

were lending the money to another institution at 4 per cent., leaving only $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent to cover the cost of working this Savings Bank. Now the institution that has been allowing them 4 per cent. will not, I understand, continue any longer to pay that rate of interest. I do not like, myself, to see the people hoarding up their money in the Savings Bank, when there are so many other things they can do with their money in a new country like this. It would be better if they invested it in land, and made some good use of the land, thus benefiting themselves and the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest): I should like to say a word or two in answer to what has fallen from the hon. member for the Murray. I do not think it was ever intended by the Legislature that the Savings Bank should be run at the expense of the general taxpayer, which it must come to if it is run at a loss. We must deal with this matter as a business matter, and not as a matter of sentiment. We want to make this bank pay its way, as well as to serve a useful purpose in encouraging thrift amongst the community. We simply wish to have power to adjust the rate of interest, according to circumstances. If the Government are found to be making too much money out of this Savings Bank, I dare say members will look after that. The returns will show the receipts and the expenditure; and if the receipts are unduly inflated, in comparison with the expenditure, it will be clear enough that the Government are making money out of it, and paying too little interest to the depositors for the use of their deposits. Of course we are always very glad to listen to any new member when he addresses the House, but the hon. member for the Murray seems to me to want to monopolise all the talk, and, if he goes on as he does now, he will soon tire us. We can't stand too much of it. Other members want some little time in which to place their views before the House.

The amendment—that the Bill be read a second time that day six months—having been negatived on the voices, the original motion was put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House at 10.40 p.m. adjourned until Monday, July 8th.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 8th July, 1895

Petition: Customs Repeal Bill—New System of keeping Advance Accounts—Amendment of Land Regulations re Leasing of Jarrah Forests—Carriage of Explosives and Ammunition to Northern Ports—Uniforms Bill: third reading—Excess Bill, 1893-4: third reading—Agent-General Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION re CUSTOMS REPEAL BILL.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION presented a Petition from the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce, praying that the Customs Duties Repeal Bill should not come into force for the term of six months from date.

Petition received and read.

Ordered—That the Petition be taken into consideration when the House is in Committee upon "The Customs Duties Repeal Bill."

NEW SYSTEM OF KEEPING ADVANCE ACCOUNTS.

MR. GEORGE, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—

1. Whether the new system of keeping the Advance Accounts, referred to on pages 146-149 of the Auditor-General's Report, was working satisfactorily.

2. Whether he considered that the Auditor-General's requirements in this respect would now be fully and satisfactorily complied with.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied, as follows:—

1. The system referred to has not been working long enough to express a decided opinion upon it. There is every reason to believe it will work satisfactorily.

2. It is believed so, but, if not, the Auditor-General will bring the matter under notice.

THE LAND REGULATIONS re LEASING THE JARRAH FORESTS.

MR. A. FORREST moved, in accordance with notice, "That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce a Bill to amend the Land Regulations, in the direction of special Legislation as to the leasing of jarrah forests." The hon. member said: In moving the motion standing in my name, I have to address the House for a short time, with a view of asking the Government whether there is any intention to introduce, during this session of Parliament, any legislation having for its

object the alterations of the regulation, affecting our timber country, and the conditions under which timber licenses are now held. In bringing this matter forward it is appropriate that I should give, as one of the reasons for the motion, the fact that the Government is about to introduce a Bill for the construction of a railway from Donnybrook and Bridgetown to the Collie coalfields. This line will pass through country of a character which we all know entitles it to be regarded as among the very best timber country. Now, what I want to say is, that it will be absolutely impossible—and the Government must be well aware of the fact—for this excellent timber country to be properly and profitably opened up, unless some special legislation is introduced in order to enable this to be done. Special legislation will be necessary if we are to give small millers, and people who will go into these forests, such concessions as will enable them to compete with the older Companies already enjoying concessions of a character quite sufficient to render competition, under present circumstances, almost impossible. I am sure that my meaning on this point will be made clear if I read to the House a short statement prepared by the Lands Department, which shows how important these concessions are, and at what a disadvantage smaller mills, and new comers, must be in, compared to the Companies mentioned in this list. I find from this statement that the timber concessions and special timber licenses at the end of 1894 of the West Australian Timber Coy., amounted to about 200,000 acres, free. The Rockingham Jarrah Timber Co. holds 250,000 acres for the very small rental of £50 per annum; the Canning Jarrah Timber Company, 100,000 acres for which they pay £200 a year; while such mills as that of Gill & Company holding only 2,880 acres, pay £133 6s. 8d. per annum. Under the present regulations any person desiring a timber license is required to pay £20 for every 640 acres, and this does not put him in a fair way to compete with those other Companies, the concessions to which I have just read to you. I can assure honorable members that if the grand timber country in our South-Western districts and along the line proposed to be constructed to the Collie coalfields, is to be opened up, we must not call upon people to pay £20 for a 640 acre block, when they will have to compete with a Company holding 250,000 acres for only £50 a year. Not only must anyone desiring to enter into

the timber industry face such a disadvantage as this, but he is also met with the fact that under the present regulations there is no such thing as security of tenure. There is no proper inducement held out to encourage the establishment of fresh mills, and what I propose to ask, therefore, is that the Government will undertake to bring before Parliament a Bill by which blocks of from 3,000 to 5,000 acres can be taken up along each side of the proposed railway line, at such a rental that the lessees will be in a position to compete with those other Companies holding such enormously large areas, and which pay little or nothing for the huge concessions they enjoy. I am not asking anything more than the introduction of necessary special legislation, such as will have the effect of beneficially opening up these great jarrah forests by people who will be enabled to make a fair profit on their outlay. People who invest their capital in this industry—or who would do so if a fair opportunity was given them—should certainly have some better and more secure tenure than they are enabled to secure under the existing regulations. I trust that the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands will agree with me that something more liberal is required than a rental of 1s. per acre, when you consider that the man who is called upon to pay this, must also compete with a company holding a quarter of a million acres for only £50 a year. If hon. members think I am going too far in this matter, I hope they will carefully consider the comparison I have drawn. In this timber industry, whatever can be done by new mills must be done with the export trade. It would be folly to say that much attention should be paid to the local trade, for the simple reason that one mill alone could turn out more stuff than would be sufficient to meet the wants of the entire colony. It is the export trade alone which the new comer has to look to, and, bearing this in mind, I trust hon. members will support the resolution, merely with the view of seeing such alterations in the regulations as must lead to the opening up of the grand jarrah forests in different parts of the colony, and to the introduction and employment of a great amount of capital. I have much pleasure in moving the resolution standing in my name.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): Sir, I understand from the hon. member's resolution that he desires the Government to bring in a

Bill in order to amend the regulations in regard to the licenses for cutting timber in our jarrah forests. In connection with this I may state that I have already prepared a rough draft of amended regulations affecting this subject, but I have not yet had sufficient time to put it into proper shape for presentation to the House; although I hope to be able, before this session is over, to bring forward amended regulations with a view of dealing with the licensing question, while it is also my intention to liberalise the conditions under which the smaller areas of these timber forests are held. I recognise that there are practical difficulties in the way of doing all that the Government would like to do. However, there can be no question of the fact that there should be some more satisfactory — some more secure — tenure. What we want in our forests to properly develop the industry, are steam mills, and we cannot expect people to spend thousands of pounds in the erection of steam machinery when they cannot obtain a longer tenure than for a period of twelve months. Some legislation is most certainly needed to meet such cases as these. It is possible also there should be some reduction of rents, but there can be no question whatever that we should so amend the regulations as to give fixity of tenure in instances where companies have given some proof of their *bona fides*, of their intention to erect steam mills, and of their intention to spend considerable capital in the development of the industry. A rental on these timber areas can almost be regarded as something in the nature of an export duty, and it is our duty to help forward the development of the industry in every way possible, and to remove any obstacles which may hinder its progress. The hon. member for West Kimberley, in moving the resolution, stated that he did not want any alteration in the regulations, so far as the cultivation of timber areas was concerned, but this land was not much use for cultivation while a timber license was held, for the simple reason that the settler would be unable to clear his land of the timber, and all sorts of difficulties would occur. However, at this stage we cannot go into what practical difficulties may present themselves but I will content myself by assuring the hon. member and the House that I contemplate bringing forward amended regulations, of a character to meet the object he has in view in proposing the resolution.

MR. LEAKE: I hope honorable members will not be led into giving a silent vote on this apparently harmless resolution on paper. They must carefully consider what may be behind it.

MR. A. FORREST: Nothing at all.

MR. LEAKE: We may be getting a little too far forward by passing this. I understood the honorable gentleman to suggest that timber licenses should be issued at such liberal terms to holders of small timber areas as will enable them to compete with the holders of large areas. Why, Sir, that will practically be committing over again the errors of the past.

MR. A. FORREST: Oh, no; nothing of the kind.

MR. LEAKE: Most certainly it would be. However, I for one have no objection to the terms being made as liberal as is necessary to enable any man to make the industry pay, providing that which is done in this way is done fairly. We have heard a good deal of the impossibility of inducing forest capital into this industry, but I have yet to learn that any of those who have established themselves along the Darling Range have been thrown out in consequence of these regulations. I do not know if any member of this House is particularly interested in this industry, or if they have abandoned their interests. In fact, we know they have not. We have not heard of any wrong being done, nor has the hon. member for West Kimberley advanced any sound argument why the House should support a loss to the revenue in the manner he has suggested. If we can get gentlemen to pay 1s. per acre for the timber country adjoining the railway and not far from market, why, I ask, should the rental be reduced? One of the great arguments put forward by the hon. gentleman who moved the resolution, was that the proposed railway line to the Collie coal-fields would traverse great timber country, which would require to be opened out. If this is so, let us make such terms as will pay the country, for it is best in this matter that we should not be over hasty in being too liberal.

MR. A. FORREST: The timber men have made fortunes—all of them.

MR. LEAKE: No one said they had not. The Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, under the influence of circumstances over which he has no control, has of course replied in terms to meet the views of the honorable member for West Kimberley. He says

these men should be offered security of tenure. Most certainly let them have security of tenure. It is the proper thing, only I say again, don't let us be too liberal with concessions in regard to these valuable timber forests. Let us carefully consider these resolutions. For my own part I would suggest to the hon. member to withdraw his proposals. He has got that which he wanted—an assurance from the Government that they would bring up the amended regulations, not in the recess, but at once. What more can he want? Don't let us commit ourselves to this resolution, but as the Commissioner of Crown Lands has undertaken to bring down the new regulations, let us wait for them.

MR. RANDELL: Mr. Speaker, I do think this matter requires considerable consideration before we pass any resolution in connection with it, such as is proposed by the honorable member for West Kimberley. He has alluded to Companies already working upon areas in different parts of the colony as possessing a monopoly, and yet he is now seeking to obtain the same thing for others.

MR. A. FORREST: No; smaller areas, 3,000 or 5,000 acres.

MR. RANDELL: Some references have been made to the timber concessions in other parts of the colony. The first timber concession granted, was with the object of bringing the colony into notice. In these concessions a railway line was built really as *a-quid pro quo*. Concessions were granted to the Rockingham and Jarrahdale Company, but they had a railway, and so had the Canning Jarrah Timber Company. These were facts the hon. member in moving his resolution had apparently overlooked, and he is now asking for concessions where the circumstances are not at all similar. We must remember that in giving away these timber concessions, we are, in reality, giving away portion of the capital of the colony. There are no conditions that in taking out this timber any attempt is to be made to plant others, or in other words, to replace portion of the capital of the colony. Conditions like these should not only be imposed now, but ought to have been imposed years ago. We are altogether too liberal with our concessions. We in this country should not be in too great a hurry to destroy the timber which is in our forests, and in the matter of these concessions we should be very cautious indeed. There is evidently some intention on the part of the Government to give a very liberal response to

the proposals made in the resolution, but it would be altogether too absurd to build lines of railway out of loan monies without a fair return for the outlay and this will not be possible if the capital of the colony, portion of which is her timber reserves, is too liberally given away. The hon. member who moved the resolution was certainly very kind, but there is no possible reason why we should place the timber country of the colony in the hands of any people without a fair return.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member who has just spoken spent considerable time in discussing suggestions which I am sure the wording of the resolution does not convey. What the resolution does say is nothing more than that, in the interests of the jarrah industry, special legislation is requisite in order to place that industry on a proper footing. We have been informed that amendments are to be made, but it remains to be seen what these amendments will be, and that will be ascertained when they are submitted to the House in the usual course. The resolution as now submitted to the House is perfectly harmless, and the necessity for something being done must be plainly apparent to anyone who is acquainted with this country. From the remarks of some hon. members I should judge that they are not aware of the condition of the timber industry, or what is requisite for its advancement and development. The timber regulations are undoubtedly not as good as they ought to be, and for a long time past I have promised myself that an effort should be made to amend them as far as I was able. The tenure of the ordinary timber license is only from year to year, and no provision is made for a license of more than 1,280 acres. The rental is at the rate of £20 for 640 acres and £40 for every 1,280 acres. To my mind we should offer every facility and every encouragement to men with capital to come here and invest it. It means wealth to the country, the employment of a great amount of labor, and the beneficial development of one of the greatest of our natural resources. The hon. member for Perth has said that we should not be in a hurry in this matter. I believe we ought always to be in a hurry wherever it is to develop such an industry as that of the timber trade. This is one of the greatest products of our land, but it cannot be properly and fully developed without capital. There is a great export trade to be done with

our timbers, and no one can pretend that the development of this trade in such timber centres as the Darling Ranges and other places, bringing as it does increase in revenue, increase in population, and increase in business, does not have a beneficial effect all round. Why, at Jarrahdale alone there is quite a community prospering on the timber industry. We have the same thing at the Canning, and at the Hamelin, and in different parts of the colony large capital is being employed. I am very glad indeed to see that the Commissioner of Crown Lands is taking the matter in hand. He told me he was about to do so. The suggestion of the hon. member for Perth that we should not hurry is the last thing to propose in a country like this. Wherever the development of our natural products is to take place, I say let there be all the hurry we can obtain. This is one of the products for which we are known throughout the world, and I am pleased that we are in a hurry with its successful development. The colony is singularly fortunate in having this great resource in its hard timber. It is regularly shipped to the United States and to the mother country. We cannot see any use, or any good to be gained, by waiting. We should be in a hurry in this matter, and not leave the work for others to perform. I say we should always be in a hurry when it is a question of the proper development of any of our natural resources. As I have said before, the resolution is merely a request for amended legislation, and the proper time to discuss what should be done will be when the Government proposals are brought down to the House.

MR. CLARKSON: I have much pleasure in supporting the resolution. A good deal has been said about forest conservation. However, in these forests of ours, while our timber industry is not being developed as fully as it might be under altered circumstances, it must be borne in mind that tremendous loss is caused by fires. It is better to give the timber away than get it burned up by bush fires. These trees grow as fast as they are burned, and in half a century there will be as much timber in the country as there is now. There is not the slightest use in our pursuing a dog-in-the-manger policy in this matter. If there is any chance of our making money by the export of our timber let us do so in the best possible way.

MR. GEORGE: After the severe rebuke administered to me by the Premier the other

evening, I did not intend to speak on this subject now, but the Hon. the Premier has said so much in favour of the timber resources, that I feel justified in pointing out to him the possible developments in the Murray district. As some members are doubtless aware, I was for some years manager of the Jarrahdale Timber Company, and consequently I claim that where the question of jarrah is under consideration, I can speak with a good deal of authority. As manager of the works of the company, I dealt with a large number of men, and naturally know a good deal about jarrah, and the prospects of our timber resources. The matter, as brought forward by the honorable member for West Kimberley, should receive the most serious consideration. He has simply come before the House, and asked for the confirmation of a principle, leaving the details of that principle to be considered afterwards in proper order. It will be for us to deal with these details at the proper time. I am sure that the wisdom of this House is sufficient to prevent any injustice being done in any way. Some members, by the way they have spoken, cannot possibly be aware of the extent of this industry, even at the present time. They can have no conception of the magnitude of the trade in jarrah. When I left the management of the Jarrahdale Timber Company, our wages sheet amounted to more than £3,000 per month. One has only to consider the possibility of such a company as this ceasing operations, to realise what a terrible state of affairs would be created among a large population. When one considers what £3,000 is to the revenue and to the general welfare of any community, it can at once be seen how important such an industry is. We employed there between 300 and 400 people, and I believe the Canning Company had about the same, and in this instance I would like to point out to members that we should do all we can to increase our exports, especially in the direction of exporting the natural products of the colony. Jarrah is now noted by experience in Paris, Canada, London and other places, and the industry should be encouraged. It was a well-known fact in the trade that in consequence of the grand character of this hard wood, the mills at present in existence in the colony are not equal to supplying the demands of foreign markets, and I make no doubt that if we can offer facilities for the investment of capital in order to open up works on the Darling Ranges

we shall be able to very largely increase our exports, and give employment to large numbers of people who are now in search of work, besides which there would be a still more gratifying increase in the revenue of the country. Members will have noticed that in the timber trade this colony has been the pioneer to open up the markets of the old world. The examples set here are being rapidly followed, more particularly by New South Wales and Tasmania. Those Governments are watching every movement, and it certainly behoves the representatives of the people to make every effort to hold those great markets for our own products. There should be no hesitation about offering facilities in the direction of assisting in the development of this great industry. I hope the resolution now before the House will receive the cordial approval and unanimous support of this Assembly. I think we should give every possible opportunity to capital to come and settle down in our forests. We should offer capitalists every inducement, because in the development of these great forests of ours, it is capital that we require. I have travelled pretty extensively in my own electorate, and was much struck with the vastness of the jarrah forests. One gentleman has said this evening that the jarrah is too valuable to be given away lightly, but jarrah is only valuable according to the use made of it, and, as was rightly said by still another member, it will be far better to turn the timber into wealth than allow it to be burnt in bush fires. I would like to say this in conclusion, that the hon. the Premier referred in cordial terms to the extent of the forest timbers in my own electorate. That electorate is badly in need of a railway, and I trust that when the hon. the Premier is about to construct further railways, he will recollect the splendid opportunity that awaits him in the district I have referred to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Sir, I do not think there is any member in this House, certainly none sitting on this side of it, who had any desire, wish, or thought to injure or even to hinder in any way the proper development of the jarrah timber industry. It is not so much a question of the actual wording of the resolution, but, after hearing the hon. member for West Kimberley, it is very hard to understand what his purpose is. His argument is that certain individuals have large tracts of country at a given price, and that certain others can only obtain smaller quantities at a pro-

portionately higher price, and I gather it is intended that persons having these larger areas should be reduced to more of the standard of the others, or that those paying higher prices should obtain their licenses at lower rates.

MR. A. FORREST: I did not say that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is the way I took it, at any rate.

MR. LEAKE: It is what the hon. member said.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was most certainly the way the arguments of the hon. member trended. I wish to refer, Sir, to some of the statements made on this question by the honorable member for the Murray. He has told us that at the mill of which he was manager the payment to employees reached £3,000 per month. Is it to be supposed that a company like this will be deterred from taking up the country because of having to pay £20 a year for a 640 acre block, or £40 a year for a 1,280 acre one. Any alteration in the question of rent will not make one bit of difference, or induce any other person to take up this timber country. People who have sufficient capital to enter into the industry will not pay much attention to the small rental. I am sure the honorable member for Perth has no desire whatever to hinder the progress of this industry. He has put it pretty plainly that his only desire is that we should deal carefully with this branch of the capital of the colony, and go with such caution that we shall not be led into giving one section of millers advantages not enjoyed by others, and there should not be any special reduction in rents to meet the desires of special persons. If we are going to build railways and bring these persons, and their timber, within reach of the centres of population, that should be sufficient inducement and encouragement for them to take up this land. As I said before it will be impossible for the mere rental to make any difference. A company which has any intention whatever of engaging in the timber industry will not be hindered from doing so because of the amount of the rental. I trust that in whatever the Hon. the Commissioner for Crown Lands introduces on this subject he will not reduce rents. Let the circumstances be equalised if possible and let us give justice and encouragement, but merely throwing away £20 here and £40 there is to get too far forward altogether, and is to meet a set of circumstances which have not come into exist-

ence. The question of the rent over these timber areas is very much like what would happen to a man in business. If a man proposed to enter into any business, and at the very outset knew he could not afford the rent, then he should not enter into that business, and much the same thing applies to the question now before the House.

MR. JAMES : I intend to support the resolution in the way it is put before us by the hon. member for West Kimberley. We have enormous quantities of timber in this colony, and, having in view the concessions granted to these older companies, we should be only too ready to do anything that will provoke competition from the new comer. If we can do anything to induce our local men, our local capitalists, to enter into this work, we should do so. It has been suggested that we should not reduce the rent of these smaller areas, and that some steps should be taken in the direction of forest conservation. The latter suggestions are worthy of consideration apart from the question now before the House, while as to the rent question hon. members should recollect that large areas are already held for next to nothing, and something will have to be done in the interest of the local capitalist to equalise matters. It is necessary that some steps should be taken to properly develop the enormous timber resources of the colony, and I, for one, will do anything to secure this development for local people in such a way that they will have a fair return for any capital they may invest.

MR. HOOLEY : This question, Mr. Speaker, has been discussed this evening from two altogether different points of view, but it has been a discussion which should be productive of good results. The case, as stated by the hon. member for West Kimberley, shows that there is a hardship upon the smaller traders. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the older companies to which concessions were granted, had to pay many thousands of pounds in opening up their territory before they secured any return. With regard to this Collie and Blackwood line, it undoubtedly will travel through first class jarrah country. Now the Government propose to spend a large sum of money on these railways, and any private company taking up land along this line for the timber industry will have a great advantage over other companies, and they will have the Government behind them with their public line of railway. I am in

favor of passing this resolution, as an abstract resolution.

THE HON. W. E. MARMION : I also desire to support the resolution, and I may say that when I had the honor of holding the office of Commissioner of Crown Lands I was forced to the conclusion that the question now brought forward was one which would have to be fully dealt with some day. In fact, it has been postponed too long. The necessity for amended timber regulations is something that was always brought prominently to my notice. The matter has apparently been postponed as long as possible, and while I see the absolute necessity for something being done, I am afraid the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands may find many difficulties in the way of his carrying out what he desires. It is absolutely necessary that we should induce the investment of capital in the timber trade if we desire to see the resources of the colony developed. The industry has to depend upon the export trade, and we must make alterations if we desire to have the necessary money spent. Whatever this House can do to advance the timber industry in this colony should be done. I am sure that my hon. friend, the member for West Kimberley, did not mean to say that we should place the holders of smaller areas in the same position as the holder of the larger concessions so far as rent is concerned. However, that is what the House has been led to infer, and if so, it has been under a misunderstanding. I am not in favor of giving away our timber country in enormous areas, but I do think the people who come into the industry in future, should have something more than 1,280 acres, which is the full extent they can hold now. One honorable member this evening believed there was something at the back of this. There can be nothing of the kind. It is absurd to expect companies to build tramways and erect mills when they can only obtain small areas and have no fixity of tenure. In order to properly develop the trade we want companies prepared to lay down railways and branch railways into the forest at a cost of many thousands of pounds. If we want millers in our timber country we must give them a sufficient area to return them their outlay. I am not in favor, as I said before, of the custom of giving enormous areas being perpetuated. Our timber will be of the greatest value in the future. Our local trade will be ever on the increase, and in a little

while huge quantities of it will be wanted both for our goldfields and our coalfields. When we want all this timber, and our export trade has continued to grow, then we shall feel the want of altered conditions for working the timber country more and more. We have a wonderful timber country in this colony, and its development means a great deal, not the least of which will be the employment of hundreds of people, and honorable members know full well how the wealth and revenue of a country increases when its laboring population is kept prosperously employed. All the honorable member for West Kimberley asks in his resolution is for special legislation to deal with the present condition of the jarrah timber industry. The proposed amended regulations have yet to come before the House, and if we then find the Government is proposing to be too liberal there will be ample time to prevent it. I would not have spoken on this subject but for noticing that some honorable members misunderstood what is a very harmless resolution, and only suggests that the future development of the industry should be on fair, just, and as liberal terms as possible.

MR. A. FORREST: I should like to bear out what the honorable member for the Murray has said on the question of the cost of running these mills, and at the same time I would like to remind the honorable member for Albany that he was one who kept 100,000 acres locked up in the Canning district for four or five years, and then sold his interests with advantage to himself.

MR. LEAKE: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is the hon. member in order in referring to my past misfortunes?

MR. A. FORREST: I only wish to say that in view of the fact I have mentioned, and of that hon. member's own knowledge of the necessity for amended regulations, this opposition from him comes with a very bad grace indeed. Hon. members have made more out of my resolution than the words convey, or are intended to mean. It is acknowledged that alterations are necessary, and my resolution is intended to affirm that. It seems very strange to me that while we have had the railways to the Vasse and to Bunbury working for some time, which railways travel through beautiful jarrah forests, no new mills have been started in these districts. If these forests will be readily taken up after railway communication, as some members have said

how is it there has been no increase in the direction I have indicated? Surely the answer is to be found in the fact that the regulations for taking up this country—which is some of the finest jarrah country in the world—require amendment. If we want people with capital to embark in this industry, and assist in the development of our export trade, we must give them such facilities as will enable them to enter into the undertakings as commercial transactions. A good deal has been said of the money made out of timber, but I venture to say no member of this House can point out a single person who has made his fortune out of these forests. References have also been made to the fact that when the Donnybrook to Bridgetown railway is made, the timber cutters there will have a local market, but that is not so, and, what is more, the cost of reaching Perth would be too great, as compared with the advantages of an export trade. I think the people we ask to come into this timber trade should be allowed to take up 5,000 acres,—not at the rate of £50 a year for a quarter of a million acres—but at something less than 1s. per acre. I am really surprised after what the honorable members for Perth and Albany have said, that they have not themselves started mills near Perth. This timber industry is one that requires a large amount of capital, and hon. members will be able to understand this when I say that the small mill I run in the ranges costs £1,000 a month and means the keeping of about 100 people—men, women, and children. Surely these sort of establishments are of some good to the community? It is only right in the interests of the country itself, that we should make whatever concessions we possibly can to encourage and develop such an industry, which means the employment of so much capital and such a great amount of labor. The hon. member for Nannine had said a good deal, but it was pretty evident he knew nothing about timber.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I beg the hon. member's pardon. At one time I dealt with over 40 trucks a month, and have been in three or four mills.

MR. A. FORREST: Then you ought to have known better than to say some of the things you have said. I hope these regulations will be speedily brought down, and in such a way that they will be acceptable to the House. It is no use any man thinking he is going

to pay his way in the timber trade on a 640 acre block.

MR. GEORGE: It is no use for jarrah.

MR. A. FOREST: Not the slightest. If we desire to encourage the export trade in our timbers we must alter the regulations in the manner I have suggested.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I did not intend to speak to such a harmless resolution, Mr. Speaker, and did not think it could possibly have created the discussion which has taken place upon it. There is not the slightest doubt that the alterations suggested by the hon. member for West Kimberley are required. We must have altered timber regulations if the trade in that product is to be made a prosperous one, but I believe the proper time for the consideration of the matter will be when the regulations are brought before the House.

MR. SIMPSON: I am perfectly sure that honorable members on this side of this House have every sympathy with any movement having for its object the further development of one of the most important industries in the colony. The only thing is that hon. members regard with suspicion any proposal coming from a member so intimately associated with the jarrah industry, as the hon. member for West Kimberley undoubtedly is.

MR. A. FOREST: I have only brought the matter forward for the reason that I know something about it.

MR. SIMPSON: I am free to admit that I am not strong on jarrah. I have only seen certain exhibits. However, there can be no doubt our jarrah timber is one of the most valuable natural resources we possess. I only hope that in any proposal by the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, that gentleman will carefully conserve the interest of others than those whose desire appear to be in the direction of one thing, and one thing only—"monopoly." For my own part I am sceptical as to the reasons actuating the member who brings this matter forward, and I think the House is also very sceptical whether the word "monopoly" is not written all over it. I trust the House will very carefully consider any question in the direction of further alienating the forest lands of the colony. By all means let the House do everything to encourage the legitimate industry, but not take any step to assist in the creation of a huge and grinding monopoly in regard to our forests.

The question was then put and passed.

CARRIAGE OF EXPLOSIVES &c., TO NORTHERN PORTS.

MR. CONNOR, in accordance with notice, moved: "That in the interests of the mining and squatting communities, and of the police force of the Northern portion of the colony, it is absolutely necessary to provide some means of having explosives and ammunition forwarded to the different Northern ports." The hon. member said: In bringing under the consideration of hon. members of this House the motion standing in my name, I desire to emphasise the fact that unless there is some alteration in the present regulations for carrying explosives by the various steamship companies, most serious injury will be done, and loss sustained, by those engaged in work in the districts named. At present we have a thriving industry in the far north. We have the Murchison, the Pilbarra, the Marble Bar, and I need not say, the Kimberley goldfields. Some honorable members of this House may not know that unless some alteration is made in the shipping regulations in this respect, great harm will be done to the mining industry in these districts. At present the shipping regulations are actually prohibitive, and no steam vessel dare bring explosives to any of our ports. What is worse, is the fact that there never has been any necessity whatever for this prohibitive legislation. No harm has ever been done, or danger run, to require it. Dynamite, as hon. members know, is the explosive mostly required in the north. It can be carried without danger on ships, and if the old methods of carriage were not sufficient, the shipping companies will be quite prepared to meet any proposal for special storage. However, so far as the safety of passengers is concerned, there is no more danger in a ship carrying dynamite than there is in one carrying matches or kerosene. Perhaps there is not as much. Under the present regulations, if a gunboat was to come to Fremantle with its ordinary supply of gunpowder or guncotton aboard, it would have to stand off. It could not be legally brought alongside. I ask honorable members of this House whether such prohibitive regulations as these are not most absurd. I intended to have read to the House this evening some telegrams I have received dealing with this subject, but, unfortunately, I find that I have left them in my office. One telegram was from a meeting of 300 miners, telling me that they were about to petition the House on the sub-

ject. When the petition comes forward I shall see that it is properly brought before this House. These men find that it is necessary that they should have the explosives, in order to carry on the work of mining development. Then, again, I have another telegram from a gentleman running a mine at great expense, who wires something to this effect:—"Unless I can get explosives, seven or eight men will be thrown out of employment, and I shall have to go bankrupt." In other words, those who have put these regulations in force have practically said to those engaged in the mining industry—"This is intended to shut you up." I have made it my business to see the representatives of the various shipping companies, and, with only one exception, I found they were perfectly willing to continue the carriage of explosives on the same lines as those in force prior to the institution of this prohibitive regulation. These companies have been carrying explosives without accident for the past ten years, and they are prepared to resume their old practice. There is another phase of the question, and that is as it affects ammunition. The Attorney-General has informed me that the Act does not prevent vessels carrying ammunition, but the regulations apparently override the Act in this respect. Now, in the far North, the blacks may at any time become very troublesome, and it is necessary that people settled there, and the police, should be provided with ammunition for the purpose of protecting their homes and property. It is not required for offensive purposes, but for the purposes of defence and protection. For my own part, I regard the disabilities that the mining industry in these districts is under in regard to explosives, as being of such a serious character, that if the Government will not alter the legislation on this point we should subsidise the running of a vessel to these northern ports at stated intervals. I leave the framing of what ever new regulation is required to some more experienced member of this House, but I do appeal to the good sense and justice of honorable members, and more particularly to those who represent mining constituencies, to assist me in having this prohibitive and unnecessary legislation done away with.

MR. KEEP: I have very great pleasure in supporting the resolution proposed by the hon. member for East Kimberley. It simply means that at the present time the shipping regulations in regard to explosives are of an

absolutely prohibitive nature. We never heard of them until in April or May last, when the hon. the Premier took a trip to Geraldton, and found himself in company with 200 cases of dynamite. This may have made the Premier nervous, but he reached Geraldton alright. On his return, however, certain communications were made to the Customs Department, and then these regulations were brought into force. Under these regulations no vessel having explosives on board is permitted to go alongside any jetty, and it simply means that any vessel arriving at Geraldton would be compelled to tranship the explosives on board into a boat three miles from shore, and this latter boat could not land the cargo. A regulation having such an effect as this can only be described as prohibitive. I would say, let the companies take the risk of carrying explosives as they used to do prior to the visit of the Premier to Geraldton. Dynamite has been stored on board ships in all sorts of ways, but when vessels were compelled to carry it in the place determined on by the Customs Department—that was in the ships' boats—it was about as dangerous a place as could have been selected. There can be no trouble in getting the various coasting vessels to carry magazines on board, and then there will be absolutely no danger whatever. In connection with this matter the representatives of the shipping companies had an interview with the Collector of Customs and the Chief Inspector of Explosives, but no good result came of it. I would suggest that the regulation should be withdrawn, and the companies allowed to take the risk of carrying the explosives.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I was led to suppose that the shipping companies did not want to take the risk.

MR. KEEP: I do not think any of them will refuse.

MR. SIMPSON: I have very great pleasure in supporting the proposal made to this House by the hon. member for East Kimberley. I am aware of the fact that coincident with the safe arrival of the Premier, after his visit to Geraldton, these regulations were enforced.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I suppose these are facts.

MR. SIMPSON: Approximately they are facts. It appears to me that we owe the enforcement of this regulation to the tremor of the Premier. It is not right that this should have

been allowed to throw obstacles in the way of developing the mining industry. I know of one instance where there is a weekly expenditure of over £60, and work must be shut down unless they can procure the necessary explosives. It appears to be a regulation due only to the timidity of the Premier after travelling with 200 cases of dynamite to Geraldton.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They could have these explosives taken by railway.

MR. SIMPSON: Then I am to suppose that this regulation is enforced merely in the interests of a private railway company—a company, the capital of which was guaranteed by the Government in the face of public opinion. I do think the repeal of the regulations is necessary, and I have much pleasure in giving my support to the resolution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Mr. Speaker,—The regulations that are in existence at the present time are those framed in 1885 or 1886, and they have not been altered, so far as I am aware, by the present Government, but about a year ago a notice was put in the *Government Gazette* that the regulations would be carried out. No doubt they are very stringent. I have been trying to see if some means could be devised by which explosives could be carried, and the Collector of Customs says the steamship companies absolutely refuse to carry them at all, and it is no use doing anything in that direction. I quite recognise the difficulty, because these explosives are indispensable, not only for miners, but for the settlers in the north. The regulations affected the northern ports, from which supplies were obtained for the Pilbarra, Roebourne, and Kimberley goldfields, whilst all the other goldfields had explosives carried to them by the railways.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about Carnarvon?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think there is much gold-mining there. I know the settlers require these explosives as well as the miners; so that what the hon. member for Geraldton says about miners having been kept waiting for explosives, does not affect the question before the House, because there is the Mullewa railway by which the explosives can be carried. This matter was brought prominently before my notice when I travelled on a steamer from Geraldton which had an immense amount of dynamite on board. There were a great number of passengers, and if it had been known there was a

quantity of dynamite on board, very few of those passengers would have travelled by that steamer, indeed, I do not think it is reasonable to expect passengers to travel by steamers carrying immense quantities of dynamite. People are foolish who go to sea under such circumstances. In all the other colonies I believe they prohibit passenger steamers from carrying these explosives; and, so far as the ocean-going steamers are concerned, it is a thing unheard of. They would not take explosives on any account. I think it is not desirable to attempt to induce passenger steamers to carry them. I may say the Government is most anxious to assist in this matter with regard to the northern ports of the colony, and will support any reasonable means that are may be devised. The hon. member for East Kimberley may rely upon every assistance from the Government. It is somewhat difficult to see how it can be carried out, because it is, after all, a commercial matter. I don't see how the Government can assist, unless perhaps by subsidising a sailing vessel, if the House thinks that is a satisfactory way of dealing with it. A sum of money will have to be placed on the Estimates for subsidising a vessel to visit those places, say once in six months, to carry the necessary explosives, though I do not think the trade would be sufficient to warrant a schooner going up every six months.

MR. SIMPSON: Yes, easily.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If there is, and it is shown to this House that it ought to be done, then I think no objection will be raised by the Government.

MR. HOOLEY: I rise to support the motion of the hon. member for East Kimberley, because I know the effect this lack of explosives has, not only upon miners, but upon the settlers. I know they suffer great hardship, and have been suffering during the last three or four months, because they could not get water for their stock. I have numerous letters showing the difficulties, for though they could get well sinkers, they found it impossible to sink wells in that hard country without dynamite, and they had to send all the way to Geraldton to get it. All the steamers that clear out of Fremantle for the northern ports invariably call at Geraldton, but the fact of having explosives on board prohibits them going alongside the jetty, and therefore they refuse to carry the explosives for Carnarvon, Cossack and those places, so that if the Government

can do anything to obviate the difficulty, I hope they will; I was glad to hear the Premier say he would do his best to meet the difficulty, possibly by subsidising a sailing vessel. I am quite satisfied in my own mind that there will be quite sufficient cargo if a small vessel of say 50 or 60 tons burden goes up twice a year, but I do not know whether it would pay them to go for such a small cargo without any subsidy. I ask the House to consider the question, and in its wisdom I hope it will subsidise a vessel.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member who introduced this motion is always most generous in his advocacy of anything and everything that tends to develop the goldfields of the colony, and as a member representing mining interests I hope he will meet with success. I shall certainly render him all the assistance in my power in all matters of this kind. If we cannot always agree upon such matters as the Stock Tax, we can agree to give a *quid pro quo*. Why should not the squatter and those who represent the pastoral interests in the North, assist in developing this industry, and so provide markets for their products on the Pilbarra and other goldfields? As it has been in the other colonies, where the goldfields began in the East and then extended to the West, so it probably will be here, and the much despised Kimberley goldfield will be profitably worked, no doubt when some of the richer parts of the colony are worked out altogether, for then both material and labour will be more easily obtained than they can be at the present time. I consider that if the Government do subsidise a vessel to carry these explosives to the north, they will be conferring a great benefit upon the pastoral industry; and I hope in the matter of the removal of the Stock Tax the members representing pastoral and other interests will see that it is simply giving a *quid pro quo*. I am certain that this must come in a very short time, and what the squatter must lose by the Stock Tax can be made up to him in this and other ways. I hope the Government will support the motion.

MR. WOOD: It is my intention to support this motion because I think it a very good one indeed. I am glad the Government have realised the danger of carrying large quantities of dynamite in passenger steamers. Any one would think to hear the speeches to-night that there never had been such a thing as an explosion. I would be very sorry to travel in

a steamer carrying 200 cases of dynamite on board.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, that would not shift you.

MR. WOOD: I think one way of dealing with this question of subsidising steamers should be by providing them with magazines, or if not by subsidising steamers then sailing vessels might be sent up with a year's supply to the different ports along the coast. Let it then be stored in magazines and let the Government sell it to the miners and to the squatters. I shall support the motion, and I hope the Government will bring in a Bill in a very short time.

MR. RANDELL: I think a great deal too much is being made of the danger that is supposed to attend the carrying of explosives. It is a very rare occasion for an explosion to take place through carrying either gunpowder or dynamite. I have no personal acquaintance with dynamite, but am told there is no danger if reasonable precautions are taken for its storage. The only ground of danger of which I know is if a fire were to occur, and there is danger then apart from any dynamite, for probably both passengers and crew would have to leave the ship. So far as the extra danger when carrying explosives by steamer is concerned, I rather think there is more danger of fire than an explosion. I have no statistics, but I think more fires occur on sailing ships than on steamers, although there have to be large fires kept on the steamers to drive the engines. It seems to me that the suggestion that has been thrown out will not meet the case, and if a vessel be sent up only twice a year it will be very inconvenient to the settlers and others who want these things for station purposes, and also for purposes of defence. Of course it is a matter for steamship owners themselves as to whether they would undertake the risks. It seems to me there is no reason why they should not do this, though they should not be compelled to carry explosives. It seems to me the danger has been considerably magnified because we had an explosion at Fremantle. The Government some time ago imported a gentleman who was an expert on the question, and I should like to know if he gave them any advice on the matter of explosives. It seems to me that that visit afforded a suitable opportunity for them to get expert advice on these matters. One is curious to know what the report of that gentleman was.

THE PREMIER: His report will be here directly.

MR. RANDELL: I am glad to hear it, for he was imported here at considerable expense.

THE PREMIER: No; the expense was not considerable I think.

MR. RANDELL: I do not think it was worth the money. I should myself have no objection to travel by a steamer carrying explosives, for I fully believe there is no danger, if reasonable precaution is taken. There has been a good deal too much fuss made about the matter, and we ought not to interfere with the trade of the distant ports of this colony because of the imaginary danger in carrying explosives.

MR. CLARKSON: It seems strange to me that these regulations which have been in force some nine years should need to be revised. I cannot call to mind any accident that has ever occurred to a steamer or sailing ship through carrying explosives without a subsidy. Why then offer a subsidy, if they are willing to carry them without. I think there will be plenty of time to anticipate this when a case has occurred. I hope the hon. member for East Kimberley will receive the unanimous support of the House on his motion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I had the pleasure of travelling from Fremantle to Geraldton along with 50 cases of dynamite.

MR. LEAKE: The Government did not know that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I should have been just as satisfied to travel with five thousand as five, because in case of explosion five cases would have been sufficient to put the vessel under. I do think, however, it is going beyond the province of the Government for them to propose to direct the steamship companies that trade along this coast upon a question of this kind. When dealing with the question of land, possibly it may be necessary for the Government to take some precautions in that way. I would rather trust myself to the steamship companies and their management, than to the management of the Railway Department, as manifested in what occurred a little time ago at Fremantle. I do think that the difficulties in connection with this matter—which the hon. member for East Kimberley is seeking to rectify—will be best dealt with by removing the regulations altogether, and by leaving the shipping companies to look after themselves and their passengers. They do not require

any assistance from the Government in anything that effects their trade along the coast. If there were any public opinion adverse to the companies carrying dynamite, depend upon it they would quickly give up carrying it. I think we may safely leave the question in the hands of the shipping companies.

THE PREMIER: They do not carry explosives anywhere else.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not quite sure the hon. the Premier is correct.

THE PREMIER: Well, where?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think dynamite is carried round the colonies, but that is not the question; we are not legislating for the other colonies, but for the peculiar circumstances of the northern portions of this colony, which need attention in this matter. I can speak from personal experience, though I cannot say it is on account of the present regulations, for dynamite might have gone up on the railway, but I know 16 men were kept waiting three weeks because they could not get the necessary dynamite. I am not blaming the regulations, for the Murchison fields can be supplied by railway, and dynamite could have been got that way, but the custom had been to bring it up to Geraldton by steamer, and they were expecting it in that particular way. The extra cost of transit was a hindrance in this particular case. I suggest that the Government remove the regulations and leave the companies to deal with the question and they will take care of their own interests without any assistance from the Government.

MR. LEAKE: I do not intend to make any observations if the Government do not intend to oppose it.

THE PREMIER: No.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Before the question is closed, I should like to say a word or two. The law in this colony is the same as it is all over the colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, and I believe in South Australia, too. I think in all the Colonies we have the same Act dealing with the carriage of explosives, and the only difficulty here at the present time is, that when they arrive at a port they have to hoist a flag and keep away from the jetty when they have dynamite on board. I do not know that dynamite or other explosives become more explosive when they are brought alongside a jetty. It may be, however, there are more people about to increase the danger. Anyhow, the steamer could soon get rid of the

explosives when she got alongside the jetty. The difficulty referred principally to Geraldton, which was the port of call for the Murchison fields. North of that port there was no difficulty, for steamers could go alongside the jetty at Derby, but they had no jetty at Onslow or Cossack. The Carnarvon and Pilbarra fields could be supplied well enough, and if the companies refused to carry explosives to these ports, it was not on account of any regulations that the Government have made, because there are no jetties, and the regulations consequently do not affect them.

MR. LEAKE: They cannot discharge at the Geraldton jetty.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): So far as I have considered the question, I think the regulations might be eased somewhat where they say you may come alongside the jetty to load dynamite, but you must not come in to the jetty if you have dynamite on board. If the regulations were eased there would be no difficulty in the matter at all. I believe the companies know that passengers object, and that is the reason why they will not carry dynamite. It is all very well for an hon. member to say we overrate the danger, but if the regulations were relaxed and an explosion occurred and two or three hundred lives were lost, there would be an outcry against the Government. I believe dynamite, so long as it is in perfect condition, is not dangerous; it is when it begins to melt or ooze out of its cases that it is dangerous. The report to which the hon. member for Perth referred will disclose the fact that there was enough stored at Fremantle to blow that place about, and which was very dangerous, and which had to be used at once, lest it should explode and do immense damage. The Government is now making use of a hulk for storing purposes. I know of some dynamite that was taken away up the coast and stored in the bowels of some sandhill or some solid rock, or some other such place, and it exploded and blew the whole hill completely away, although nobody touched the stuff. Suppose that had been in the hold of a steamer, you can imagine the results. It is a difficult matter to keep such dangerous material. It is no use saying there is no danger, because there is danger, and the Government must protect the lives of the travelling public, as well as provide for the convenience of the mining and other industries. They have the two things to provide for, and their attention will be turned

to that end. I wish to say this, when the Government come forward with their proposal. I hope we shall not hear the words yet another subsidy for the carriage of explosives up the coast, and I should have thought private enterprise would have taken this up. The Government must always consider the safety of the public, who have a right to think they are safe on board these steamers. The companies would not tell the passengers they had dynamite on board, because the passengers have no right to know the nature of the cargo, but if an explosion took place the Government would be asked at once, why did you not make such regulations under the powers Parliament conferred upon you as would have prevented this? There must be regulations of some sort; and the matter will be duly considered by the Government, who will do what it can in the matter.

MR. CONNOR: I would like to reply to the remarks of some hon. members, and particularly to the members who have spoken from the Treasury benches. The Attorney-General makes out the case as though it were almost impossible to carry explosives without having an accident, and quoted an instance where a sand hill was blown completely away. Now, Sir, is there any more danger in these things than in the steamer having to carry a boiler to propel her. I think if statistics could be brought forward it would be found that a greater percentage of accidents had occurred through having boilers aboard than explosives. I do not know of a single instance where a ship has been damaged through having explosives on board. There is another thing which is very absurd. You can send a steamer to Geraldton, for instance, to load explosives, but you cannot send her in there to land them if she has them on board. These regulations practically say you can come in to carry these explosives out, and it does not matter to us if they blow the ship up ten times over, but you must not come alongside the jetty except to load them. I think that is very absurd. The Premier made use of the same argument; I am not blaming him; I only want to deal with the facts.

THE PREMIER: They absolutely refuse to carry them; so the Collector of Customs tells me.

MR. CONNOR: I can refer to one hon. member of this House who is manager for one of these shipping companies, who told the Premier that his company was perfectly

prepared to carry these explosives provided the regulations were removed.

MR. SIMPSON: Give him exact facts.

MR. CONNOR: I think the Premier will admit that what I have said is fact, and I am only just reminding him of what took place some time ago. I have already referred to the fact there is no more danger in carrying explosives than in carrying a boiler, the danger lies in carrying detonators rather than in dynamite. I do not know whether I am going wrong in referring to these matters.

THE SPEAKER: You are perfectly in order.

MR. CONNOR: A gentleman who was brought over here to report, said that decomposition was the cause of danger, and that I believe is so. I have no more to say, except to express my satisfaction that the Government have agreed to support my resolution, and to express the hope they will not allow it to stay where it is, but that squatters and others in the North, who are dependent upon these things will not be left in the lurch, and have to see their stock die on account of the absurd regulations that will not allow the steamers to carry explosives of any sort.

Motion put and passed.

UNIFORMS BILL.

The Order of the Day for the third reading of this Bill having been read, and Mr. Speaker having reported that the Chairman of Committees had certified that the fair print of the Bill was in accordance with the Bill as agreed to in Committee and reported, Mr. Burt moved, that the Bill be now read a third time.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a third time.

Ordered—that the Bill be transmitted to the Legislative Council, and their concurrence desired therein.

EXCESS (1893-94) BILL.

The Order of the Day for the third reading of this Bill having been read, and Mr. Speaker having reported that the Chairman of Committees had certified that the fair print of the Bill was in accordance with the Bill as agreed to in Committee and reported, Mr. Burt moved, that the Bill be now read a third time.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a third time.

Ordered—That the Bill be transmitted to

the Legislative Council, and their concurrence desired therein.

STANDARD TIME BILL.

The Order of the Day for the consideration of the Committee's Report upon this Bill having been read, and the amendments in the Bill having been read and agreed to, Sir John Forrest moved, that the Report be adopted.

Question—put and passed.

Ordered—That the third reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

AGENT-GENERAL BILL.

The Order of the Day for the consideration of this Bill in Committee having been read.

Sir John Forrest moved, that Mr. Speaker leave the Chair, and that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to consider the Bill.

Question—put and passed.

Mr. Speaker left the chair.

AGENT-GENERAL BILL.

Clause (1)—Appointment. Agreed to.

Clause (2)—Duties.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the Clause be struck out, and that the following Clause be inserted in lieu thereof:—"It shall be the duty of the Agent-General to do and perform all acts, matters, and things in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in relation to Western Australia, in accordance with such instructions as may from time to time be given or transmitted to him by such Minister as may from time to time be appointed by the Governor to be the channel of communication between the Colony and the Agent General." He thought it was fuller and more elastic. The Clause he proposed was similar to the one in the Tasmanian Act, whereas the one then in the Bill was similar to the one in the South Australian Act.

MR. RANDELL preferred to stand by the Clause as it was printed, and wanted to know if the new Clause would not take the directing of the Agent-General out of the hands of the individual Minister, except by the concurrence of the Cabinet-in-Council.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) did not think so. Instructions would be sent to London by every mail, and the business of the country would be carried on by the particular Minister having charge of the department.

At the present time the Treasurer communicated in the ordinary way upon all matters not being Cabinet minutes.

MR. RANDELL said he was referring to the removal of the Agent-General.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that it was never done except by the Governor-in-Council.

MR. LEAKE understood the Premier to say, that the new Clause was more elastic than the one then standing in the Bill, yet he gathered from the reading of the new Clause, that the Agent-General could only act when he had specific instructions, whereas the clause as it stood said he was to do all things in relation to Western Australia that the Colonial Treasurer directed, or as were proper to be done in the interests of the colony.

THE PREMIER: That would not be without instructions.

MR. LEAKE thought it undesirable to tie the hands of the Agent-General, as there were many little things that needed to be done upon which he could not possibly have written instructions, and he thought he should have some discretionary power.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said in small matters he would have that power, but not in important matters. It would be easy to telegraph.

MR. LEAKE was willing to allow the matter to pass for the time being, as it could afterwards be altered if necessary when the Bill was reported.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) thought the Agent-General should act under instructions, but that did not mean he could not attend to matters of detail. There had never been any friction between the Agent-General and the Ministry, and he thought when the Premier's new Clause was seen in print, hon. members would regard it as a better one than that which they then had before them in the Bill.

MR. SOLOMON wanted to know whether the channel of communication was the Governor himself, or the Governor in Council.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the Governor never did anything of that sort by himself.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked if he could not go away without leave of absence.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he always asked the Secretary of State.

Clause two was struck out and the new clause proposed by the Premier was carried.

Clause 3—*Salary.*

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the word "be" in the second line be struck out for the purpose of inserting the words "*not exceeding.*" He thought the colony could get a very good Agent-General at a thousand pounds a year, but he thought it better to leave it to the discretion of the Government to pay the whole amount of £1,500 if they thought it necessary.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he proposed at the proper time to move an amendment reducing the amount. He had taken some trouble to look up figures which he wished to give to hon. members, but he was not quite sure whether that was the time to give them.

THE CHAIRMAN said the discussion could take place upon the proposal of the hon. member for Nannine.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said if the Committee carried the proposal of the hon. member for Nannine they were committing themselves to £1,500 a year.

HON. MEMBERS: No, not necessarily.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) did not favor the proposal to strike out the words from the clause as proposed by the hon. member for Nannine, because they ought to deal with the matter definitely, and the alteration would make it more difficult for the Government to deal with the question if they had to offer a salary less than that provided for by Statute. Such action would not be regarded as very friendly on the part of the Government, and he thought a definite amount should be fixed, so that the gentleman appointed would know exactly what he was to receive. The Government were free in the matter, and were under no obligation to anyone, so that the Committee had the matter entirely in its own hands. The appointment was not under offer to anyone, so that the amount could be fixed without reference to individuals. He thought, under the circumstances, £1,500 a year would be a reasonable salary. The Committee ought not to forget the Agent-General in London held a responsible position, and was entrusted with vast sums of money, and he should be a gentleman of experience who could be thoroughly trusted. He thought there was no need for the colony to be niggardly in the matter.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The Agent-General for Tasmania only gets £1,250 a year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he knew that, but it was also very well known that in the other colonies they had had to cut down on account of the difficulties they had had to meet.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They are gaining experience.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said South Australia paid £1,500 at the present time, and the Committee would only be acting fairly to leave it as it had been during the past three or four years, still, they had it entirely in their own hands.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said there was no doubt but the position of the Agent-General was an ornamental one.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not at all.

MR. R. F. SHOLL did not think there was much responsibility attached to it he had to take his instructions from a Minister who only got £1,000 a year, and he considered £1,000 in England equal to £1,500, or even £2,000, in the colonies. He considered when such colonies as New Zealand and Tasmania only paid £1,250 they ought not to pay more. Queensland paid £1,500, Victoria £2,125, which had been since reduced, and New South Wales £2,000, but he thought there was a good deal of sentiment about the New South Wales' salary, as their Agent-General was an old and valued servant. Their present Agent-General had only been receiving £800 a year from the colony, as he had been drawing a pension of £700 per year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He had been receiving £1,500 from the colony but only £800 from that office.

MR. R. F. SHOLL pointed out the expenditure in connection with the office was £3,130, notwithstanding the Agent-General only drew £800 a year. He intended to move to reduce the amount of salary to the same as New Zealand and Tasmania, namely, £1,250.

MR. LEAKE: You cannot compare New Zealand with Western Australia.

MR. MARMION said if he supported the resolution of the hon. member for Nanine, he should certainly oppose that of the hon. member for the Gascoyne.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought there were many reasons why his resolution should be carried. The Government had had the opportunity of securing the services of an Agent-General for nothing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had no knowledge of such a thing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought they had very good reasons for rejecting that proposal. The Bill proposed a salary of £1,500, but there might be circumstances under which they could get it done for less, and he thought the Ministry should have discretionary power, particularly if the Committee fixed the maximum.

MR. LEAKE said as it was not a party question he should support the clause as it stood. He did not believe in reducing it to the dead level of a contract, or ordinary bargain for work. Let them fix the amount and then the Agent-General would know what to expect, and would not be afraid it would be reduced a few months after he accepted the office. It would be difficult for the hon. member for the Gascoyne to live in London on £1,500 a year.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he would like to try it.

MR. LEAKE thought it desirable to get the best men for such positions, and he would support the clause as it stood.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. R. F. SHOLL moved to strike out the words "£1,500," with a view of inserting "£1,250." He did not believe the colony ought to pay more than New Zealand or Tasmania. He thought the man who did most of the work, the second in command, might receive a little more. There was no doubt but the secretary of the Agent-General was the man who did most of the work, whilst the Agent-General was merely the figure head. He thought £1,250 in England would go further than £2,000 in the colonies.

MR. SOLOMON would support the amendment, for if New Zealand with loans amounting to forty millions could be well represented by an Agent-General only receiving £1,250, he thought their colony could stand on the same footing. It would be harder to reduce the amount if the necessity should arise in the future than to fix it now.

MR. MARMION said he would support the clause as it stood. He did not wish to deal with the question of the cost of living in London, as compared with the colony, but he thought they should not deal with the position in a niggardly spirit, as the gentleman who would occupy the position would have to spend money in that position which he would not otherwise do.

MR. SHOLL: Nonsense!

MR. MARMION felt sure that what he said was correct. The other colonies referred to might possibly have appointed gentlemen who had private means of their own, but in the case of anyone who was appointed, who had not private means, he would find it difficult to do the office justice even at £1,500 a year.

MR. JAMES supported the amendment because in any test of comparison with other colonies either in population, or comparative amounts paid to Ministers and the Agent-General, the amount proposed here was larger in proportion; and he did not see why the Committee should pass a larger amount in proportion than the other colonies.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): said they must not forget that the gentleman selected for this office was called upon to break up his home, and leave his business, and go away, though only for a short time, only for three years. He had known of one Agent-General who had lived in lodgings in London, and he did not think hon. members would like to see that condition of things in relation to Western Australia. He did not think it a time to reduce salaries, seeing they had been able to pay £1,500 for the last five years, and if they could do it then they could do it now.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said they had not actually paid the amount.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The amount was fixed by Parliament before the present Agent-General was appointed.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Not before it was known he would be appointed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Said it was fixed before it was known who would be appointed, and he did not think the present time was the one to begin to reduce salaries.

MR. WOOD said he intended to support the clause as it stood.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: We knew that.

MR. WOOD thought it was ridiculous to reduce the amount only £250, if it were reduced it should be by £500. He considered if they paid the Agent-General in proportion to population he would get about £300 a year. He should support the Clause.

MR. CLARKSON supported the Clause as it stood. He thought it would look mean to strike off a paltry £250.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the hon. member for West Perth amused him. It was not a question of paying the amount of £250 more or

less, but it was a question of paying £250 more than they ought to pay, because they could get as good a man as either Tasmania or New Zealand for the amount. The Premier had referred to an Agent-General who lived in lodgings, he thought such a man would be more likely to do more work than a man who lived in a palace. He had noticed in the Excess Bill an amount of £700 for Crown Agents, and he did not think the other colonies paid such amounts.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said they paid the Banks for doing the same thing.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: thought possibly they were paying Crown Agents and Banks as well.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said not on the same loans.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) supported the amount of £1,500 as it had been fixed by Parliament on a former occasion. He assured hon. members from his experience when he went Home to open the office that £1,500 a year was little enough.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: you were young and giddy.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he felt sure hon. members generally would not accuse him of being giddy, although he was young. The Agents-General of the other colonies had to pay interest on loans and attend to other business. The Crown Agents in connection with their own colony kept the accounts of their stock prior to the introduction of Responsible Government, but they had now followed the same course as the other colonies, and arranged with the Banks to do the business, otherwise it would involve keeping a large staff in the Agent-General's office. The Government did not care whether the salary were fixed at £1,500 or £1,250.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Tenure and duration of office.

MR. LEAKE said hon. members who remembered his remarks on the second reading of the Bill, would anticipate the motion he proposed then, "that the tenure of office be limited to three years and to three years only." He feared if it were not so limited, when once a gentleman were appointed he would hold office for a considerable time. It was not desirable that any one should be allowed to grow old in the office of Agent-General, he should be kept in touch with the circumstances of the colony. He proposed to strike

out from the last line of the clause the words "but shall" and that the words "and shall not" be inserted in their place. It had been suggested to him to strike out the words "who shall be eligible for re-appointment" but he was not prepared just then to do so. He did not mean that no holder of the office should ever be re-appointed, but only that he should not be appointed continuously.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) could not support the amendment, because he did not see much sense in it.

MR. LEAKE: No, don't put it like that.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could not see exactly what the hon. member was driving at, unless it were, that there were a great many people he knew who were anxious for the position, and he desired they should all have an innings. He did not see why an Agent-General who had given satisfaction in carrying out his duties should not be re-appointed. It was not very easy for people to sever their connection in the colony and go away to live in London. The other colonies had always had difficulty in suitably filling the office, and it seemed as though hon. members desired to limit the action of the Government in making the appointment, and he could see no reason for it. If they preferred to make a limit, let it be six years and not three years only. They might fix the appointment for three years, but should leave it open for the Government to re-appoint for another term of three years if it were desirable to do so.

MR. R. F. SHOLL would not support the amendment, because he did not think it wise to place any Government in a position to have to remove an Agent-General at a time when his experience and service in England might be specially useful. He hardly got into work in twelve months, and there might arise a crisis, which would make it very desirable that his services should be retained. He thought the clause should be left as it was.

MR. RANDELL understood the hon. member for Albany had intended to strike out the words "who shall be eligible for re-appointment." He thought if those words were struck out it would then be left to the Government to re-appoint or not as the case might demand. A good deal could be said on both sides of the question. The Hon. the Premier had stated the case very strongly from his side, but he thought it desirable that no person should hold the office too long. It was

not possible by cablegrams and despatches to put the Agent-General in possession of all the circumstances, needs and different affairs of the colony, as they could if he were fresh from the colony itself, as if, for instance, he had been working in either Houses of the Legislature. There were many reasons why one person should not hold the office too long.

THE PREMIER: Parliament would have something to say if that were the case.

MR. RANDELL said it was well known the Agent-General of South Australia had not held office very long.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the clause was from their Act.

MR. RANDELL said, then they must have some means of upsetting the Bill, for there had been a great number of changes in connection with their office.

THE PREMIER said the previous occupant of the position for South Australia had died.

MR. RANDELL thought other instances had occurred. In Victoria, for instance, they had changed very often. He thought if the words "who shall be eligible for re-appointment" were left out, it would relieve the Government, if they did wish to re-appoint. There was a good deal in the argument that if he had served the colony well for three years, it would be a pity to remove him. If the hon. member for Albany would withdraw his amendment he would move one in its place.

MR. LEAKE said that, on the hon. member's suggestion, he would withdraw the amendment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government preferred to leave open the question of re-appointment, as in other colonies.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. RANDELL moved, as an amendment, that the words in the fifth line of the clause, "but shall be eligible for re-appointment," be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5 and 6:

Agreed to.

New Clause:

MR. MOSS moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill: "No person who may be appointed to the position of Agent-General shall, during his tenure of office, act as director of, or hold any position in, any company or syndicate whatsoever, whether in-

corporated or not." He said that, as the salary of the Agent-General was to be £1,500 a year, the least to be expected from the holder of the office was that he should devote the whole of his time and attention to the duties of Agent-General.

MR. R. F. SHOLL supported the new clause, and said it was very desirable that the Agent-General should give all his time and attention to the business of the colony. It was not long ago, as hon. members would have seen from reports in newspapers, that the present holder of the office was entrapped into consenting to have his name placed on the prospectus of a mining company, and it appeared he afterwards had great difficulty, when his attention has been called to the matter, to get his name removed from the prospectus, and had actually to go to a court of law in order to get his name removed. If the fact were made clear, in the present Bill, that no Agent-General for this colony should, or could allow his name to be placed on the prospectus or the directorate of any company, the mining boomers would then know that it would be useless to approach the Agent-General for Western Australia.

MR. LEAKE asked the Attorney-General to consider the effect of the words in the proposed new clause. Were they not rather too sweeping? If the object was to prohibit the Agent-General from acting as a director on the board of any incorporated company, perhaps that object was commendable; but the amendment went further, by saying the Agent-General should not be a director of any company or syndicate, or hold any position in such. Would the Attorney-General, or the mover of the new clause, be good enough to define the meaning of the term "syndicate"? His own impression was that the term "syndicate" was merely a synonym for "partnership;" and the new clause might thus stop the Agent-General from indulging in any little venture at all. This House could not expect an Agent-General to—[The Commissioner of Crown Lands: Have no fun]—yes, could not expect him to have no fun at all. If the words, "or hold any position in," were struck out, the new clause would be less arbitrary.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the proposed new clause raised a question so important, that notice of it ought to have been given. The Government, he might say, had no objection at all to what the mover was aiming at; and in fact the present Government had always contended that the

Agent-General should not, without the special consent of the Government, be a director of a joint-stock company. There might, however, be no objection to the Agent-General's holding the position of a director in London of an important bank—say the National Bank of Australasia—but in reference to joint-stock companies of the ordinary kind, such a thing should be prohibited entirely, and he might say it was prohibited at the present moment. In order that time should be given for considering the effect of the proposed new clause, it would be well to report progress at this stage. He therefore moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th July, 1895.

Bankruptcy of Member: Notice of from Official Receiver—Export Duties Repeal Bill; first reading—Naval and Military Uniforms Bill; first reading—Excess Bill, 1894; first reading—Standard Time Bill; first reading—Adjournment.

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

BANKRUPTCY OF MEMBER.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I have to inform hon. members that I have received the following letter from the Official Receiver:—

Supreme Court,
Perth, W.A.,
26th June, 1895.

The Hon.
The President of
The Legislative Council.

Sir,—I have the honor to inform you that Thomas Harry Marshall, of Cue, a member of the Legislative Council, was adjudged bankrupt on the 24th inst., and enclosed I send you an office copy order of adjudication.

I have the honor, &c.,
H. WAISCOT,
Official Receiver.