were not in ex-

istence in any other colony. What was the use of asking the Governor to appoint members on school boards, if the members would not attend? Did any hon. member think that school boards in Perth and Fremantle had any influence in the erection of school buildings in those places? If the boards had that power, why should the Governor be given the power to appoint the members of these boards? In ten years' time there would be no such thing as a school board in Western Australia. If the boards were made elective, there would be an end to them before long; and, as his object was to do away with the boards, he intended to vote to make them elective. What was wanted was a good administrative department. The Government was rather too fond of going home for persons to fill the position of schoolmasters and other positions. Because a man happened to be educated at Oxford or Cambridge, it was thought that he must be an efficient teacher. The place to find men who had been educated at Oxford and Cambridge was on the goldfields, wheeling barrows or acting as cooks. If the Government wanted a good man for the Education Department, they must find the person who had worked his way up in the colonies from the bottom of the ladder to the top.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): It would be a mistake to cut the clause about in the way proposed. Sub-clause (*a*) was inserted, no doubt, with a good object. Ordinarily, it was intended by the Bill to have electoral rolls; and, to provide them, it would be necessary to have electors to be placed on the rolls: consequently, this clause, which had stood the test of time, should be allowed to remain. The clause stated that the Governor "may" appoint; not that he "shall" appoint; because probably there might be a district where the electoral rolls were not prepared in time for holding the first election. Clause 21 provided that all members of existing district boards should be deemed to have been duly elected, and should continue in office until the 31st day of December, 1899. He understood this clause was to be altered so as to read "1898" instead of "1899"; and, if the Bill came into force in October, the members of the existing boards would remain in office until the 31st December of this year. That would only be for three months. In some districts there would not be time to prepare the rolls necessary to provide for the election of school boards. If time were available, there might be certain things neglected which would render it impossible for the electoral roll to be made up; and, if the roll was not made up, the Governor, at the instigation of the Minister, would not leave a district without a board. Therefore the provision was that the Governor "may," on the recommendation of the Minister, appoint the board; but only in the circumstances he had pointed out. He asked hon. members to consider the matter well before striking out sub-clause (*a*); because, if that sub-clause were struck out, some difficulty would ensue, as the other sub-clauses were governed by that sub-clause. In most places the electoral rolls would be prepared, and the members of the board be duly elected. The Governor would not be asked to appoint members, unless in exceptional circumstances.

MR. MORAN: If the roll of a municipality was not prepared, the Governor did not appoint the members of that municipality; and, if a vacancy occurred in the Legislative Assembly, the Governor did not fill that vacancy.

MR. MONGER: The Governor appointed the members of the road boards, in such cases.

MR. MORAN objected to this clause altogether.

Amendment (Mr. George's), that sub-clause (*a*) be struck out, put and passed.

Further amendments (Mr. Moran's), that sub-clauses (*b*) and (*d*) be struck out, put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 21—Existing Boards to continue in office until next election:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, as an amendment, that the word "nine" in the last line be struck out, with a view to the insertion of the word "eight." All members of a school board had to retire by effluxion of time at the end of the year.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 22—Time of election of District Boards:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, as an amendment, that in the third line the word "nine" be struck out, with a view to insertion of "eight."

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 25, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 26—District board may delegate powers:

MR. MORAN moved, as an amendment, that the clause be struck out. This was another of the anomalies of the Bill. The clause provided that any district board might, subject to the approval of the Minister, delegate to one or more persons, as they might please, any of their powers so far as related to the control or management of any school under their supervision. What did this mean? It meant that they might appoint whom they liked to do the work which they had been elected to perform, while they who had been elected might leave the colony.

MR. VOSPER supported the amendment. A person having been elected on the board, another man might do his work; yet if this were allowed, where would be the responsibility? It seemed to be a transparent absurdity. Of course members might be told this provision was in the old Act. He could not see any other reason than that for its existence.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said the members of a school board could not delegate their powers to anyone without the approval of the Minister. The Minister was responsible to Parliament; and in view of the fact that some members, like the representative for the Murray (Mr. George), were very critical, they would not be likely to approve of the board doing what was unreasonable. The clause empowered the board to delegate their powers to others. The reason for giving this power was that some districts were very large, and a district board could not supervise nor visit the outlying portions, except at great expense and inconvenience. Hon. members might not know so much about the working of the educational system in the country as he did. Hon. members on the Opposition side of the House did not know everything. The fact of having sat on a school board for 12 or 13 years might entitle a member to speak with some authority upon the question.

MR. MORAN: It might fossilise him.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Having acted as secretary to a school board for some considerable time, without remuneration, and having assisted for many years in carrying out the work of the department, might entitle him to know something of the matter. Some of the districts over which schools were established were very large, and it might be necessary in outlying portions where a school existed, and where no district board could inspect or look after it, to appoint two or three persons to carry out these duties, and to report to the board. The district might be a hundred miles from one end to the other, and the majority of the inhabitants perhaps lived in one part of it. The members of the boards found it extremely inconvenient to visit the outlying schools; and in such cases this clause empowered them to appoint someone to look after these outlying schools. He was almost afraid to mention the fact that this clause had worked well in the past. If members thought this clause was not necessary, he was not wedded to it; but it was very useful, and it should be allowed to remain.

MR. GEORGE said clause 24 provided that the district boards were "to inspect and supervise within a district all Government schools," while clause 26 provided that any district board might delegate their powers, so far as related "to the control or management of any school under their supervision." These two clauses seemed rather to clash with one another. He asked the Minister whether power was given under either of these clauses to the boards to interfere with the methods adopted in the schools. He understood the advisability of empowering the boards to delegate their authority in districts which were too large for the members to cover. A similar policy was adopted in connection with the roads boards, as some boards could not visit the whole of the district under their charge, and such a district was consequently cut into three or four parts. Perhaps the school board districts could be treated in the same way. It was quite as necessary that the small schools should

be visited and inspected as the larger ones. It was even more necessary, because in the larger schools the parents could look after their children's interests more easily than could be done in the outlying districts.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Having had some experience with regard to school boards, he knew that a great advantage was secured by allowing boards to appoint delegates to act for them in distant parts of their districts. This plan had been found most useful, and he asked the House to allow the clause to remain as it was. It could not prevent the establishment of a board in a district where there was a sufficient number of children, and where the district was of sufficient importance to justify its being placed under the control of a board. He saw no reason why the clause should be struck out. It had been frequently found that the people living in the outlying districts were of great service to school boards, by giving advice where a member of the board could not visit. The clause had been in operation for some time, and had worked well.

A MEMBER asked if the power to appoint representatives had to be delegated by a majority of the board.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes; and whatever was done must have the approval of the Minister.

MR. OLDHAM: Having listened most carefully to the arguments on one side and the other, he felt that the clause would be useful, and should be supported.

MR. MORAN: Where did the responsibility come in?

MR. OLDHAM: In clause 20 the power of appointment to this board was given to the Governor.

MR. MORAN: The member for North Perth was falling into a tremendous blunder, seeing that the whole of that clause had been struck out.

MR. OLDHAM: Only the sub-sections had been struck out.

MR. GEORGE: Sub-clauses (*a*), (*b*), and (*d*) had been struck out.

MR. OLDHAM: But the clause itself had not been struck out, and the provision was left that the Governor might appoint to a board any person qualified to be a candidate for election.

MR. MORAN: When, where, and under what conditions?

MR. GEORGE: Whenever the electors did not elect a board.

MR. OLDHAM: The point was that it would be much better to allow a person who had been elected to appoint a man in his place, than to allow the Governor, which meant the Government, to make the appointment.

MR. MORAN: There was not that power. The hon. member was making a big mistake.

MR. OLDHAM said he was not making a mistake. It had been proved that, so far as remote districts were concerned, this was a useful clause; and it was not fair to ask members of a board to travel 50 or 60 miles for the purpose of inspecting a school.

MR. GEORGE: Members would be elected for particular portions of a district.

MR. OLDHAM: The majority of the people who were on the electoral roll would be residents of a particular township, and the outlying portions of a school district would have no representation on the board. Under these circumstances, it was advisable to allow some person to be appointed for overlooking the management of schools in the outlying portions of the district.

MR. MORAN: The member for North Perth (Mr. Oldham) had apparently broken out in a fresh place, and was now putting forward the astounding principle that a man who had been elected should have the power to nominate another man to perform his duties. The only time the Governor could make an appointment to a board was after the people had absolutely failed to make an election.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The nomination or appointment was subject to the approval of the Minister.

MR. MORAN: The clause as it stood would give the whole of the members of a board power to go away for years, and delegate to one man the power to do their work.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Not at all.

MR. MORAN: The clause was a vicious one in principle, and he could not understand any man who had democratic or popular instincts supporting it. The clause really involved the old nominee principle,

which existed before the establishment of Responsible Government, the only relic of which principle was now the political patronage exercised in the filling up of civil-service billets.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And that was a big power.

MR. MORAN: It was a power objectionable in every way. He would consent to support the clause only if the person appointed to inspect were a member of the board.

MR. OLDHAM: Supposing the member were 50 miles away.

MR. GEORGE: Oh, supposing the member were dead.

MR. MORAN: Supposing the member were five thousand miles away, when a man was elected to do a duty, he ought to do that duty. He (Mr. Moran) would support such a suggestion as that made by the member for the Murray (Mr. George); but in the meantime he moved that the clause be struck out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Any appointment by a board would be subject to the approval of the Minister, and without such approval even the unanimous decision of a board could not be carried into effect.

MR. MORAN: Why should the Minister have that power?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The board would probably be elected by the larger number of people resident in the main populous centre; and, consequently, members of the board would not wish to go a hundred miles away to inspect an outlying school. They might, however, have confidence in, say, Mr. Brown, who lived in the outlying district; and the board could nominate him to inspect the school there situated.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN: They could delegate the whole of their powers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This power must either be granted or not be granted to the boards; and, if it were not granted, the outlying schools could not be inspected. It was better to have some responsible person in the little townships or localities to inspect the outlying schools, and no harm could accrue from a nomination made by a board and approved by the Minister.

MR. MORAN: Put that in the Bill, and make the power general.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If a board delegated the whole of their powers, the members would be absent from a certain number of meetings, and would thereby cease to be members. There was a difficulty to be met, and no better way of meeting it was offered than that presented by the clause.

MR. MORAN: Under the clause, it would be possible for the members of a board to delegate all their powers to one man. Every person who had work to do on such a board should be elected, and not nominated.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: But if there were no people to elect them?

MR. GEORGE: No people, therefore no children; no children, therefore no school.

MR. MORAN: Why not delegate the powers to "King Billy," the aboriginal, or to somebody else. The clause embodied a bad principle, which was antagonistic to Responsible Government. He could understand members who had been in the colony for the last fifty years being imbued with old and crusted principles; but it was difficult to understand a young man like the Minister of Mines supporting such a clause.

Amendment (Mr. Moran's) put and negatived, and the clause agreed to.

Clauses 27 and 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Appointment of persons where no school board exists:

MR. MORAN: The gay and festive Governor appeared to be cropping up again in this clause.

MR. GEORGE: Speak of the Governor respectfully.

MR. MORAN: The power given in this clause was really the power of appointing a nominee school board.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: In outlying districts.

MR. MORAN: What was the idea? When did a place become entitled to a school board? Perhaps the Minister would give an explanation.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Where the people of a district unanimously desired that a district board should be elected, one would be elected there. But if they did not desire a board, or did not ask for one, the Minister would have the power, under this clause, to appoint three per-

sons as a board of advice. This was especially desirable for remote or scattered districts, as he had found while previously administering the Education Department. This applied especially to parts of the goldfields where population was small or shifting, and where it would be undesirable to incur the expense and trouble of electing a board in the first instance. A board of advice, acting in this way, would be useful in detecting and reporting delinquencies on the part of teachers, when any such occurred.

MR. MORAN: The inevitable result of passing this clause would be that, as persons were said to be generally unwilling to act on school boards, the Governor could appoint a board; and, where people in a district were so careless as not even to ask for a board, the Minister would appoint what was called a "board of advice," and in this way nearly all the boards in the colony might be appointed by the Governor or the Minister. If the principle of elected boards was to operate at all, this provision for appointment by the Minister should be struck out.

MR. GEORGE: Was it intended to add a clause to the Bill for enabling a district to be subdivided, so that more than one board, within a district of the present size, might be appointed?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Power to subdivide a district was given under this Bill. It was also in operation under the existing Act, and the power had been exercised.

Put and passed.

Clause 30—agreed to.

Clause 31: Minister may establish certain schools:

MR. GEORGE: The member for East Perth (Mr. James) had asked him to direct the Minister's attention to subsection 2 of this clause, because in some sparse districts it would be difficult to get ten persons to sign a request for the establishment of a Government evening school; and as it was desirable to have such schools established even for a smaller number than ten persons, who might be young men having had little or no opportunity of education in earlier years, power should be given in the clause to enable an evening school to be established for less than ten persons in a district.

MR. EWING sympathised with the suggestion, and said that by striking out the word "ten" the number could be left to the discretion of the Minister, so that he might establish an evening school in any district where the number appeared to him sufficient.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Evening schools would not be organised in this way in any district where a Government school did not exist, because the intention was that where there might be young men desirous of obtaining instruction from the teacher in the Government school, a night-school could be established in the district, and be held in the school premises, under the management of the Education Department, the teacher of the State school receiving certain remuneration for conducting the night-school. This was the system at present. It would not be worth while to establish such a school unless at least ten persons in a district would attend it. The clause provided that an application might be sent on behalf of at least ten persons; and, that number being guaranteed, the department would establish an evening-school in the district. Still there was nothing to prevent the teacher of the Government school devoting his spare time to teaching in a night-school, whether the number of persons were three or four, or more, and, of course, the teacher would receive the school fees himself. The provision in the Bill went further than that, and was intended to provide evening-schools in districts where at least ten persons in each such district would attend the school. If hon. members desired it, the minimum number of persons might be left to be fixed by regulation, instead of being stated in the Bill. He did not think the Minister of Education (Hon. G. Randell) would be likely to establish an evening-school even after receiving an application on behalf of ten or more persons, until local inquiry had actually been made.

MR. EWING moved, as an amendment, that the words "at least ten" in the first line, be struck out. The number could be provided for by regulation.

THE PREMIER: It might be said that regulations should not be made in such a case.

MR. GEORGE: Some Ministers made too many regulations.

MR. JAMES: There might be districts in which a desire was expressed for the establishment of a night-school, although it might not be practicable to get ten persons in favour of the movement. Therefore, it was desirable that the Minister should have power, in his discretion, to establish evening-schools where he thought they would be useful. He moved, as an amendment, that all the words after "schools" in the first line, namely, "and such evening-school may be held on the premises of the State school," be struck out.

Amendment (Mr. James's) put and passed.

MR. VOSPER: If the Government endeavoured to establish an Agricultural College under this Bill, complications would at once arise. He did not want to see any blunder in the initiation of such a college. An Agricultural School belonged to the Department of Agriculture, and a Mining School belonged to the Department of Mines. Any reference to an Agricultural College had no right to be in the Bill. In the Department of Agriculture a staff of experts existed already; and if it were decided to have Agricultural Schools, let such schools have an easy development. In time we were going to have a School of Mines established, and the Government would then have to bring in a Bill to deal with the matter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Minister should accept this amendment.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If hon. members did not wish to have an Agricultural School, of course they could strike out the words.

Amendment (Mr. Vosper's) put and passed, and the word "agricultural" struck out of sub-clause 6.

MR. CONNOR moved, as a further amendment, to add the following New sub-clause to stand as sub-clause 7: "Or declare as technical, truant, or school for other purposes, schools already in existence." It was not necessary that this should be done, but the Minister should have the power to do this if he thought fit.

MR. JAMES said: There might be schools existing at the present time which fulfilled other conditions, but these schools might become technical schools or truant schools, as the case might be, and the object of the amendment was to declare these schools to be such, without having to establish separate schools for those purposes. It was a good power; the only doubt about it being as to whether it was absolutely necessary. He suggested that the Minister should agree with the principle of the amendment; and, by accepting it now, the Minister could look into the Bill and see whether the words were necessary, or whether the idea was not covered by provisions already in the Bill.

Amendment (Mr. Connor's) put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 32—Fees for Instruction:

MR. LEAKE said he did not know whether the Minister had made up his mind to allow the age of six to remain as the minimum. He did not propose to move an amendment.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Pretty nearly every country had the age of six as a minimum. Parents desired to get their children into school as soon as they could walk; and children were generally much better in the school than at home. Little children were not worried under the present system. School was made as pleasant as possible to them. He would like hon. members to see the Kindergarten system at work, and to see the happy faces of the children of tender years in school. It was quite a playground for them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The clause provided that no fee should be paid in these schools by children between the ages of six and fourteen. If children below six were admitted, would a charge be made?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: This was not the intention of the Bill. The clause gave the Minister power to deal with such cases as he thought fit. If the school were made a nursery of, a charge might possibly be made.

Put and passed.

Clauses 33, 34, and 35—agreed to.

Clause 36: Secular Instruction:

MR. MORAN moved that the clause be struck out, as it was not required after the alteration that had already been made in the Bill. The first part of the clause,

which provided that the teaching should be secular, was covered by a previous clause; and the second part, providing that the teaching should be non-sectarian, was no longer necessary.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The clause was required, in the event of high schools, being established under the Bill.

MR. MORAN: The word "non-sectarian" should not remain, as the Committee had already decided that religious instruction should not be given. The clause was not at all necessary.

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved, with a view of making the clause agree with the action previously taken by the Assembly, that the clause should read as follows:—"In all State and other schools established under this Act, secular instruction only shall be given, except as hereinafter mentioned."

MR. MORAN withdrew his amendment and accepted that of the member for Central Murchison.

Amendment (Mr. Illingworth's) put and passed.

MR. VOSPER said his attention had been called to sub-clause 6 of this clause, which provided that technical, agricultural, truant, or other schools might be established as the Minister decided. He regretted that provision was not made in this clause for a School of Mines.

MR. MORAN said he was very glad.

MR. VOSPER said he was sorry in this way, that the necessity for a School of Mines had not been recognised in the drafting of the Bill; but he was glad that power had not been given to establish a School of Mines, because the Department of Education could not carry on such a school successfully. He might say the same in regard to Agricultural Schools. An Agricultural College was the natural development of the Department of Agriculture. If there was to be an Agricultural School established, it should not be under the Minister of Education, but under the Minister of Lands, and should be administered as far as possible under the Department of Agriculture, or the Government would be placed in this position, that they would have a school with the finances controlled by one Minister, and all the educational work carried on under another Minister. It would be well to strike out the word "agricultural" from the sub-clause, and he moved, as an amendment, that the word "agricultural" be struck out of sub-clause 6. He earnestly hoped that before long hon. members would see a Bill introduced for the establishment of Schools of Agriculture and Schools of Mines. In this country model farms, and Schools of Mines and metallurgy were required. He moved, as an amendment, that in sub-clause 6 the word "agricultural" be struck out.

MR. JAMES: Without suggesting it was not wise to adopt the course suggested by the hon. member—on the contrary, he agreed with him that if Agricultural Schools were established, they should be in charge of the Minister of Lands, and that Mining Schools should be in charge of the Minister of Mines, yet if the machinery was provided now for the establishment of such schools, that machinery would be available at any time, and at any moment such schools could be started and their practicability be proved. If the Assembly thought at any time that these establishments were sufficiently advanced to be taken over by the department, special legislation could be passed to enable that to be done. Supposing it was found necessary to establish an Agricultural School at once, special legislation would have to be introduced for that purpose, whereas if the clause before us were passed, a motion could be introduced calling upon the Minister to establish a School of Agriculture, and in a year or two, if it was thought necessary, special legislation could then be brought in to place such school under its proper department. He was not in favour of such schools remaining under the Department of Education, but we should provide the means by which these schools could be established without waiting for special legislation. The object of the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie would be met by adding the word "mining" rather than by striking out the word "agriculture."

MR. VOSPER: Having given some attention to that view of the matter, it did not appear under this Bill that there was any form of machinery for working these schools. Schools of Mines and Schools of Agriculture were outside the

scope of the Bill entirely. To establish a good School of Mines or a good School of Agriculture would cost some £20,000 or £30,000; therefore it could not be dealt with by regulation under this Bill. If this Bill were taken as a machine for controlling Agricultural or Mining Schools, how could those schools be managed? It would be impossible to control the professors of an Agricultural College by a district board. The appointments in the case of a Mining School would have to be made in connection with the Mines Department, and the proper person to make these appointments would be the Minister of Mines; and so in regard to an Agricultural College.

THE PREMIER: That was not the case in South Australia.

MR. MORAN: The Minister of Lands practically controlled these schools there.

MR. VOSPER desired to save the Government further trouble in the future. The Bill was very well for primary schools, but special legislation would be required for the establishment of a large School of Mines or a College of Agriculture. If it were decided to establish a School of Mines or an Agricultural School, a controlling board would have to be appointed.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Make a start in this Bill.

MR. JAMES asked to be informed as to what was the object of the alteration just made? Surely the question in dispute was one of drafting; and, if that were so, the clause should have been passed as it stood, because the Committee could not deal with a question of drafting. What was the principle involved?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Religious instruction in State schools.

MR. JAMES said he did not see how that principle was involved. The clause was badly drawn, and, no doubt, the hon. member's amendment would improve the drafting.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The object was to amend the clause so as to provide that in all State and other schools established under the Bill, secular instruction should be given "except as hereinafter mentioned:" the next clause (37) dealt with religious instruction.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 37—Hours of Instruction—Religious Teaching may be given:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved, as an amendment, that the words "board of the district," in line 5 of sub-clause (2), be struck out, and that the words "district boards" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. LEAKE: The sub-clause provided that the time during which religious instruction should be given must be fixed by mutual agreement between the Ministers of religion and certain other persons.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he had an amendment to propose.

MR. LEAKE: The last words of the sub-clause, "subject to the approval of the Minister," should be struck out, and the words "if they cannot agree, such time shall be fixed by the Minister" should be inserted.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he had prepared an amendment, providing that the Minister should also act as arbitrator in case of disagreement "and his decision shall be final."

MR. LEAKE: That would not be proper phraseology.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Not being a framer of Acts of Parliament, he would be glad of the assistance of the hon. member.

MR. LEAKE suggested that the Minister of Mines might adopt the words already suggested.

MR. JAMES: But if the parties did agree, the arrangement was still subject to the approval of the Minister.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That was so, and the intention of the clause was a good one. He then moved that the words, "but if they cannot agree, such time shall be fixed by the Minister," be added at the end of sub-clause (2).

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

Clause 38—Agreed to.

Clause 39—Objection to religious instruction:

MR. MORAN: There was something wrong about this clause, which threw the onus on the parent of showing that religious instruction was not required.

A parent should first signify his wish to have religious instruction imparted to his children. Under the clause as it stood, any person might "round in" children on the back-blocks and give them religious instruction.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The parents could refuse to allow that to be done.

MR. MORAN: But, under the clause, parents had to write to say they objected.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The parents could object at first.

MR. MORAN: The consent of the parent should be got first. His (Mr. Moran's) attention had been drawn to this clause by a member of a very large religious body, who objected to the provision. That was the Reverend Father Bourke, who was not one to introduce trifling objections, and in the opinion of that gentleman the onus should not be thrown on the parent, but should be on the person who wanted permission to impart religious instruction.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Every school teacher had to keep a register of all children in the school, and to indicate after each name the religious denomination to which the child belonged. Under this system, it would be seen that only the children of a particular denomination would be allowed to attend the particular class for religious instruction.

MR. MORAN: The clause was clumsily drawn.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Only children of a certain denomination would get religious instruction appertaining to that denomination.

THE PREMIER: There would be no chance of their getting into the wrong flock, would there?

MR. LYALL HALL: There would be no harm in altering the clause as suggested by the hon. member. A child attending school for the first time should be given a printed form to take home to its parents to be filled in, stating whether those parents agreed to religious instruction being given or not. That would be no trouble to the school teacher, and such a plan would give satisfaction to a very large body of people.

MR. JAMES said he was at a loss to understand the position taken by the member for Perth (Mr. Hall), who said there was no harm in making the suggested alteration in the clause. The Bill provided that religious education must be given in certain hours of the day, and that provision must be taken as a declaration by Parliament and the people that religious education at a certain period of the day was desirable. It ought surely be assumed that parents of children were anxious to have their children taught, or did not object to their being taught, the tenets of the faith to which those children belonged. Although children attended Government schools, their parents might be as good church-people as were those parents whose children attended denominational schools. The idea seemed to be that if a minority of the people wanted to oppose the general wish of the majority, they should write to say so. The question was, on whom should this onus lie?

MR. MORAN: The onus of religious instruction?

MR. JAMES: Yes.

MR. MORAN: On the parent.

MR. JAMES: *Prima facie*, Parliament ought to realise and recognise the principle that children should be educated in the faith of their fathers.

MR. MORAN: That was not so, and the hon. member for East Perth was swallowing his own words.

MR. JAMES: No church recognised the fact he had stated more keenly than that to which the hon. member (Mr. Moran) belonged.

MR. MORAN: The member for East Perth had no right to presume anything of the kind.

MR. JAMES: The majority of parents ought, *prima facie*, to desire that their children should have religious instruction; and the onus of not requiring such instruction should be thrown on the parent. The giving of religious instruction being in itself a good principle, the House should stand by it.

MR. MORAN: The member for East Perth (Mr. James) had been a champion of the principle that there should be no connection between the State and the giving of religious instruction. Yet now the hon. member wanted this Assembly to recognise the fact that the Legislature should affirm the doctrine that children must receive religious instruction in

State schools. He (Mr. Moran) contended, on the contrary, that the State should not concern itself with religious instruction; and that, before such instruction be given in State schools, the parent in each case should first signify his desire that religious instruction should be given to his child. No loop-hole should be allowed to any teacher of religious instruction, no matter what denomination he might be connected with, for giving instruction to children without the express request of the parent in each case being first signified. Parliament had affirmed that religion and God should be shut out from the State schools; therefore, he (Mr. Moran) objected to this clause in the Bill.

MR. LEAKE: The argument of the hon. member who had just spoken was to the effect that either the parent must apply to have religious instruction given to his child, or must object to its being given; and surely it was as easy to object as to apply.

MR. MORAN: No, no. The parent might be away. Suppose the parent did not know?

MR. LEAKE: Oh; but the parent did know.

MR. GEORGE said he could not see the force of the argument of the hon. member (Mr. Moran), who must see something in the objection or he would not urge it so strongly. The practical effect of giving religious instruction would be that on the first day a minister or teacher of religion gave a lesson at a State school, the child would in each case mention it the first thing after he got home; and, if the parent desired to object to that religious instruction being continued, surely the parent could easily do so, and there would be no serious harm in one day's instruction having been given. Was it the intention of the Minister in charge of the Bill to strike out the words "included in secular instruction or otherwise?" These words ought to be struck out, in accordance with previous amendments.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They could be struck out.

MR. GEORGE moved accordingly that the words "included in secular instruction or otherwise" be struck out.

THE MINISTER OF MINES agreed to the amendment.

Amendment (Mr. George's) put and passed.

MR. QUINLAN, in moving a further amendment, said he agreed with the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) that the onus should be placed on the teacher to obtain consent. He moved, as an amendment, that all the words after "subjects" be struck out, with a view to inserting the following words:—"And no religious instruction, whether denominational or general, shall be given to any child in such school without the consent in writing of the parent or guardian of such child." This amendment would be in conformity with sub-clause 5 of clause 7, already passed; and he asked for favourable consideration of the amendment.

MR. MORAN said he had a simpler way of effecting the same object. He moved, as an amendment, that the word "if" after the word "otherwise" be struck out, with a view to inserting "unless;" so that this part of the clause would read: "unless the parent of such child signifies his consent to such religious instruction to the head teacher of such school."

MR. OLDHAM: Were members to understand that the object of the amendment was to prevent any religious instruction being given?

MR. MORAN: Only with the consent of the parent.

MR. OLDHAM: The result of the hon. member's amendment would be to prevent any religious instruction being given. He (Mr. Oldham) would vote for the clause as it stood. If the consent of every parent was to be asked before such instruction could be given, the effect would be that no religious instruction would be given in any school. He believed in a free and secular system of education, and had always said so. If a parent did not want his child to be instructed in any religion whatever—and there were those who did not believe in the existence of a deity—such a parent as that was not likely to be the slowest person to tell the teacher. If a child was not being brought up in the tenets of the father, that father would be the first person to complain. There was no attempt whatever to disguise what was the object of the member for East Coolgardie. That hon. member's desire was to prevent any

religious instruction whatever from being given.

THE MINISTER OF MINES said he did not wish the clause to be altered further. He could not give way on this matter, as there was a principle at stake. The people of the country did not want to drive religion out of the State schools. The desire of the people was that the religious instructors should be allowed to go into a public school, and that the children belonging to the different denominations should be gathered into separate classes at certain times to be taught the particular tenets of their denomination, and this should be done unless the parent objected by sending a note. A register was kept in the schools stating the religious denomination of each child, and the religious instructor was not allowed to take a child from another denomination. If a religious teacher belonging to one denomination attempted to take a child belonging to another denomination and to teach it the religion of that denomination, he would be guilty of an offence. Hon. members would not, he hoped, further interfere with the clause. It was the desire of the committee, he thought, to get hold of the children of parents who were careless and who did not trouble about religious matters. An attempt should be made to get hold of the waifs and strays, and give them a little religious instruction in the schools. But the State would not allow any religious teacher to interfere with the children of another denomination.

MR. MORAN: A great many of the wage-earners working on the goldfields left their children in lodging-houses or in some place in town, and these children had no protection whatever.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The word "parent" included "guardian," or the person who had actually the custody of a child. If the child was in a lodging-house, the person who had charge of that child would give the notice to the teacher. If a parent left a child in the custody of another person it must be presumed that the parent had told the guardian how the child was to be brought up.

MR. MORAN: These children would be proselytised from the very jump.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There was no necessity for such remarks.

MR. MORAN: If the parents were not watchful, these children would be proselytised.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No teacher in the public schools had any idea of proselytising children. No attempt was made to do any such thing. He (the Minister) hoped the clause would be allowed to remain as it stood.

MR. HALL: After the explanation by the Minister, the clause might well stand as it was. At first he had been of the opinion that masters of country schools, through excess of zeal in behalf of their particular religious creed, might possibly have a child taught some other form of religion than that which the parents desired; but this could not easily happen when, as the Minister had explained, the teacher had to keep a record of the religion of the children's parents, and to see that the children were properly classified for the religious lessons given by each religious instructor.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: School teachers were not allowed to give special religious teaching. That could be given only by clergymen and others from outside the school.

MR. MORAN said he was curious to know the cause of this sudden accession of religious zeal on the part of some hon. members. About two years ago there had been a lengthy debate in the Assembly covering this very point; and, if he was not mistaken, there had been very strong expressions of opinion, particularly from the Opposition side of the House, as to the advisability of separating Church and State. If the pages of *Hansard* were searched, members would find speeches of that character from the member for East Perth (Mr. James), and it would also be seen that the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) had insisted on Church and State being separated. The Committee had now almost unanimously affirmed this principle; therefore it was absurd now to allow this clause to remain in the Bill. It would enable anybody who professed to be a minister of religion to give religious instruction. There were all sorts of ministers—those who were trained as such and others who were only presumed to be ministers, but who might at any time go

into a public school and teach religion to children whose parents might be away.

WANT OF QUORUM.

MR. LEAKE called attention to the state of the House.

THE SPEAKER, finding there was not a quorum present, after the usual interval, declared the House adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House was thus adjourned, by a count-out, at 10.58 p.m., until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 12th July, 1898.

Papers presented—Election: Central Province—Question: Niagara and Bardoc Dams—Return: Government Vessels at Fremantle—Motions (2): Leave of Absence—Summary Jurisdiction Appeal Bill, second reading—Juries Detention Bill: Postponement of order—Pollution of Rivers Bill; second reading; in Committee (progress reported, clause 2)—Prevention of Crimes Bill; second reading; in Committee—Lodgers' Goods Protection Bill; second reading; in Committee (progress reported, Clause 1)—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Petitions of Right, Return; Electric Light at Fremantle and Midland Junction; Estates purchased by Government, Report; Rabbit Question, Report; Public Abattoirs, Proceedings taken for establishing; Collie and New South Wales Coals, Report on Comparative Values; Rottnest Prison, Report, 1897; Gaols and Prisoners, Report, 1897; Fremantle Prison, Expenditure of Labour and Value of same; Mining Commission, Report; Pearl Shell Fisheries, Regulations under "Immigration Restriction Act, 1897"; Land Titles Department, Report, 1897; By-laws of Perth City Council, Perth Park Board, Metropolitan Water Works Board, and of various municipalities.

Ordered to lie on the table.

ELECTION: CENTRAL PROVINCE.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE took his seat as member for the Central Province, *vice* Mr. Wittenoom, resigned.

QUESTION: NIAGARA AND BARDOC DAMS.

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Colonial Secretary:—1, What was the amount of the tender accepted for the construction of the dam at Niagara? 2, What was the actual cost when completed? 3, What was the amount of the tender accepted for the dam at Menzies? 4, What was the actual cost? 5, Is it capable of holding water? 6, Is the dam at Bardoc capable of holding water?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) replied:—1, £24,314, 17s. 2, Not yet known. Calculations from detailed measurements are being made by contractor, and also by the departmental engineer. Contractor's claim not yet submitted. 3, £14,199 16s. 6d. 4, £19,511 3s. 3d. 5, Certain cracks in the concrete allow water to escape slowly, but cost of necessary repairs, now in hand, will be comparatively small. 6, Yes.

RETURN: GOVERNMENT VESSELS AT FREMANTLE.

Ordered, on the motion of the HON. H. BRIGGS, that a return be laid on the table showing: 1, The names, tonnage, and crews of each of the vessels owned or chartered by the Government now lying at the port of Fremantle. 2, What was the original cost of each. 3, What has been since expended on each for repairs. 4, What is the cost of upkeep of each. 5, What work has been done by each during the past six months?

MOTIONS: LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by the Hon. F. M. STONE, leave of absence for a fortnight was granted to the Hon. D. McKay; also