

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I shall adopt the hon. member's suggestion, and move that the Clause be postponed.

Question, that the clause be postponed, put and passed.

Clause postponed.

Clause 11 "Inspection by representatives of miners":

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I think it advisable to postpone this Clause also, because we may find that we can make one Clause out of Clauses 10 and 11.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I hope hon. members will give notice of their amendments. This Bill has been carefully prepared on lines similar to the Acts in force elsewhere. Notwithstanding this, we find that hon. members come here and think they can write out an amendment at five minutes' notice. This Bill has been before the House for two or three weeks, and no one has taken the trouble to give notice of any amendment. Now hon. members propose amendments, and a fair opportunity of considering them is not given.

THE HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I do not think we should rush this Bill. These are very important clauses, and I have been trying to obtain information before giving notice of amendments. The Hon. Mr. Stone is only asking to have the Clause postponed.

Clause postponed.

Clause 12 "Managers to be appointed":

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I propose that the words "Assistant Manager" be inserted after the word "Manager." I do this because there are many managers of these mines who are in England, and I think it is necessary that there should be a manager at the works. There might be some confusion as to which manager was meant, if we did not insert some such words as these.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): That is provided for by the Interpretation Clause, which says that "manager" shall include "deputy-manager."

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I do not think that would meet the case, because the Deputy-manager is the person referred to in Clause 14.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I move that progress be reported, so that hon. members may have an opportunity of tabling their amendments. We can then know exactly what we have to deal with.

Question, that progress be reported, put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Wednesday, 11th September, 1895, at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

Question put and passed.

The House, at 5.20 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 11th September, 1895, at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 29th August, 1895.

*A Correction—Establishment of an Experimental Farm—Appointment of Resident Magistrate and Medical Officer at Esperance Bay—Ecclesiastical Grant Abolition Bill: first reading—Married Women's Property Bill: consideration of Committee's Report—Crown Suits Bill: in committee—Sale of Goods Bill: second reading—Estimates, 1895-6: further considered in committee—Adjournment.*

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

PRAYERS.

#### A CORRECTION.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I should like to correct an error in a statement I made last night in dealing with the "Miscellaneous" vote on the Estimates, under the head of "Incidentals." Quoting from a return which had been laid on the table showing the various items in detail, I stated that the cost of the trip to Donnybrook had been £406, whereas, as a matter of fact, it only cost £40 6s. The return had been so carelessly copied and the figures so jumbled together that I mistook one amount for the other. I now wish to correct the statement I made last night, so that it may not go abroad

that so large a sum as £406 was expended on this trip.

# ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to make provision on the Estimates for the establishment of an Experimental Farm.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government viewed with favor the establishment of an Experimental Farm, and would be glad to establish it so soon as the requisite arrangements were made and the necessary authority obtained.

# STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATE AND MEDICAL OFFICER FOR ESPERANCE BAY.

MR HASSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to appoint a Stipendiary Magistrate and Medical Officer at Esperance Bay.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government would do so, as soon as it was found necessary. At present there was no great demand for these officers, but, if the place continued to progress, as seemed certain, the appointments would be made.

# ECCLESIASTICAL GRANT ABOLITION BILL.

Introduced by Sir John FORREST, and read a first time.

# MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

## COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration of the committee's report, and the verbal amendment made by the Committee in Clause 2 (on the motion of Mr. James) being read.—

MR. LEAKE said he had intimated his intention of moving to strike out this amendment when the Bill was re-committed; but he now found he would be within his privilege in doing so now. He therefore moved that the amendment be not agreed to.

The House divided, on the motion, with the following results :

Ayes...	...	...	...	20
Noes...	...	...	...	2
				—
Majority for	...	...	...	18

## AYES.

Mr. Burt  
Mr. Cookworthy  
Sir John Forrest  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Hassell  
Mr. Hooley  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Picotte  
Mr. Randall  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. R. F. Sholl  
Mr. Simpson  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Throssell  
Mr. Venn  
Mr. Wood  
Mr. Leake (Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. George  
Mr. James (Teller.)

Motion thus affirmed, and the Committee's report, as amended by the House, adopted.

# CROWN SUITS BILL.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Short title and commencement :

MR. MARMION said, as this was a very important Bill, and members had scarcely had an opportunity of considering it, he hoped the Government would not press it forward too hastily.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the Government had no wish to hurry the Bill, but he thought they might go through Part I, and, if it was so desired, they might then report progress.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 6 :

Put and passed.

Clause 7—Reference to repealed Acts :

MR. LEAKE directed the attention of the Attorney-General to subsection (2) of the Clause, which provided that "all rules and orders of court in force in the Supreme Court at the time when this Act comes into operation with reference to matters within the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed." Did not that go rather too far? Would it not operate to repeal the existing and Supreme Court rules, so far as petitions of right were concerned. No doubt the intention was merely to repeal the rules of court made under the Petitions of Right Act; but, once an action was commenced, the procedure went on under the present Supreme Court rules.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the intention was as the hon. member had stated, and he would consider the point referred to.

—Clause put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

### SALE OF GOODS BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

MR. JAMES: I beg to move the second reading of the Bill, which codifies the law relating to the sale of goods. It would be impossible for me to go through the whole of the Bill without wearying hon. members, who, perhaps, after all, would not be much wiser, as it is a Bill full of legal technicalities. Nor do I suppose would members be much edified if, in explanation of the Bill, I were to read to them a few hundred cases from "Benjamin on Sales." Shortly I may say that the Bill is a copy of the English Bill, which has also been adopted in the various colonies, and which has been received with great approval. The only section that will require much consideration—and I wish to draw the attention of the Attorney-General to it—is section 22, dealing with the question of sale in market overt. I think it is somewhat questionable whether there is such a thing as market overt in this colony, and before we introduce that expression for the first time into our public Statutes, it would be well to consider whether such a thing as market overt exists in the colony. Should the Attorney-General be of opinion that it does not, then this clause will have to be modified when we go into committee on the Bill. I now beg to move its second reading.

MR. SOLOMON: I most heartily support the second reading of this Bill, which I think will be a most useful measure. So far as I understand, the original Act was compiled by one of the greatest draftsmen in England; and I believe the Bill is one that will operate beneficially for the mercantile community in this colony.

Motion put and passed

Bill read a second time.

#### ESTIMATES, 1895-6.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Estimates.

Lands and Surveys, £30,820.

MR. WOOD said he would be glad if the Government could see their way to resuscitate the title of Surveyor-General. He noticed that provision had been made on the Estimates, for years past, for a Deputy-Surveyor-General, but he thought it would be more dignified for the colony, and also for the department itself, that there should be a Surveyor-General

connected with it; and he hoped the Government would see their way at an early date to revive that old office. He thought everything else was satisfactory, so far as the department of Lands and Surveys was concerned.

MR. THROSSSELL said he should like to make a few general remarks upon the vote before the Committee. While he had nothing but commendation to offer for the manner in which the work of the department was generally carried on, he wished to express his regret at the small amount of increase proposed in the vote for this department for the coming year. He found there was only an increase of about £3,000 over the vote for last year. Regard being had to the importance of the department and the progress of the colony, he thought the increase was all too small. Although there was a large amount of survey work going on, and a considerable amount of settlement, he wanted to say—and he thought this was the right time to say it—that we were not doing enough in this direction. There was another point he wished to call attention—not for the first time by any means—and it was this: he did not think we were making adequate arrangements for directing the attention of new comers to our lands, and for providing them with reliable information about our lands. If private individuals were dealing with this estate of ours, we should find them, especially as this juncture, when population is flocking into the colony, making every effort to attract the attention of new comers to the liberal conditions upon which these lands are offered to those wished to settle on them. Every possible publicity should be given to the land regulations of the colony, and the easy terms upon which land may be taken up. Information on the subject should be available, not only at our shipping ports, but also at all our agricultural centres, showing the land open for selection, and proclaiming the fact that free blocks of land were offered to anyone who chose to apply for them. Instead of that, no arrangements whatever appeared to be made for providing this information, and for advertising our lands. The greatest possible curiosity existed amongst strangers coming here as to the lands of the colony, and the greatest eagerness prevailed for obtaining some information on the subject. Generally speaking, enquirers had to look to strangers for this information, instead of having it thrust upon them by

the Government of the colony, wherever they went, whether in the city, or in towns, or upon our agricultural areas. The fact ought to be posted up in every railway carriage in the colony that we had free blocks of land to give away on certain conditions, and that our other lands could be purchased on the easiest of terms. It seemed to him that the time had arrived when we should take some practical steps in this direction. Another point he wished to draw attention to was this: last year the House voted a certain sum for ring barking and draining certain lands; but they did not hear one word about any steps having been taken in that direction; and, so far as he knew, not a shilling had been spent of this money. When the money was asked for, they were told what magnificent areas of land the colony possessed down south, if they were only drained; but, so far as he was aware, these magnificent areas were still undrained, although the House, as he had already said, had, at the request of the Government, voted the money for that very purpose. Money was also provided for ringbarking portions of the country, by way of experiment, and to show the results of ring barking. Those who knew anything about the wonderful effects produced by ringbarking need not be told of the marvellous change brought about by the expenditure 1s. 6d. or 2s. an acre spent in that direction. He recognised the earnestness of our Commissioner of Crown Lands, and he felt sure that, having called his attention to these matters, they would receive the Minister's attention. Then, again, there was the Agricultural Bank, of which people knew little or nothing, simply because no steps were taken to bring before our country farmers a knowledge of the benefits which this institution was destined to supply. One reason why our farmers had not more largely availed themselves of this Agricultural Bank was because your simple bucolic had little or no knowledge of it, and had not the ability or the inclination to write to head quarters for information on the subject. What was wanted was to have someone who would go amongst these people, and show them the benefits of this institution. If that were done he ventured to say we should have far better results. Then, again, there was the question of establishing experimental farms. Two years ago he brought that matter forward in the House, and it was fully discussed, and his motion in favor of the desirability

of establishing an experimental farm was confirmed by the House. It was easy to show the importance and value of such institutions, and their beneficial influence in the way of practically demonstrating the results of improved methods of culture. At present we had about 200,000 acres of land under cultivation in this colony; now, if by increasing our knowledge as to the best methods of cultivation, we could make that land produce 10s. an acre more than it did at present, we would in that way alone add £100,000 to the revenue of the country.

MR. HOOLEY said he could not quite follow the argument of the last speaker, nor accept his idea that the Government should spend large sums of money in clearing, ringbarking, draining, and improving the land. He thought if they adopted some steps for conserving water, where required, they would be doing more legitimate work. They were already offering free grants of land as an inducement to people to settle upon the soil, and he was certainly opposed to any scheme going beyond that. Why should they spend money in draining, or ringbarking, or otherwise improving this land, on the mere chance of inducing men to settle upon it? If a free grant of the land was not sufficient to attract people to settle on the soil, better let the land remain idle, as it had done for the last half century. He would far prefer to see the Government spending money in the re-purchase of some of the large estates which were given away in the early days of the colony, and sub-dividing these grants into small lots, and offering them for sale to intending settlers, on terms which would yield the Government a small profit, or, at any rate, upon terms that would not put the Government to any loss. This would be much more likely to settle people on the land, and to give us a large farming population. Anything we could do in this direction would, he thought, be to the advantage of the country. We were now importing nearly all we consumed, and it was our policy, as it was our desire, to give every inducement to encourage the settlement of the land. But he maintained that the principle laid down by the hon. member for Northam—that the Government should spend money in draining and ringbarking—was not a good one. What would be the use of ringbarking land unless you were assured that that land would be immediately taken up and settled upon? You would have to go over the same land the next year again to keep down the young saplings,

and keep at it until the end of time, unless the country was taken up and settled.

Mr. COOKWORTHY said, with regard to the question of ringbarking, for which money had already been voted by the House, no doubt the Government would do the work satisfactorily. But to his mind the question of draining was of greater importance. In the southern portions of the colony, especially in parts between Pinjarrah and Bunbury, there were large areas which, in order to bring them under settlement, required a system of draining that could only be done by the Government themselves. You could not expect small settlers, just taking up the land, to carry out that system of draining. It must be done on an extensive scale. He was told, on very good authority, that in the agricultural areas on the Harvey a much larger quantity of these areas would be taken up, if the country were thoroughly drained. At the present moment a large portion of the Collie and the Harvey Plains was under water, and the land, in consequence, was rendered useless, owing to the want of draining. A great deal of this land was very good land, but, unless it was systematically drained, it would never become available for settlement. He was not referring to surface drainage, which a man could do himself, but to an extensive system of drainage, which could only be carried out by the Government, and for doing which the money had already been voted by Parliament. The sooner this scheme was carried out the better would it be for those districts of the colony he had referred to.

Mr. GEORGE said, with reference to the question of drainage, if the Government were going to undertake so important an undertaking on the part of the country, he hoped they would proceed to work cautiously, and intelligently, and not do anything without due and careful consideration. That something was necessary to be done in the direction indicated was evident, because it was no use setting out agricultural areas without doing something to enable people to settle upon the land. Whether the Works Department was competent to undertake this work was doubtful, to his mind. There was an instance within his own knowledge where the action of a certain department in draining some land at Drake's Brook resulted in one person being, he would hardly say robbed, but certainly sustaining considerable

injury, for they diverted the water from him to other settlers. That was only one instance of how the Government went to work. Therefore he hoped that, before undertaking any extensive scheme of drainage, the Government would proceed cautiously and carefully, so that they might really deal fairly and equitably towards all persons.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said he should like to reply to a few of the very valuable remarks of the hon. member for Northam. He might shortly state that most of the matters which the hon. member had referred to, and which he desired to see carried out, had already engaged his (the Commissioner's) attention, and he hoped that before very long several of them would be carried into operation. With reference to the question of advertising our lands, of course that might be done to a certain extent; but his own idea of carrying it out in a practical way, was to have some thoroughly good man, with a thorough knowledge of the colony and of the land regulations, and of the conditions of settlement, and let him travel about the country, advising people as to where the best or most suitable land for their particular requirements was to be had, and instructing them as to how they could take it up, and giving them generally some practical advice. He might say that he had a very good man for this work in his eye, and he hoped that perhaps shortly they would be able to put this idea into practical shape. With reference to ringbarking, he might say that, notwithstanding some adverse opinion expressed on the subject by one or two hon. members, he had great faith in the scheme which the House sanctioned last year, and in the value of ringbarking; and he might say that he had now a very competent man employed in selecting portions of land suitable for this purpose, in the southern districts. He had selected two blocks containing altogether from 8,000 to 10,000 acres, and, when the work was done, they would have practical demonstration, in two or three year's time, of what could be done by the expenditure of £200 or £300 in this direction, and how much it would improve the value of the land. Of course the settler taking up this improved land would have to pay a little premium for the improvement done by the Government in ringbarking it. He was convinced that, with this kind of country, in two or three years after it was ringbarked, the cost of clearing would be

reduced from £10, to £4 or £5, and that where the cost would have been £15 an acre it would be reduced to £5 or £6. That had been his experience of this sort of country. He was not one who was in favor of Government embarking upon chimerical or experimental schemes, when the results were doubtful or problematical; but, in this instance, he was convinced of the beneficial results that would follow from the action of the Government in this direction. With reference to the question of draining, he might also state that this was another question that had not escaped attention. He spent two or three days himself in looking over one or two areas that were considered suitable for this purpose; but he did not himself consider that the expenditure would be justified in that particular locality. In the first place, he did not find that the quality of the land was such as he had expected; and, in the next place, a large portion of the area was in the hands of private holders; and he did not see the force of the Government improving the value of these people's property, especially when some of them were not of the progressive type of settler, and had done very little in the way of improving their lands themselves. He still hoped, however, to be able to do something in this direction. They had another locality in view, on the Collie Plains, where they were advised by the manager of the Agricultural Bank, a few drains would prove of great benefit to many worthy and struggling settlers; and he had that day instructed a very good man to go and inspect and survey the locality, and to provide an estimate of the cost of draining this land. If his report should be a favorable one, he (the Commissioner) would only be too happy to carry it out. With reference to Experimental Farms, he only hoped the Government would be able to see their way soon to make a start in this direction, by establishing at least one of these farms. The first thing to be done was to secure the right sort of land, in a suitable locality. He maintained they would be simply courting failure if they started an experiment of this kind in the wrong place, or with the wrong sort of land, or in an unsuitable position; whereas, on the other hand, if they secured the right place for such an experiment, and the right class of land, in an accessible locality, he believed they might count upon ultimate success. It would be no good having these farms established in some inaccessible, out-of-the-way place, if they were to be of any

educational value, because people would not be able to see for themselves what was being done, and consequently would derive little or no advantage from such an establishment. He wanted to have these experimental farms established in localities where all the operations carried on would be open to the public, for their guidance and instruction, and where even the newspaper man might be able to obtain some profitable information. There was one other point he wished to refer to. Notwithstanding all that has been said about the deplorable fact that we were importing such a large quantity of agricultural products into the colony, the fact remained that the extension of agriculture, and the increasing area of land brought under cultivation in this colony, was very encouraging. Notwithstanding the large influx of population that had recently taken place, the acreage now under cultivation, per head of the population, was greater than it was a few years ago, when we had not much more than one-half the present population. We had  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres per head of the population now, as against 2 acres per head of the population in 1886. Bearing in mind that when we had a population of only 20,000 we were importing largely from the other colonies, was it to be wondered at that when our population had increased, as it had done lately, by leaps and bounds, until it now reached 90,000—was it to be wondered at, in the face of this sudden jump, that we should not be in a position all at once to supply the wants of this largely increased population? The surprise to him was that we had not had to import a great deal more than we had, under the circumstances. As he had already said, the increase in cultivation now going on was very encouraging. If we continued to have a good season this year, he did not believe there would be any necessity to import chaff into the colony this next season; and he felt confident that, a year or two afterwards, our trouble would not be as to the extent of our importations, but as what to do with our own supply. That was the difficulty which he feared—that we should produce more than we required for our own consumption. He was very much obliged to the hon. member for Northam for drawing attention to these matters, and he hoped the hon. member would have no cause of complaint in the future,—at any rate of any want of effort on the part of the Government to carry out the measures he had referred to.

MR. COOKWORTHY said with regard to what had fallen from the Commissioner of Crown Lands about Experimental Farms, he would remind the House that the various agricultural societies throughout the country had been asked to select and recommend any lands in their districts suitable for such farms. This had been done by the Agricultural Bureau. It had also been stated that the Government were thinking of bringing up certain private lands for this purpose, which he thought was to be deprecated. One would think that if they wanted to establish an experimental farm that would serve any practically useful purpose, they would select a site for it on some of the Agricultural Areas which they had declared open for selection, so as to show people what the land in these areas is really capable of producing. If the Government had to purchase freehold land for this purpose, would it not be an acknowledgment to all new comers that the Government had no land of their own fit for such a purpose as an experimental farm?

MR. RANDELL said it was very satisfactory to find that the vote for this department, notwithstanding the progress of settlement, had not increased more than about £2,500 over and above the actual expenditure of the department during the past year, and this increase was principally in one item, which he wished to refer to. As he had always advocated a considerable outlay upon surveys—and he had done so because he believed they paid—he was very glad to see that the Ministry had been able to allocate £10,000 for surveys during the coming year. He was not in a position to say whether that sum was sufficient. No doubt the Department could find a way of spending more, in this direction; and personally he believed it was a most useful way of spending the public money, for, without surveys, very little could be done in the way of settling and developing the country. It was very satisfactory to hear the Minister of Lands speaking so hopefully about the development that had recently taken place, and the increased area brought under cultivation. They knew very well the hon. gentleman was not speaking of what he knew nothing about. He only hoped that, in the near future, we should be able to overtake the requirements of the colony in this direction, and that there would be no necessity to have recourse to importations of agricultural produce from other countries. It was only a

truism to say that the sooner that time arrived the better would it be for the best interests of the colony. As to having a surplus for exportation, he thought we might disabuse our minds of that idea. He believed that day was a long way off, so long as we continued to receive such large additions to our population as we had of late. With regard to the question of Experimental Farms, he was very much inclined to follow what had fallen from the hon. member for Sussex (Mr. Cookworthy.) He believed there had been a very general expression of opinion in that House, whenever this question had cropped up, that the Government should not select the very best land for experimental farms, but that they should select areas that were fairly representative of the general character of the country. Possibly no more suitable sites for these farms could be found than within some of the agricultural areas that had been set apart by the Government. If these farms were to be of any educative value at all, they should be established upon areas where the land was of the same quality as the average lands of the district. With regard to what had been said about purchasing land for this purpose, there were two sides to that question. If the Government found it necessary to purchase private land for the purposes of these experimental farms, they would be proclaiming to the world that we have not a sufficient quantity of good land available for further settlement still in the hands of the Crown. They had heard on very good authority that we had any amount of good land yet unoccupied and unalienated, therefore if the Government—except under very exceptional circumstances—were to purchase lands now in the hands of private individuals for the purpose of establishing Experimental Farms upon such lands, it appeared to him they would be publicly proclaiming to the world that we had not so much good land unalienated as we sometimes represented we had. He quite believed in the establishment of an Experimental Farm; but let it be truly experimental. If the Government purchased the very best freehold land they could obtain for this purpose, they would be defeating the very object in view in establishing these farms.

MR. MARMION said he agreed with previous speakers, that an experimental farm, if established, should be upon land of the same general character as that now open for purchase or selection by new comers into the

colony. If such a farm were started upon a piece of land which had been alienated from the Crown, and which was of a class such as no intending settler could purchase from the Government, of what practical use would such an experiment be to intending settlers? He quite admitted, and had always said so when he held the position of Minister of Lands, and he was of the same opinion still, that there was not in this colony at the present time any large extent of land of a first-class character that was open for selection to new comers. He defied anyone to say to the contrary, or that there existed in the colony any large areas of land, of a high class character, which could be purchased by intending settlers. That being the case, he submitted that the efforts of the Government should be in the direction of showing what can be done with second-class land—land of an inferior character—the average class of land now available for selection by the new comer. Let the Government, by means of their Experimental Farms, demonstrate what this class of land is capable of.

Mr. PIESSE pointed out the necessity of having these experimental farms in positions easily accessible by railway, so that they could be visited by those who were interested in such experiments. He thought this was absolutely necessary, if these institutions were to be of any educative value. That being the case, possibly it might be necessary for the Government to purchase land for this purpose, as there was probably no land available for such a purpose in the hands of the Government, in the Eastern districts at any rate, within easy reach of Perth by rail. He could not agree with the statement of the hon. member for Fremantle that there was no unalienated land in the colony suitable for agriculture. [Mr. MARMION: No large areas, I said.] The hon. member, when in office, must have been under a different impression, for he most jealously guarded the lands of the colony, in every possible way, as if they were of extraordinary value. He was rather surprised at the hon. member's change of front, when he stated there was no good land in the colony that had not been alienated. He should like to tell the hon. member to the contrary, and that there were still large quantities of good land available for settlement. They might not be at present easily accessible; but, taking into consideration the railways that were being built, he ventured to say that there were large areas

that would become available for settlement. No doubt the attractions offered by our goldfields militated against the extension of land settlement; but, when the present period of unrest subsided, he believed we should have a very large amount of fresh settlement taking place, and he thought it would be of a permanent character. With regard to advertising our lands, he thought the expressed intention of the Commissioner of Lands to appoint an experienced man to travel round the country, giving every information to intending settlers, would be as good a means of advertising our lands as could be adopted. He also thought that, irrespective of this gentleman, the Government should have at the various centres of population in the country districts, real, live, active agents, who would take some interest in the settlement of people on the land. They need not be officers entirely employed in the Lands Department, requiring large salaries, so long as they were suitable and energetic men, they might be men occupying some other post in the service, who would be satisfied with a little additional salary. As to the necessity for further surveys, he thought there was a large quantity of land not yet taken up that had already been surveyed. In fact, much of the land that had been surveyed was not suitable for settlement; and it was to be hoped that, in the future, when any surveys were undertaken, they would be upon lands that were really suitable for occupation.

Mr. LEAKE, referring to Item 5 (Correspondence clerk, £185), said he understood this officer had been going through the severe ordeal of qualifying himself as a shorthand writer, and that he had been a long time in the service. Under the circumstances he thought the proposed increase in his salary (£15) was a very small increase.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) thought it was a fair increase. They could not do these things by leaps and bounds. Probably if the Government had proposed a larger increase, hon. members would have opposed it. It must be remembered that you could not increase the salary of one officer, without also affecting those who were above and below him. He had endeavored, in framing these Estimates, to recognise the merits and the fair and just claim of every officer in the department.

Mr. SOLOMON thought that all the in-



creases proposed in this department were fair and moderate, and he thought the head of the department was to be commended for the course he had adopted, and that other heads of departments should follow his example.

Mr. WOOD said if the heads of all other departments would follow the example of the head of this particular department, he would say "Well done!" But it seemed to him that the example was not followed, and that there were serious irregularities in the increases of salaries proposed in some of these departments. He thought the sooner the better some definite system were adopted, regulating these increases. In some departments they saw tremendous increases; in others none at all. It must be very disheartening to an officer who had been in the service for many years, like the officer referred to by the hon. member for Albany, to find a man who joined the service long after him transferred to another department, where his salary was raised at one jump by £70.

Mr. HOOLEY referring to the item "Collector of Land Revenue, £385," complained that this officer only received an increase of £10. In order to provoke discussion, he would propose that the amount be reduced by £10. There was no more deserving officer in the public service than this same officer, and to give him a paltry increase of £10 on a salary of £375 was nothing more than an insult. [AN HON. MEMBER: He will pocket the insult.] This officer had £40,000 or £50,000 of public money passing through his hands yearly, and he was always to be found at his desk when you wanted him.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL thought there was a great deal in the remarks of the hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) and of the hon. member for the Murchison (Mr. Hooley), with regard to the unfairness with which some of the old officers in the service had been treated in regard to their increases. It was high time some definite system should be adopted regulating these increases, instead of their being brought about by favoritism and personal influence.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said with regard to the increase of £15 to the correspondence clerk (referred to by the hon. member for Albany), he might say that to have given this officer a larger salary than was now proposed would have been to put him on a level with

the chief clerk; and no doubt the chief clerk would then have had something to say, and would have considered himself badly treated unless he also got a rise. He could only say it would be a very happy day for Ministers if these matters were regulated by some sort of system or fixed regulations, so that Ministers might escape being badgered to death by this officer and that officer for an increase of salary.

Mr. GEORGE asked for some explanation as to Item 46 (Inspector of Mineral Mines, £100.) He did not know whether he was correctly informed, but he was told that this officer had been the manager of a gold mine for some time past. He was also informed that the office was a mere sinecure.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) thought this £100 was looked upon more in the nature of a retaining fee than a salary. The duties of this officer was to report upon any lands applied for (in the Northampton district chiefly), and advise the Government as to whether such lands contained minerals or not; and it was very necessary to have a competent and reliable man to make this inspection, before the land applied for was sold. Whether the office was drifting into a sinecure or not he did not exactly know; but the item was one that had appeared on the Estimates for a great many years.

Mr. RANDELL understood this gentleman was now up at Cue, managing some mines, and this vote looked very much like a pension or superannuation allowance, or as if the office of Inspector of Mines was a sinecure. If there was really no necessity for his services, he should think it would be better to remove the item from the Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought it might as well be left there, as it would be available for someone else, if the services of the present holder of the office should not be available. If he left the district and went away to Cue, permanently, of course someone else would have to be employed.

Mr. RANDELL said if it was understood that this officer would not be allowed to draw the salary, unless he performed the duties of the office, he would say no more about it. He understood that this item had been challenged on a previous occasion. It was not desirable to lease mineral lands for agricultural purposes, if that could be avoided. There had not been much demand for the services of this adviser, and, attention having

now been drawn to the item, he hoped the Government would reconsider it.

MR. HOOLEY said the item was unnecessary and ought to be expunged. This expense was for only one district (Northampton), and this expert having been previously engaged in mining himself in that district, the inference was that there was not a single block of mineral land there worth taking up for copper or lead mining, because if there was such this expert would have taken it up himself years ago.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said copper or lead mining in that district did not pay to work at present.

MR. MARMION said that, no matter how rich the show of copper or lead on the surface might be in this colony, the industry did not pay at the present prices obtainable. This officer had held the same position many years, and when a block of agricultural land in the Northampton district was applied for, the application was sent to this officer, who reported on it. If minerals were reported to be on the land, the application was refused; but if reported otherwise, the application was dealt with on its merits. He (Mr. Marmion) had previously considered this matter, when he was Commissioner of Lands and had doubted whether this old arrangement should continue, or whether it would be cheaper to pay a high fee to some expert for inspection upon each application received. The Government felt confidence in this officer, and so the system had been continued.

MR. GEORGE said the explanation did not satisfy him; therefore he moved that the item be struck out. If this expert was at Cue managing mines for English companies, as he (Mr. George) was informed, then the expert could not be on the spot for reporting on lands in the Northampton district, and ought not to receive this salary.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said if this officer did not do the work he would not get the salary.

MR. GEORGE said such work as that referred to could rightly be done by other officers, who were in the Government service.

THE PREMIER said those officers were on the goldfields.

MR. SIMPSON said that in the old days, when Northampton was a large and active mining settlement, people were applying for agricultural land, and it was necessary, at that

time, for the Government to have an expert to advise them, so that mineral land should not be taken up on the conditions which were intended only for agricultural land. Under the changed circumstances of that district, this system of dealing with the land was not working well. There was no bright outlook for copper or lead-mining, at present; therefore could not the surface be used for agricultural purposes, in the meantime, as any minerals that were there would not run away? Such a method had been adopted in other countries, where mining of this kind had ceased to be payable. Some few complaints had been made to him by people who wanted to take up land in particular parts of the Northampton district, for agricultural purposes, but whose applications were refused by the Department, because the blocks were said to contain lead. The Commissioner of Crown Lands might make some wiser arrangement for dealing with these so-called mineral lands, and, after what had been said, the matter might well be left to the Commissioner.

Motion, to strike out Item 46, put and negatived.

MR. RANDELL, referring to Item 84 (Surveys, £10,000), asked how the money was to be expended.

MR. PIESSE, referring to Item 76 (inspector of conditional purchase and homesteads lands, £300), asked whether one inspector would be sufficient for the whole colony. A great deal of improvement work was being done on lands taken up, and, to ensure a due performance of the conditions, the inspection should necessarily be thorough. This one inspector would have to travel over a vast extent of agricultural country between Northampton in the north and Albany in the south; and as there had been so much imposition practised on the Lands Department, by persons giving false certificates as to the required improvements on their neighbors' selections having been duly complied with, there should now be no risk of that deception being repeated, and, to prevent such practices in the future, the inspection should be thorough. He was sure the present inspector, who had already done much good work, was performing the duty in an admirable way. The effect of the new and stricter system was felt beneficially already, by encouraging those who were honest, and preventing others who might be inclined to evade the Regulations from

doing so, by keeping them up to the conditions. The only doubt was whether one inspector would be sufficient for doing properly all that ought to be done in the way of thorough inspection.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said it was too early after the new system was inaugurated to arrive at a conclusion on the point stated, because, as the inspector had started so recently, the department did not expect him to catch up, at once, with all the work that needed to be done for the proper inspection or improvements on the lands taken up. If, however, the work in future outgrew the inspector's time and energies, the advisability of appointing another inspector would be considered. In the North the Government had a surveyor who acted as inspector of improvements in that part of the colony and had made very reliable reports. The reports as to improvements made, when received now, were scrutinised very closely, and were not accepted so readily as were such reports in the old days. Replying to the question asked by the hon. member for Perth, as to how the money to be voted for surveys was to be expended, he said there was nothing special to state in explanation, beyond the necessity for keeping up with the surveys where selection had taken place before surveys were made; also where fresh areas had to be surveyed, town sites would have to be laid out.

Mr. CONNOR, referring to Item 85 (rent of Photo-lithographic Office, Pier-street, £150; last year £90), said this was a substantial increase which should be explained.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said the reason for the increased rental was that the Government had arranged for a long lease of these premises, because, as the printing of maps and plans required by the Lands and Mines Offices was increasing very greatly in amount, delay was caused by the want of further facilities for doing the work, especially the large amount required for the goldfields, and some additions to the lithographic printing office were necessary. Before making these additions and extensions the Government had arranged to take a lease of the premises in Pier-street for 21 years, and hence the increase in the rental required by the owners.

Mr. CONNOR said it would pay the Government better to buy a piece of land for erecting new offices, rather than take a

building lease. This rent at £150 a year, estimated on the basis at which money could be borrowed in England, say 3½ per cent., would cover the cost of a suitable piece of land, as well as the buildings to be put on it. Without wishing to be obstructive, he moved that the item be struck out. He moved this merely to keep himself in order.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said he was inclined to agree with the hon. member's objection. He asked whether the Government were committed to this bargain.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS said the Government had agreed to take the lease for 21 years.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said the Government could buy land cheap enough and erect their own buildings on it. If the Government were not bound to take the lease, he would support the motion for striking out the item.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said these offices for the lithographing of maps and plans were required to be near the Lands Office, as the communication was so frequent. Land for building new offices could be obtained elsewhere, but the present premises, which had been rented for the purpose many years past, could be utilised for adding some additional printing facilities at half the cost that would be necessary on a new site, farther away. To place these offices further away would be most inconvenient. The arrangement made was not satisfactory in all respects, but the Government had now obtained a long lease of these premises.

Mr. WOOD asked if there were conditions in the lease requiring that buildings of a particular description must be erected. The increased rental seemed to be outrageous, as a ground rent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said the block was valuable, on account of its central position. He believed there were not any conditions in the lease as to the erection of particular buildings.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH said the object of having these lithographic offices near to the Lands Office was likely to be defeated, because the time was not far distant when the whole of the present block, known as the Public Offices, would be required for the increasing business of the Postal, Telegraphic, and Telephonic department alone. The growth of this country would soon demand this extension of

Public Offices in Perth, and the Government should consider whether they should not fix upon some land of their own for new Public Offices, with a view of erecting all the offices together, as some such re-arrangement would be absolutely necessary before long. It would be a mistake to lease this land and erect buildings on it, as the land was church property, and could not be acquired. The Government should take a grip of the future of this country, and arrange their plans for a future group of Public Offices, in view of the evident growth of the capital city. There had been instructive experience elsewhere, and the effect of the rapid growth of a colony had been that the Public Buildings had to be re-arranged, and placed together near to the Parliament Houses. He was sure that, before long, the present site of the Legislative Assembly Chamber would not long continue to be the site of a Parliament House; also that the present group of Public Offices would be required for keeping pace with the increasing business of the Post Office and its allied departments. The Government departments would be absolutely crowded out, directly, with the expanding business of the country, and it was time the Government began to think, firstly, as to where the Parliament Houses of the future should be located, and, having fixed upon that site, they should accordingly get possessed of sufficient land near it, and locate the whole of their Public Offices together. The present site of the Public Offices and of the Assembly Chamber was not going to be the centre of the future capital city, by a long way, and it was useless to go on trying to group the Public Buildings round the Town Hall of Perth.

MR. SOLOMON supported the suggestion as to building on Crown land instead of leasing land to build on. It had been a mistake in the past for the Government, under the old system, to alienate all the choice blocks of land in the towns of the colony. Possibly there was the temptation of being able to obtain money, when public funds were scarce, by selling blocks of town lands. But he urged that the present Government should, while blocks in towns could be got at a reasonable price, obtain such land as might be required for public purposes. It was hard to say what the value of such blocks might rise to, within twenty years, with the population increasing so rapidly.

MR. KANDELL said that if the contemplated lease was not completed, it should not be carried further. He could not compliment the Government on the arrangement referred to, because the site of the lithographic offices was in a cramped position, there not being space for large buildings on the site, and it would not be good policy to erect buildings there on a lease for 21 years. He suggested that the lithographic printing department should be located along with the newly built Government Printing Office at the corner of Mackie and Goderich-streets; and as this Printing Office must soon be further extended, the land available in that locality would enable the Government to erect buildings of considerable size, in a central part of Perth.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not now remember the particulars of the lease, but these premises were hired years ago; that all the lithographic and photographic appliances were there, in working order; and that to move these to a new site and erect buildings on the new site would be inconvenient and expensive, as compared with the present arrangement for leasing the ground and erecting some temporary buildings on it. He did not think the increased rental was high for the situation of the land and the good building on it, together with the extensions which the Government had made for meeting the growing requirements. It was not intended, under the new arrangement, to pull down the present substantial building, nor to expend a lot of money in making further extensions on land belonging to other persons. The Government had tried to make a more economical bargain, but were not able to do so, and he did not think that £150 a year was an excessive rent, in comparison with the value of other properties centrally situated. It would be better if the Government could own the land; but that not being practicable in this case, as the land belonged to the church property, and this site being most convenient for the lithographic printing that was required by the Lands Department, the Government desired to continue the use of the site, secured under lease. Although he was willing to defer to the opinion of the hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) as to the value of land, yet this rent did not appear excessive, under existing circumstances. The Government, in years past, had spent a good deal on this land to adapt it to the requirements, and all that past expenditure on buildings would

be lost if the appliances were removed to a new site. If, at a future time, removal to a larger site was found necessary, this leasehold could be sub-let for as much as the Government were paying in rent. If these premises were put in the market to-morrow, there would be no difficulty in getting a tenant at £150 a year. It was not so much the amount of rental, as the convenience of the site, that commended the arrangement to the Government.

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

At 7.30 p.m. the Chairman resumed the chair.

MR. GEORGE, resuming the discussion on Mr. Connor's motion to strike out Item 85, said the property in question had a frontage of 50 or 60 feet in Pier-street; and, capitalising the rental of £150 a year, the capital value of the land would be £50 or £60 per foot frontage. Therefore he would ask those who understood the value of land in Perth, whether this land in Pier-street could, by any means, be said to be worth £50 or £60 per foot frontage. He very much questioned it. He also questioned whether the convenience of the proposed site was so great as had been stated. Did this arrangement include a right-of-way from the Lands Office through the Cathedral yard to these offices? [THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Yes.] If the Government began to make further extensions on this land, such expenditure from time to time might ultimately reach a large amount, and, at the end of the 21 years, the official contention would probably be that as so much money had been expended by the Government in adapting these premises to their growing requirements, the Government should then acquire the freehold. That being the prospect, why not negotiate for the purchase right away? [THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: So we have, but cannot get it.] Then was it not possible to find some ground equally suitable, available for purchase, in the vicinity of this leased land? [THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: No.] But if the Government had looked round for such land, they could find it. The lithographic printing office might be located conveniently in or near the Government Printing Office, that being a huge new building which he did not think was yet fully occupied. Could not this department be located in that large building, temporarily, until the Government could find a suitable

site for erecting new buildings when required? He believed the Lands Department would also have to be moved to a new site, within a few years, to make room for the growing requirements of another department, so that the alleged convenience of having the lithographic printing office near the present Lands Office could no longer continue.

MR. LEAKE opposed the item, and agreed with the arguments urged against the leasing of private premises in Pier-street. Chiefly, he disapproved of the principle of the Government taking an improving lease of any person's ground, and affirmed that the Government should build only on their freehold. The Committee knew how lavishly inclined a Government was likely to be, when putting up buildings to suit any departmental requirements. The Government buildings were always far more substantial than those put up by private persons; and it would be improving this property beyond all reasonable limits to adopt the method proposed in this item. A lease of 21 years was too short in the case of a Government, whereas a lease of 99 years in such a case would have something to commend it. By the time this lease of 21 years expired, the Government would probably find they could not do without the site, and might have to pay "through the nose" for their own improvements. He agreed with the objection that the proposed rent was excessive. It was equal to 5 per cent. on a capital of £3,000, which appeared to be the full value of the land at present. It would be a dangerous precedent to lease this land for 21 years, and improve the reversion for the benefit of other persons. Put a new building on Government land, if necessary; and, if the Government had not sufficient land, let them acquire more. He was never opposed to the Government in acquiring valuable sites. The manner in which the Crown lands had been parted with in the towns of this colony, was open to grave criticism, to say the least of it. If this country was bound to advance, as they believed it must do, the present central sites in Perth would not, in future years, be anything like large enough for the necessities of the Government departments. Moreover, the site in Pier-street was almost too valuable for the proposed purpose. He hoped the mover would call for a division on the motion, if necessary.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the Government had lately acquired a piece of land adjoining the Printing Office in Mackie-street, the vote

for which was passed at the previous sitting, and he knew there was, adjoining the same land, another block open to purchase, very much more suitable for the lithographic printing office than the one which the Government proposed to lease. This block could be purchased within the figures proposed in this item; a larger area than the land in Pier-street, and much more convenient for the purpose. The Government loans were obtainable at 3½ per cent.; therefore, for £150 a year the Government would practically be paying £4,500, if capitalised, for the land in Pier-street. If this land were freehold property, it might be acquired by the Crown at a future date, in which case there might be some excuse for proposing to put substantial buildings on the leased land; but this being church property, could never become the property of the Crown, without an Act of Parliament. Therefore, it was unwise for the Government to propose to build on land which could never become Crown property. The land he had suggested, near the Government Printing Office, would be far preferable, and the Government ought to acquire it. The Government should explain, also, what buildings they proposed to erect on this leased land. If the Government began building there at all, the increasing necessities would compel them to go on until the buildings might amount to a considerable value. He was surprised that the Government should think of taking this unwise step.

MR. HOOLEY opposed the proposal to build on leased land, and said suitable sites could be purchased at a fair valuation at present. To carry out the proposal in the item would be an act of folly which no private individual would perpetrate.

MR. CONNOR said that, in first drawing attention to this item, he did not know whether the property referred to was church property or who owned it. But the debate which had ensued would be a benefit to the country. If now buildings were to be erected on this leased land, they would then be on a larger scale, to meet the growing requirements; so that, practically, the small erections previously put up by the Government would have to come down, and there would be no saving in that, as compared with the erection of proper buildings on a new site. He agreed that the lithographic department should be located in or near to the lately erected Printing Office in Mackie-street. Unless some declaration was

made by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, as head of this department, that the Government would not carry out the arrangement as to erecting buildings on leased land, he must press the motion to a division.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said hon. members should look at the proposal in a reasonable light. He did not understand that there was any intention to put up expensive buildings, but only to make extensions of a temporary character, to suit the requirements of the department. The convenience of the site, with the existing facilities, was the main recommendation. The Church trustees could get as much rental from others for these premises; and it was really with a view of meeting the wishes of the Government that this arrangement was made for leasing the premises. So far as he and the Government were concerned, he assured the Committee there was no intention to expend much public money in building large premises on this leased land, but that only such temporary additions would be made as would meet the requirements of the department. There were no building conditions in the lease.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he could lease to the Government a bigger piece of land, opposite the Government Printing Office, at £100 a year, for 21 years.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said if the Government were bound by this lease, he felt sure there would be no difficulty made by the Church trustees as to releasing the Government from the bargain. In making this arrangement, the Government tried to do the best they could in the public interest, and not with a view to benefiting any individual. These premises had been rented by the Government during the last nine or ten years; a glass house, for photographing, had been erected on the land; and this, with the other extensions, had cost £200 or £300 during that period. Having the conveniences there now in working order, it would be economical and convenient to continue the use of these premises, by making such further temporary additions as might be required from time to time. If hon. members would leave the matter in the hands of the Government, he was sure the Commissioner of Crown Lands would try to reduce the term of occupation to a few years, and the Government would undertake not to expend money on permanent improvements. It was in accord with his (the Premier's) wish that no large

improvements should be made on rented land that did not belong to the Government. If hon. members would accept that view, the Government would do what they could to carry out the evident wish of the House, which was in accord with his own wish, and that of the Government.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was no argument for the Government to say they would reduce the length of the lease to a few years, if they were going to pay £150 a year as rental.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said what he meant was that, as the requirements of the Department increased in future, the place would not be sufficient. It had been more the wish of the Government than of the church trustees, that the term of lease should be long. After hearing the views of hon. members, he thought it would be better for the Government to arrange for acquiring a suitable piece of ground on which to erect buildings, rather than continue the use of these rented premises, because there must be some expenditure for making the premises suitable for present requirements.

MR. RANDELL, referring again to the suggestion that the Government should acquire sites in eligible localities, with a view to future public requirements, said it was to be hoped the Government would not enter rashly into the land market. The result of the present discussion was to indicate clearly the desire of the House that the Government should secure eligible sites, and to keep their eyes open for opportunities. He would like to see the Government acquire the whole of the land, from the Printing Office in Mackie-street to the Hospital in Goderich-street, for public purposes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said that, in making additions to meet requirements for some years, it was not thought desirable to go further without obtaining a lease of the ground. He reckoned that, by the end of 21 years, the saving effected by this arrangement would pay for the additional buildings over and over again. The convenience of the site, with the existing appliances in working order, and the small expense that would suffice to extend them, had induced the Government to enter into this arrangement.

MR. HASSELL argued that the Government should purchase suitable sites in the older towns, in view of the increasing requirements for public purposes.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, while agreeing with the suggestion made by several members, it would be a dangerous business for the Government to purchase land in various parts, for possible future use. The Government might be met in this House with an adverse motion disapproving of particular purchases. The Government must move safely, when they did move in this direction; for, if they went into the market to buy land at high prices, they might be told they had no business to do it, and might be accused in this House of having made purchases for the purpose of benefiting particular persons. The Government had lately ventured to buy a property adjoining the Printing Office in Mackie-street. While agreeing as to the desirability of purchasing land for public purposes, he had some misgiving about making purchases without having first obtained the approval of Parliament, unless the land was placed under offer in a proper way, as was done in the purchase of Point Walter and the Recreation Ground at Fremantle. He did not think the Government would take the responsibility of purchasing land, unless in exceptional cases.

THE CHAIRMAN said the discussion on the item was becoming too discursive.

MR. WOOD, after the explanation given by the Premier, withdrew his opposition to the item.

MR. CONNOR said the Government had not yet given a definite promise that they would not lease this land and erect public buildings on it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he would promise that no money should be spent on buildings of a permanent character on this land, and also that he would do his best to reduce the term of the lease. Some temporary additions would be necessary, for carrying on the work a short time. Whatever the Government did in this way would be in the public interest. The business was growing, especially in the Mines and Works Departments, and as all the lithographic printing was done for these departments, extended facilities were necessary. If land were purchased for this purpose, 12 or 18 months would be needed for completing the new buildings and equipment, so that some temporary provision must be made in the meantime, to meet urgent requirements. In a matter of administration like this the House might fairly assist the Govern-

ment, when satisfied that the Government did not intend to do anything that was irregular or unreasonable. He thought the lease could be reduced to a term of two or three years, without difficulty. There had been something like a storm in a teapot over this matter, as if the Government were trying to do something that was not in the public interest. To buy land near the Public Offices would take a lot of money. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: It will take more money, by and by.] He thought that a site would have to be sought further away, and the inconvenience of distance would have to be put up with. He had often thought the lithographic printing might be done near the Government Printing Office, though that locality would be less convenient. He hoped there would not be a division over this item. If hon. members would state what they objected to, he would endeavor to meet their wishes.

MR. SOLOMON said there was no wish to hamper the Government, but the desire was that any public buildings should be erected only on Crown lands. To shorten the lease would reduce its value, as these premises might, when no longer required by the Government, be sub-let for, perhaps, £250 a year.

MR. SIMPSON said this was an instance of the grossest maladministration that had occurred right through the Estimates. They were first told there was an improving lease; then that it was not an improving lease; and now the head of the Department said these building extensions were necessary for coping with the increasing requirements. The Ministry had made a bad bargain. [THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: We could make £500 profit out of the lease, right away.] Ah, but if the Government had not got a lease yet, how could they make £500 out of it? If the Government had got a lease, they should abide by it. The attitude of the member for West Perth, in first opposing the lease as an absurdly, high price and now approving of it, was peculiar. The House would be doing its duty to the country by insisting that this sort of bad bargain should not be made. The Department might go on extending the present building until it resembled a Chinese pagoda, and at the end of the lease the Church trustees might then let it out as a Chinese joss house.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said there would not be much objection, if the Government removed

the impression that expensive buildings might be erected on this leased land. That being so, he was quite prepared to meet the Government in the matter.

MR. WOOD, in reply to remarks made by the hon. member for Geraldton, said that he withdrew his opposition after the satisfactory explanation given by the Government. That explanation satisfied him, though it might not satisfy the hon. member for Geraldton, who would do anything in the world to get an adverse vote against the Government.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member went a little too far in stating that the hon. member for Geraldton would do anything to get an adverse vote against the Government.

MR. WOOD apologised for having used the expression.

MR. RANDELL, said the assurances given by the Government were satisfactory to him, and he did not wish to hamper them. This question had raised important issues, and he thought the Government now realised the position.

MR. CONNOR said he could not grasp that any practical answer had been given by the Government. If, however, the owners would accept the same rent as last year, £90, he was prepared to alter his motion to that effect.

MR. MARMION agreed with the remarks of the last speaker, and said there was involved the principle that the Government should not spend public money in erecting buildings on leased land. The Premier's promise would be kept, but it should be more definite; otherwise he (Mr. Marmion) would vote for striking out the item.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. E. Richardson) said it would be hardly reasonable to expect the Church trustees to let this property at the same rental as last year, when they knew they could get more for it. Must the printing plant be turned out of the premises because this House refused to vote a sufficient sum for the rental? The lithographic printing could not be finished quick enough for present requirements, and some extension of the appliances was indispensable. Two or three hundred pounds might suffice for this purpose for the next seven or eight years. The Premier having promised that no substantial buildings should be erected on this land, that promise should satisfy the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said this question was not one of administration, on which they



might trust the Government, but one of principle. The Government should acquire a site at once near the Printing Office, with a view to erecting substantial buildings on it.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Have you got any for sale there?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; I have not.

MR. GEORGE: Is that insinuation, thrown out by the Attorney-General, in order?

MR. ILLINGWORTH said that, although the Government had, or fancied they had, 99½ per cent. of the wisdom of the country on their side of the House, there was at least an odd three-quarters per cent. on the other side. [THE PREMIER: We will give you more than that.] As the Government could not buy this land, they should buy other land for the purpose, at once. He asked the House to enter its protest against the proposal in this item.

MR. HOOLEY, after hearing the explanation given by the Premier and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, was satisfied that what the Government would do would be in accord with the wishes of the members of the House, and he would withdraw any objection he had raised to the item.

MR. LEFROY regarded the question as having really been narrowed down to one of rent, together with an apparent desire on the part of some hon. members to harass the Government. The Government represented the House, and should not be placed in an awkward position on this matter. It had already been said that any agreement on this matter was not irrevocable, and the Premier had promised that he would do his utmost, not only to obviate the necessity for a twenty-one years' lease, but also to get the agreement absolutely withdrawn. There was no question of the necessity for this photo-lithographic establishment, and if buildings had to be used rent would have to be paid. Seeing the difficulty the Government might be in if the vote was not passed, and after the assurances given by the Ministry, he thought the matter was one that could well be left in the hands of the Government. Certain members, however, preferred not to look at the reasonable side of the matter, so long as a chance remained for harassing the Government. The House had no right whatever to take a course which would create difficulty in this particular establishment, or place obstacles in the way of the Government.

MR. RANDELL would like to correct the

impression in the mind of the hon. member for Geraldton, which was that this property, being church land, could not be alienated. The fact was that some hon. members knew of instances where church lands had been alienated. However, they did not want this land alienated. It was the very thing they did not want the Government to do. They objected to the property altogether, because it was too small, badly situated, and inconvenient for the Government to take it for a term.

MR. LEAKE wondered if members fully realised the position they were drifting to in this subject. It appeared to him that all that was required at any time was for the Premier to give an assurance that such and such a thing would be done, and that, therefore, nothing further should be said about the matter, and that anything like debate should be avoided. This was not the correct view of their duty. Surely the principle involved in the discussion this evening was important, and directed to show the Government, that the House did not approve of the Government leasing land for the purpose of improving it. So far the committee had not got the assurance of the Premier that, in deference to the wish of members, the Government would not build on this block. Unfortunately it appeared as if there was a slight variance of opinion on this matter between the Premier and the Commissioner of Lands. [THE PREMIER: Not a bit of it.] Most distinctly there was. Earlier in the evening the Commissioner of Lands had informed them that the land was required, and the Government had entered into a 21 years lease of it, and intend to erect necessary buildings. An interesting piece of play was not observable perhaps to the members on the Government side of the House; but those on the opposite side of the Chamber could see it. After the Commissioner of Lands had explained his intentions, quite a number of members were ready to attack him; but, in the course of the debate, the Premier came in, and afterwards rose, and informed the Committee that no money would be expended in the manner suggested. Subsequently the Commissioner of Lands had informed the Committee that it was not intended to spend more than £300 or £400 upon these buildings. In the face of this, how could it be said that it was not intended to improve this land at the Government expense? Herein lay the prin-

ciple members were protesting against now. So far as only spending a small amount on these buildings was concerned, they might be sure the Government architect would act up to his reputation. He was not likely to build a lean-to, when, having *carte blanche*, there was room for art and embellishment to be indulged. Were they to be guided by the merely verbal assurance of one member of the Ministry, when they knew the Minister in charge of the department thought differently on the matter to the Premier. It was not fair to introduce such a system into political business. [THE PREMIER: What do you want?] They wanted more than a verbal assurance from the Premier, in face of the expressed determination of his colleague in the Lands Department. It was a little below the dignity of the Government to thus attempt to impose on the supposed or implied intelligence of hon. members. There was a big principle involved in this matter, and if hon. members were going to accept such a system of administration, they would, in the future, have the Premier coming down with his Estimates and saying, "Here are the printed Estimates; I give hon. members an assurance that the money is required, and will be spent. Please pass them," and hon. members would accept the assurance, and comply with the request.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) would like to make clear what it was the Government meant. Some hon. members did not seem to understand what had already been said. First of all, it should be recollected that this piece of land had been in the possession of the Government for the last thirteen or fifteen years. It was being rented when he was Commissioner of Lands in 1883, and had been used ever since for the purposes for which it was required. The members of the Government were quite at one with the hon. members on the point that public money should not be spent on the erection of buildings on private land. The Government did not intend to do any building if they could possibly avoid it. At any rate, the buildings would be of no importance. So far as permanent improvements were concerned, the Government did not intend to spend money, unless the buildings were on land belonging to the Crown. Some temporary additions would have to be made in order to meet the requirements of the service. The Government, however, would do everything possible to secure

a reduction of the tenancy, and he believed they would succeed in this effort. It had not been the desire of the owners of the land to lease this to the Government for a long period, but the desire of the Government itself, for the reason that it was thought to be more convenient, and more in the interests of the colony. He had not the slightest doubt they would be able to reduce the term to a year or two, and, during that time, the Government could try and make permanent provision for this branch of the public service. He trusted this assurance would be satisfactory to the hon. member for East Kimberley, and that he would now be able to withdraw his motion. If the Government had not been acting in the way some hon. members desired, they had at least been acting in the interests of the colony. Everyone of his colleagues was equally adverse with him to spending money on other people's property. Whatever might be the case of private individuals was not the case of a Government, and he fully recognised it was not wise for the Government to erect buildings, or spend a large amount of money on land not belonging to the Crown; but neither of these things was going to be done. Whatever was done would be of a temporary character. The place had been rented, in the first instance, because there was a large building used as a school-room adjoining it, because it was close to the Lands Office, and because it was the most suitable place that could be found for this branch of the service at the time. The improvements would be of a temporary character only, until the Government could find a permanent habitation for this office. The Government quite recognised that it would be undesirable to spend a large sum of money on leased land, and did not intend to do it. He hoped the explanation would be satisfactory to the hon. member for East Kimberley.

MR. CONNOR felt himself to be in the same position as he was at first. They were told that no expensive building would be erected, but the Premier had not given them his definition of an expensive building. They had not been told definitely whether there was already a lease, or whether there was to be one. [THE PREMIER: I said we would try to reduce the term.] Trying to reduce the term was not satisfactory to him. While on this subject, he desired to draw attention to the fact that whenever an

hon. member on either side of the House held an opposite view to the Government, members all round the House were with him until a member of the Government got up and said the Government did not want whatever was proposed. Then a wave went round the House, and there was an immediate set made against the motion, and the member who brought it forward. Personally he was a warm supporter of the Government, as they themselves knew, but he was not going to be led outside of his duty, and what he believed was justice to the country. In addition to this there was also an idea in the minds of some hon. members that any opposition was personal. [THE PREMIER: Oh, no.] It came with rather a bad grace from the late Whip to the Opposition for him to suggest that the opposition to this item was only with the object of harassing the Government, and it was not true. It had been necessary to bring this matter forward. [THE PREMIER: What do you want us to do.] He wanted the Government to say they would neither build on this land or enter into a lease of it. He was quite prepared to amend his proposal in favor of reducing the Estimates to the original amount so that time would be given for alterations to be made for providing a permanent building on Crown Land for this department.

MR. SIMPSON would like to ask the Commissioner of Crown Lands one question, was there any agreement?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): There is no agreement in writing.

MR. CONNOR in view of this was prepared to amend his proposal with the object of reducing the Estimates by £50, thus making it £100 as against £90 for the previous year.

By leave of the Committee, Mr. Connor withdrew his amendment, and then moved that the vote be reduced by £50.

Question—That the item be reduced by £50.

The Committee divided, as follows:—

Ayes ... ..	7
Noes ... ..	15
Majority against ... ..	9

AYES.  
Mr. George  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. Leake  
Mr. Marston  
Mr. Simpson  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Connor (Teller).

NOES.  
Mr. Burt  
Mr. Cookworthy  
Sir John Forrest  
Mr. Hassell  
Mr. Hooley  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Piccse  
Mr. Randall  
Mr. H. W. Sholl  
Mr. R. F. Sholl  
Mr. Throssell  
Mr. Venn  
Mr. Wood  
Mr. Richardson (Teller.)

Amendment negatived.

MR. GEORGE enquired with regard to the provision on the Estimates for the examination of licensed surveyors. He noticed the amount previously voted had not been expended.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson), explained that this was due to the fact that no examinations had been held, but it was thought advisable to retain the vote.

Vote put and passed.

Fisheries, £1,250.

MR. RANDELL drew the attention of the Commissioner of Lands to the fact that some time ago considerable discussion had been going on in the newspapers with respect to the Inspector at Sharks Bay, and he would like to know whether the Government had had this matter under their consideration. He should also like some information as to the success or otherwise of the attempts in the acclimatisation of fresh water fish and for restoring the oyster beds.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson), replied that in connection with the first question, there had been whole volumes of correspondence gone into most carefully, but the evidence was of too conflicting a character to warrant any decisive step being taken. Many of the residents who complained of this official had stultified themselves by at first signing a petition against the Inspector, and then signing one which declared that he was all that he should be. Besides this, Mr. Saville-Kent, to whose opinion the Government naturally paid considerable deference, had taken the part of the Inspector, and indicated it in many ways. There were many complaints, but he (Mr. Richardson) was not prepared to say how far they had been substantiated. It was almost impossible

from the conflicting nature of the testimony, to ascertain the real state of affairs. However, the officer now appeared to be doing really good work under the instructions of Mr. Kent, and was going on very satisfactorily. Attempts had been made to transplant some of the north-west pearl shell into Sharks Bay, but the first trial had not been a success. The second attempt appeared likely to be far more successful, as all in the cages, but two, were still alive. They were now hopeful of the complete success of this system; but it would be some time before it could be determined whether it was going to be successful from a financial point of view. The experiments were certainly hopeful, not only as to the ordinary oyster, but also as to the larger mother-of-pearl oyster. An interesting experiment was being proceeded with at the Abrolhos Islands. When Mr. Saville-Kent was on the coast he found the water here was 13 degrees higher than that of Geraldton, and it appeared most suitable for the north-west mother-of-pearl oysters. Mr. Kent appeared to think that the oyster would thrive there, and the experiment was one which he (Mr. Richardson) watched with interest. He had this much to say about the Inspector who had been alluded to, and that was that he was acquitting himself very well indeed under the instructions of Mr. Kent.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) would like to say a word or two with regard to this experiment at the Abrolhos. He looked forward to the results with a large degree of interest. He was very glad to hear they were being carried out. When he visited these islands some years ago, he found there was a large area of shallow water and coral reefs, and it struck him as the very place for the establishment of oyster beds. If this was now going to be proved to be the case by the experiments being carried on, they would have done a great work. It was one of which he had the most sanguine hope, and he believed they would succeed in having the pearling industry established and flourishing near the Abrolhos. A better place could not be found, if the water was not too cold, and Mr. Kent had reported that it was not. Mr. Kent himself was most confident that the experiments were going to be successful.

MR. H. W. SHOLL had every desire to see the industry flourish, but he had to differ from the Premier as to the Abrolhos Islands being a

suitable place to establish oyster beds. He had had an involuntary experience of the Abrolhos in 1868, when he was there for a week, and he was sure that the mother-of-pearl shell of the North West would not thrive there. The reefs were too barren, like other places along the coast, where the oyster would not thrive. At the same time, he hoped the experiment would be successful. [THE PREMIER: We can but try it.]

MR. MARMION: Is there any further agreement with Mr. Kent, or is it intended to engage his services further.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: No. We could not get him to remain.

MR. RANDELL thanked the Commissioner of Lands for the interesting information that had been given. He trusted the experiment would be most successful. He would now like to know what was being done with regard to acclimatisation of fresh-water fish.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS said that when Mr. Kent was here he established, to a certain extent, some of the fresh-water fish. He brought trout with him, and left a shipment of Murray cod to follow him. The latter had been introduced into the waters about York, while trout and bream had been distributed in the southern districts, such as in the Serpentine, the Preston and the Collic rivers. He had reason to believe the experiment was proceeding satisfactorily, but there had not been time to prove it absolutely. Mr. Brockman had taken great interest in this question, and had given him (Mr. Richardson) much assistance. It had been pointed out that an amendment of the fisheries laws was desirable to prevent these fish being caught until they had been properly established. Netting or machine-catching was prohibited, but not fishing with hooks. There was one way out of the difficulty, and that was to have all the areas wherever these fish had been placed proclaimed as fishing reserves by the Governor-in-Council, so that within these reserves fishing in any way would be prohibited.

MR. RANDELL enquired whether, in the event of a flood arising, any precautions had been taken to prevent the spawn being washed away from the permanent pools.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) replied that if this did occur it could hardly be avoided.

MR. COOKWORTHY would like to know

whether any fish had been placed in either the Warren or Blackwood rivers, for these were by far the most permanent streams.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said he had been anxious to induce Mr. Kent to remain and watch the results of his experiments, but Mr. Kent could not do so, although he said no evil results could occur while he was away. Mr. Kent said he had taken every possible precaution to ensure success, because of his own reputation. He believed fish had been placed in the Blackwood.

Vote put and passed.

Forestry, £732 10s.:

Mr. GEORGE congratulated the Government on the appearance of this vote on the Estimates. The work of a department of Forestry must be of great value to the country. The timber resources of Western Australia had barely been tapped, and there was no question they were going to provide one of the largest items of export. He was glad to see that steps were being taken to prove the value of these forests, and trusted proper steps would be taken for the conservation of the timber resources. At the same time, he would like to know why the Conservator of Forests was receiving less salary than the surveyor who accompanied him.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) explained that when Mr. Ednie Browne was brought to the colony, it was under a definite arrangement, and the vote on the Estimates was the balance of the payment agreed upon. Mr. Browne had been brought to the colony originally under engagement to the Bureau of Agriculture, and it was afterwards thought advisable to transfer him to the Department of Lands. Most particular instructions had been given for Mr. Browne to make a complete examination of the forests, in order that the Government should have some reliable information as to the quantity of marketable timber in the colony, and its value as a national asset. Mr. Browne was prosecuting those enquiries with much success, and had already presented some most intelligent and interesting reports. He had confessed that the great area and value of the West Australian forests had greatly surprised him. The further reports of Mr. Browne which would be available in a few months, would be even more interesting. He was engaged at present in an examination of the

Pinjarrah and the Darling forest country. Mr. Browne had not been appointed the permanent Forester, but had come to the colony under a definite agreement to report on the forests, and give the Government some necessary advice as to what steps should be taken in the direction of conservation. The permanent Forester had not yet been appointed, although many applications had been received, some of them being from very good men. An officer would be appointed when Mr. Browne had completed the work he was at present engaged in.

Mr. PIESSE would like to know whether the attention of the Government had been drawn to the wilful destruction of timber in the Darling Ranges. His attention had been drawn to the matter by certain residents of the district, and they declared that there was a great destruction of timber, both of young trees and of timber that was immature for the purposes for which it was felled. There should be some supervision to prevent the destruction of young or immature timber. The timber resources of West Australia were well known, and what the Government required advice upon was as to the proper steps to be taken for the conservation of the forests. The time had arrived when the forests should be protected. They had been in the past, and were going to be in the future, a great help to the country. The demand was bound to increase, and the export would shortly be very large. It was calculated to become one of the largest departments of the colony. They should have a Conservator of Forests, and every step should be taken to protect this great asset. He trusted the Commissioner of Lands would take notice of the improper destruction of timber that was taking place.

Mr. GEORGE thought it would have been a good thing for Mr. Browne to have been also asked to report upon the accessibility of the timber areas, roads, and routes to the forests. He agreed with the member for the Williams that there was unnecessary destruction of timber, but hewers naturally went for the young trees, for the reason that in jarrah they split with the grain far easier than trees of older growth. It would be necessary to have more than one Forester. In fact it would be ridiculous to have only one. In Victoria the duty of forest conservation, and the prevention of unnecessary destruction was looked after by the mounted police, and some such system might work well here. He did

not say they should do it without some extra emolument. There would have to be proper Regulations framed for the control of the forests, but there were companies holding timber concessions, with twenty to thirty years yet to expire, and it was hardly likely any regulations could be made to affect these. The subject of forest conservation was one requiring careful consideration.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson), replied that he had taken notice of what the hon. member for the Williams had said as to the useless destruction of young timber, and they were taking steps to put a stop to it. Instructions had been given to the police to be very strict in the supervision of the forests, and it was really owing to the vigilance of one member of the force that valuable information had been secured. There was no doubt about the fact pointed out by the hon. member for the Murray, that Regulations would have to be framed; and, as soon as possible. Mr. Browne would be asked to advise the Government as to everything that was necessary in this direction.

Vote put and passed.

Mines, £25,295.

MR. ILLINGWORTH suggested that inasmuch as members had not yet received the report of the Minister the consideration of this vote should be postponed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) failed to see how the report of the Minister could affect the question of the Estimates, and this was a department the details of which hon. members knew more about than any other. They were so familiar with the subject that it would be unnecessary to wait for the report. The report was, however, in the hands of the printer.

MR. LEAKE pointed out that there was a large increase in the expenditure proposed, and it would be more satisfactory if the report of the Minister was available for members before they were asked to pass the Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) agreed to postpone the vote until after those of the Postal Department, and its consideration was so postponed.

Educational, £33,536 13s. 4d.

MR. ILLINGWORTH enquired whether provision had been made here for carrying out the objects of the Bill to be introduced, placing the whole educational system in the hands of the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied in the negative. The Estimates were prepared before the Education Question was brought forward. The Government might be placed in a little bit of a difficulty, but care would be taken not to allow the schools to suffer. The Government would act on their knowledge of the wishes of the House in this matter.

MR. CONNOR enquired the reason for the salary of the Secretary being increased.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that this increase was made because, considering the importance of the department, and of the work done by the Secretary, he had not been well enough paid in comparison with the payment of other heads of departments. The Minister had recommended a larger increase, but the Government decided to place less than the Minister desired, on the Estimates.

MR. WOOD thought that as the Chief Inspector had been on the same footing with the Secretary before the latter received this increase, the amounts should still be made the same.

MR. GEORGE would like to know why there was a decrease in the amount for the "Teacher of Method." Last year it was £205, and £205 had been expended. This year the Estimate was £105. Was that a clerical error?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) explained that the engagement of the Teacher of Method had only six months to run, and that accounted for the difference. The gentleman was being retained in the service partly as an additional inspector and partly for the training of teachers. He would receive £55 a year from the vote "Temporary Inspector, £55," and £10 a year from the vote "Training of Teachers, £237," or a total salary of £210 per annum.

MR. CONNOR mentioned that he had brought forward, on a previous occasion, the question of these offices being filled by competitive examinations. He thought no person should be appointed for the training of teachers who had not been successful in a competitive examination. The Teacher of Method was said not to hold the proper qualifications.

MR. KANDELL explained that it was the duty of certain head teachers to train pupil teachers, and they obtained a bonus of £5 for each one passing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said

that no arrangement had been made for filling these offices by competitive examinations among those available. This vote was not only for the training of teachers, but also for their instruction.

MR. RANDELL remarked that the Teacher of Method had been recommended by Mr. Briggs, of Fremantle, who had had some experience of his teaching.

MR. CONNOR: I can assure the hon. member and the Committee that such is not the case.

MR. GEORGE drew attention to the item, "Travelling allowance, Teacher of Method, £50." If the teacher was under a new arrangement this amount should not be voted. It was like an addition to the teacher's salary.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) pointed out that the amount was only for six months, when the new arrangement came into operation. There was no travelling allowance after that.

MR. GEORGE in referring to Item No. 33 (Technical Education, £1,000), said £500 was voted last year, but not a penny of it was spent. He asked where the justification of the vote was, and what it was proposed to do with it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that the vote of last year was not spent because the Minister resigned about the end of the year, and his plans had not been communicated to anyone else. The new Minister of Education thought he could do something in that direction, and so they would this year make a start in Perth. He believed it was intended to teach certain Trades. A good deal however, would have to be left to the Minister in charge of the vote.

MR. GEORGE said he was satisfied. He had seen the principle introduced in England with very good results, and he was glad to see this colony making a start.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he was pleased to see a start made in the matter of Technical Education, but he was sorry to see no vote proposed for University Exhibitions. He suggested the desirability of taking steps towards University training. The Ministry might, at any rate, secure a piece of land this year and probably next year be able to fence and plant it. He presumed Exhibitions had ceased through lack of competition.

Vote put and passed.

Postal and Telegraph, £119 415 3s.

MR. SIMPSON said he wished to call atten-

tion to the small salaries and the many desirabilities of the officers in the lower ranks of this department. He knew that, from one end of the land to the other the administration of the department was being adversely criticised. It seemed as if the central authorities did not realise the conditions existing on the Murchison, and the Eastern goldfields, and away in the north, and that consequent responsibilities were disregarded. It was a crying shame that a man should have to go to distant places and occupy the positions of postmaster, telegraph operator, as well as having charge of a money order office, upon £130 a year. The responsibilities were enormous in view of the remuneration. He was never gratified to see rapid changes, but he did think merit and responsibility should be recognised. He knew one instance where a man was sent to a place at £110 a year, and yet he had to pay 30s. a week for his food alone. He hoped, in the future provision would be made for officers who were sent out into the back blocks. The Postmaster-General evidently had not realised the way the country was being opened up. He would prefer to see the Government err in this department on the side of liberality.

MR. PIESSE said he agreed with the hon. member for Geraldton. The officer at Nanaimo, with a salary of £140, was taken away from a southern station where he received £120. It was unreasonable to send men so far away upon a paltry promotion of £20 a year. The officer in charge at Coolgardie had now 27 officers under him, and yet he received only £250 a year. There were many places where living was so high that that alone necessitated an increase of £100 a year. He considered, too, that the Postmaster-General was as much entitled to an advance as another head of the department who had already been raised to £700 a year. There ought to be some further recognition of the services of the Postmaster-General.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said while agreeing generally with the remarks made, he wished to point out there were many advances on these Estimates. It might be true a year or two ago that the officers of the Postal Department were badly paid, but it was not so now. The department this year had certainly the largest number of increases in salaries. The Postmaster-General was a hard-working, painstaking officer, and no one could say, in view of the

developments that had gone on during the last year or two, that he had not done his best, and that, too, with considerable success. He did not believe there was any other place in Australia where such efforts were made to give postal facilities as in this colony. Mails were not only carried to centres of population, but to the homesteads of the people. He did not see why they should increase the salaries when they had so many applicants for the positions. In some of the other colonies the Postmaster-Generals were receiving less salaries than some other officers. He had no desire to cut down salaries to the lowest point.

MR. GEORGE asked if the Government intended to carry out their promise, and have a post and telegraph office at the Perth railway station. Such an office would be a great public convenience, and not merely for travellers by rail. He believed it would be welcomed by every citizen in Perth.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was the intention of the Government to put up one or two wings in connection with the Perth railway station. The accommodation there at present was insufficient to include a post and telegraph office, if it were put there now it would be altogether thrown away. It was absolutely necessary to increase the platform accommodation. That would be done as early as possible, and then a post and telegraph office would be established — possibly within six months. They had completed the arrangements at Fremantle, and would do the same at Perth as early as they possibly could.

MR. SOLOMON congratulated the Government upon the way they had tried to meet the requests of the people. So far as Fremantle was concerned, the people were gratified with what had been done at the railway station and at the Town Hall.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he supported the statement of the Hon. the Premier, that the Postal Departments in the other colonies were underpaid, and he considered the department of this colony was not an exception. That was in consequence of the fact that the Postal and Telegraph Department never paid its way. Its accounts never balanced. The tendency in the department was to try and make them balance as near as possible. Such a course was not desirable, and the difference should be charged to the revenue of the country. He wished to emphasise what had been said by

the hon. member for Geraldton. It was monstrous to expect competent and trained men to go away to the back blocks upon a salary equalling about half what a miner received. He did not believe that the country desired it. It was true there were plenty of applicants for the positions, but he did not think it was right for the Government to take advantage of the men's necessities in that way. Men had gone to these out-of-the-way places, not knowing what they were going to, and then found they could not get away. They received barely enough to keep body and soul together. He hoped the Government would take the matter into consideration, and, notwithstanding the loss to the department, would treat the men more liberally, particularly when they had to go out so far, and endure such hardship. A man should not be expected to go out for £150 a year, and work all hours, while a miner was getting £4 a week for eight hours a day.

MR. CONNOR said he wished to support what the hon. members for Nannine and Geraldton had said as to the disabilities of the men who went out to occupy positions on the back blocks. The present time was one in which the Government might well consider the position of such men. He could not, however, agree with the hon. member for Nannine in his comparison between the miner and the postmaster, because the latter generally had perquisites in the form of house, etc., in which to live, that the miner did not have. The position could not be compared to that of the ordinary miner. He called attention to the fact that there were 44 telegraph messengers and postmen in Perth, but only 10 such in Fremantle. There must be something radically wrong about that. There were either too many employed in Perth, or too few in other places, inasmuch as they did not have one-quarter so many in Fremantle as in Perth.

MR. LEAKE said much had been said, both inside and outside the House, regarding the treatment of junior clerks. He hoped the Government would make an enquiry into the matter, and that a report would be made by the Minister. It would be well to know whether the reports were based upon facts or not. Hon. members could not shut their eyes to the fact that there was a great deal of comment upon the administration of the department. If the administration were



faulty, it should be remedied, and if the officer did his best he should be relieved of the suspicion of niggardliness. He knew the Postmaster would say he could get any number of men at the salaries offered, but he asked if it were prudent, in the interests of the department, to employ underpaid men.

MR. JAMES said he gave his earnest support to the hon. members for Nannine and Albany. He did not think the Government of the colony was justified in being "sweaters." If they took a person's fair day's work, without giving a fair day's pay, they were guilty of sweating, whether it was in the case of one, or a hundred persons. He did not think they were justified in paying low wages, simply because there were so many applicants for positions. He wished to repeat some words of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, which were spoken in that place for which the Premier has such veneration, the House of Commons, when he was speaking on the question of the minimum wage. His remarks had peculiar force in view of the complaints in the Postal Department that the men were underpaid. Mr. Bannerman said "as to wages a few years ago, it would have been regarded as sufficient answer to any claim for increase, if he had risen in his place, and said they were getting enough men for the wages they offered." That was exactly the argument that had been used in that House. Mr. Bannerman proceeded to say: "That was no longer a complete answer. A change had come over public opinion upon the subject. They had ceased to believe in competition or starvation wages. For himself he believed the starvation wage means starvation work. It was not alone a question of humanity or philanthropy, but one of efficiency. They could not get a fair day's work out of a man unless they paid a fair day's pay." He (Mr. James) commended those words to the gentleman in charge of the department.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was good of the hon. member to give them advice. It was what they might expect, because he always sought to pose as the friend of the working man. He (the Premier) believed the Government paid better salaries, generally, than were paid by private firms to any class of men. Whenever an appointment was to be made in the Civil Service, there were always numbers ready and willing to leave private firms to secure it. In the Postal and Telegraph Department there had been

great increases in salaries during the last three years. It was only the small salaries that hon. members took notice of. The Government tried to do their best, and he believed the whole service was better paid than the employees of private people.

MR. COOKWOETHY said hon. members talked a good deal about a fair day's wage but none of them defined what it was, nor how it was regulated. No private person would give 7s. a day when he could get the work done for 6s., and the law of supply and demand ruled the world.

THE CHAIRMAN asked hon. members not to use the word "sweating" with reference to the Government.

MR. JAMES said he had a certain defined meaning.

THE CHAIRMAN said it was a very offensive meaning, and he asked hon. members not to use it again.

Progress was reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.30 o'clock p.m.