

this motion this evening, but I desire so say a few words on the subject, to that when I do move in this matter, as I intend to do at the next session of this House, the country may be informed in the meantime of the proposed change in the law, and that the matter may be discussed, if it is deemed advisable, in the public press of the colony. With that view I desire to say that the law with regard to the descent or devolution of landed property or real estate at the present time is this: all land devolves upon the legal personal representative of the deceased person, in the first instance, for the payment of his debts; if the personal estate is insufficient for that purpose the legal personal representative, the executor of the will, or the administrator of the estate, may resort to the deceased's real estate and sell it for the payment of his debts. But, the debts having been duly satisfied, the real estate then descends, in the case of a will, to the person or persons to whom it may have been devised under the will, but, in the case of an intestate, the whole of the real estate devolves upon the heir-at-law,—that is, in most cases, the eldest son,—subject to the widow's (if there is a widow) right of dower, for her life. The change I propose to make in this law, or the change that will be provided for in the bill, which will be introduced, I hope, either by myself or as I trust by the Attorney General when the House next meets, will be to the effect that instead of real estate or landed property descending as now, in the case of an intestate, to his heir-at-law—that is, to his eldest son, to the exclusion of all the other sons and daughters—it shall descend to all his children equally, in the same manner as the personal estate does at present, subject still to the widow's right of dower. In fact, the bill I hope to see brought in will place real estate in exactly the same position as personal estate. I mention this now so that it may become public, and that the question may be discussed between this and next session. Since giving this notice of motion I have considered the subject, and I find that legislation upon it will not be so simple as I imagined when I placed the notice on the paper. I find that several of the statutes of the colony will have to be dealt with. I also,

on further consideration, deemed it would be advisable that the proposed change in the law should be more fully discussed and the question be longer before the country, before such an important change in the law is adopted by the Legislature. Therefore, sir, I do not intend to proceed with the motion standing in my name.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 11 o'clock, p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 25th February, 1892.*

Re-organisation of Educational System—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Wimmerup Roads Bill: second reading—Electric Lighting Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### RE-ORGANISATION OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE ON THE MOTION OF MR. SIMPSON,—

“That it is desirable to reorganise the present system of Public Instruction, in order to meet the Educational necessities of the colony.”

MR. RANDELL: Sir, I do not know that it is necessary for me to say much upon the subject before the House. The question raised by the hon. member for Geraldton, so far as I was able to follow him in his endeavor to advocate the reorganisation of the educational system, was based upon two or three grounds. One of these was, I think, the large number of persons in the colony who are unable to read and write. The hon. member, for his own purpose, quoted the first clause of the Census Report, dealing with the education of the people, which states that there are 13,218 persons in the colony who can neither read nor

write. If he had examined the various schedules which have been made he would have found that there were 3,115 children between the ages of 4 and 16 who were not attending school, but who were supposed to be receiving education at home. If we were to eliminate the children, say, under seven (and I think it is hardly to be expected that children under that age can be able to read and write very much), and if, further, we eliminate some 900 odd persons, who are Chinese, Malays, and Japanese, we shall find that the hon. member has not dealt with the figures in a manner which conveys a correct impression. I think if hon. members will examine the Census returns they will find the number of people who cannot read and write much smaller than the hon. member has pointed out. I am justified, I am sure, in saying that 85 per cent. of the children of school age can read and write, and even a greater proportion than that if we deduct the children under the age of six. Another reason assigned by the hon. member was the unfavorable report given by the Inspector of Schools as regards the attainments of the children, and the qualification of the teachers. That was what I gathered, although I was not present at the commencement of the hon. member's speech. I think we may safely say that, speaking generally, the children of the colony are about one degree below the attainments of children of the Eastern Colonies and England. When we take into consideration the widely scattered population of the colony and the difficulty of obtaining teachers of any degree of efficiency in the small country districts, I think it will be agreed that the same standard of efficiency cannot be expected as prevails in more favored colonies. We could discuss the question over and over again, but all must admit that in many departments of our social and commercial life in this colony we cannot have all the facilities which can be secured by the much larger and more central populations which we find in the other colonies. I am quite prepared to admit that the Inspector's report for last year has revealed to us the very low state of attainments and the very small number of passes which have been attained both by the children generally and those who have come for-

ward to obtain the scholarships and to qualify themselves for teachers. It may also be admitted that there is a very small percentage of teachers who have secured a certificate of efficiency. That is not altogether the fault of the teachers. Some years ago teachers secured certificates of competency, but they were not bound to go forward and get certificates of efficiency. Steps will now be taken so that in future, when a teacher has obtained his certificate of competency, he shall go on with his studies and get a certificate of efficiency, and this especially so in large schools where pupil teachers are engaged, and it forms part of the head teacher's duty to instruct them. Then another point raised by the hon. member was the very small salaries given to teachers. This will be generally admitted, but the same complaint has been made with regard to other departments of the public service, say, for instance, the Postal and Telegraph Department, where the salaries of some of the officers are lower than in any other branches of the public service. Unless the Ministry are prepared to propose an increase in the amount which is placed at the disposal of the Central Board for the purpose of education, the salaries cannot be increased. Some years ago an attempt was made to increase them in proportion to the number of passes obtained by the teachers, but it was found that this was going to the other extreme, for the money voted by the Legislature was not sufficient. For instance, the salary of the head teacher at Fremantle, which was £250, was increased to £400. That was a much larger salary than the colony could afford; hence the arrangement had to be altered, and we reverted to the old practice. £250 a year for Fremantle or Perth is not quite enough, but until hon. members are prepared to increase the annual grant to the Board we cannot expect to attract to the Education Department of the colony persons of superior attainments. I think that will be admitted, especially with regard to country schools, where we find that those who come forward to apply for these appointments are, as a rule, persons who can succeed in no other sphere of life. Then, again, large salaries may be given to teachers, and we may attract to that important branch of the

public service highly educated men, but it does not always follow that persons of superior attainments are the most successful teachers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Especially for country schools.

MR. RANDELL: A man might be very highly educated—a university man perhaps; and yet he might not possess the faculty of imparting his knowledge to the children that might be entrusted to his care. For all that I am free to admit that it is desirable for us to have a superior class of teachers in our schools. The Education Act, which was passed by the Legislature in 1871, hon. members are aware, was a compromise. It admits of the principle of assisted schools. It is not necessary for a school to belong to any religious denomination; any private school has as much right to receive assistance from the State as a school in connection with some denomination. Only one denomination has availed itself of this to any great extent; that is the Roman Catholic. The Church of England has, to a small extent, taken advantage of this assistance, but principally, I think, in connection with the orphanages. No other denominations have taken advantage of the Act, and have never attempted to establish schools of their own, and receive Government assistance for them. The Bill has worked fairly well; it has given satisfaction to the Roman Catholic Church, and has enabled them to establish schools in various parts of the colony. I think that church would deprecate any interference with the provisions of the present Act. To make any change we should have to take the whole question into account; and when we enter upon this subject, with a view to altering the provisions of the Act, we shall have to bear in mind the fact that a severe struggle will ensue to retain the present system. I understand there is an intention of making some alteration in the English Act, and possibly it will be wise for us to await the result of what is proposed to be done in England, where the system is similar to our own, before attempting anything ourselves. Another reason that the hon. member assigned for interfering with the present system was that the teachers are compelled to pay the fees whether they collect them or not. Well, anyone reading the Act will see that

the Central Board are bound to fix a scale of fees, and they are entrusted with the administration of the Act. Section 5 of the Elementary Education Act provides that the Central Board shall fix a scale of fees to be paid and be received for the attendance of children in purely Government schools. It is their duty to see that teachers carry out their duties, collect the fees, and pay them to the Secretary of the Central Board for purposes of Education. When I returned from England some twelve years ago, I found that there had been a general dereliction of duty on the part of the teachers, and that the school fees were becoming so reduced that the Central Board had to take the matter up in earnest. They issued a notice that in future teachers would be responsible for the fees. A teacher has the power, if a child comes to school without the fees, to send the child home for the money. Of course, as hon. members are aware, if a teacher sends a child home, the chances are it may not come back again, and the teacher may thus lose his results. Then there is the competition with assisted schools, which are not so strict in collecting fees, their object being to increase the attendance. No doubt there have been isolated cases of hardship, but not to any great extent. I saw a statement made in one of the papers of a teacher having to pay 30s. in one month for fees which had not been collected. I hardly think this is correct, although it is very likely that the amount stated was an accumulation of fees over a considerable period and which the teacher was called upon to pay. Hon. members will see that inasmuch as the Central Board is obliged to fix a scale of fees, they are also responsible for the collection of those fees. If the Board had allowed those fees to fall into abeyance, they would have had to come to this House for an additional £2,000. These fees have enabled the Board to keep the various school buildings in repair, and to undertake various works which otherwise they would not have been able to do. The Board is directly responsible to the Government of the day, to whom their report, with those of the Inspectors, is sent. It is no fault of the Central Board if these reports do not reach this House for twelve months after they

are sent in, but when printed they are placed upon the table of the House, and thus every information is given to hon. members if they are willing to look into the matter. I think the transfer of the administration of the Act to a responsible minister is a question of policy. I may say that the Central Board has long considered this question carefully, and I myself have for years felt that possibly the Act might be administered better by one official, call him by what name you like, than by a number. Even under the old form of Government, if one person had been appointed, his administration would probably have been superior and more effective than that of the Education Board. I think it is generally felt that the Central Board of Education has fairly, well, and liberally administered the Act. I can assure hon. members that the Central Board has given a great deal of time and attention to the consideration of the various matters brought before them during their term of office. They meet at least once a fortnight, and this entails a very considerable amount of trouble. Still I think that a Minister of Education, if he has not too much to do in other departments of the service, would be able to deal more promptly and more efficiently in some matters which arise than the Central Board. There may be some respects in which the Central Board might be more acceptable than a Minister, because he might feel himself more tied to the Act, whereas the board would take a more liberal view of it in the interests of the teachers. We have always desired to give the teachers every consideration, for we have felt for some time that the remuneration has not been adequate to the services they have been called upon to perform. The Board has desired, if they could have obtained a larger grant from the Government, to have increased their salaries, but not being able to get more from the Legislature, it has been impossible to do so. As a matter of policy I am quite in accord with the principle which has been advocated—that, under Responsible Government, Boards in every instance should cease to exist, and the responsibility cast upon the shoulders of the Ministry of the day. The Central Board has anticipated that the Ministry would bring forward some scheme by which

the members of it could be relieved of their duties, and place the control of the department under a responsible Minister. I am very much afraid that a Minister who has to deal with so many departments of the service—say, for instance, the Colonial Secretary, who is chairman, I might say, *ex officio* of the Board—would find when these extra duties devolved upon him that he could not fully and efficiently administer the Education Act. I take it, therefore, that the responsibility would rest upon the permanent Under Secretary to administer it. Then we may depend upon it the Act will be administered on stricter lines, although on the whole it will be administered better than under the present system. The hon. member did not inform us on what lines the re-organisation he wished was to take place—whether he was in favor of free, compulsory and secular education, or whether he would continue the present system of State schools and Assisted schools, or in what direction he wished to go; and very much will depend upon the scheme which is suggested as to how hon. members will vote. He has given us no index as to the direction he wishes the re-organisation he refers to. It is a very serious matter, and I am not surprised that the Government have hesitated to take up the question; and I do not know that there is any great hurry for it either. When we do propose a change, we must be prepared for very great excitement, both in the House and out of it; and we must be prepared to vote an additional sum for educational purposes. I think, however, we can now afford to do that. We are placing in the hands of the people of this colony the power of voting, and it is necessary for the Legislature to see that they have the education necessary to enable them to give an intelligent vote. It is recognised in the other colonies that it would be suicidal to neglect the education of the young. Although I was prepared at one time to go so far as free and secular education, I am not so now; for I should be sorry to see the standard of all morality eliminated from the school books. I should be sorry to see the Bible forbidden as a book to be introduced into our schools. I am not in favor of teachers giving religious instruction in our schools, for I do not

think as a rule they are qualified to do so, but I think they might deal with the historical facts recorded therein, and the laws of the ancient people which are contained in that Volume. The hon. member should rather more clearly express his views, so that hon. members may be able to understand what they are voting for. The hon. member for West Perth, in referring to this subject, deprecated very strongly any interference with the present system; but I gathered from what he said that he had no personal acquaintance with the subject and was rather holding a brief for someone else. The hon. member stated that the Central Board was responsible for any shortcomings there were. We are only trustees under the Act, and I think that anyone making a statement like that is clearly not competent to give an opinion. He was speaking without a knowledge of the provisions of the Act and the by-laws which have been framed by the Central Board. It is not my intention to reply to the hon. member, but I must say I regret very much the tone of his remarks. I will not, however, deal very strongly or harshly with them, as I feel sure they were not the result of his own convictions. The Central Board have not the whole power under the Act. They have not the power of appointing teachers. This is a blot on the Act, and we have often felt that it was desirable, in the best interests of education, that these appointments should be in the hands of the Central Board. It has militated to a very large extent against the successful working of the Act in many instances. In many cases our endeavor to obtain superior teachers has been frustrated by the action which has been taken by the District Boards in some parts of the colony. Some of them are admirable Boards. If the hon. member for Albany were here I should pick his Board out as one of them. There have been other Boards, which have not felt that they could accept the suggestions, or carry out the desires of the Central Board in some particulars, which were for the best interests of the schools. I am very pleased to be able to say before I sit down that with our new Inspector of Schools, there is every probability that the attainments of the scholars throughout the colony will be considerably in-

creased. I say, for the information of hon. members, that he has thrown himself, heart and soul, into his duties. He has made many recommendations to the Central Board, the whole of which have been felt to be in the best interests of the schools, and I am quite sure that before long the action of the Central Board, acting upon his recommendations, will be productive of much good. I have always felt a deep interest in education, and I have done my best whilst a member of the Central Board to promote it. I have not spared my time and have not shirked my duties, and I have been present at almost every meeting that has taken place. I shall look with considerable interest always upon the subject of education, which I conceive to be one in which the best interests of the colony are concerned. I do not think I should be in favor of any very high standard of education. I think our seventh standard quite enough for our Government schools. A boy, having attained to that standard, has the foundation of a good education, and if he is willing he can go on and make a mark for himself in the world, as many prominent men of the present day, who were educated in our schools, have done. I shall have no objection to action being taken in the direction indicated: that is, of transferring from the Central Board to a responsible Minister the administration of the Act; but I shall reserve my opinions regarding the provisions of any bill that may be brought forward.

MR. CANNING: There can be no matter more important in the domestic economy of a State than that of education; and, although I cannot for a moment see the necessity of the motion of the hon. member for Geraldton, he has only exercised his privilege and right as a member of this House in bringing forward the matter now under consideration. At the same time I must confess I heard with very considerable satisfaction last night the assurance of the Premier that for the present the Government had no intention of disturbing the present system of education, and the second assurance that the Government also were considering the advisability of placing the department in the hands of a Minister instead of leaving it under the control of the Central Board. I

must say that that change will be one more consistent with Responsible Government. I think it most desirable that the administration of this department, which is of the greatest importance to the people at large, should be directly under a Minister responsible to this House. I must confess that this change, with one or two other minor changes which I may be permitted to allude to, but which will be rather matters of detail than principle, will be all that is required. At the present time there are before the country and this House many questions of very great and urgent importance. I do not mean to deny that the question of education is one of very great importance, but, at the present time, it is not of such pressing importance as to call for immediate consideration. So far as I have been able to learn and observe the present system has worked, on the whole, very satisfactorily indeed. I alluded to some changes in matters of detail which are desirable. One of these is that I should be very glad to see the system of fees altogether abolished. It may seem a great sacrifice, but I think on the whole the State would be a gainer in the long run. I was a member of a district board for some time, and I found that as a rule the system of fees worked very unsatisfactorily indeed, and in some cases very harshly. We found that in many cases the mother of a family was, owing to unfortunate circumstances, compelled to be the bread winner, and in these cases questions arose which placed the District Board in a very unpleasant position. It forced them to act with a certain degree of harshness or else to pass over the provisions of the Act. In many cases a natural feeling of self-respect prevented persons from admitting that they could not pay, although the amount small as it was, made a considerable difference to them. Then the teachers are placed in a somewhat unfavorable position, and there are many other reasons, which will occur to hon. members, which make it desirable that fees should be swept away altogether. That is merely a question of detail, and I have no doubt that if the department were placed under a Minister he would have the power to make changes of that kind, and perhaps some others without any difficulty whatever.

MR. RANDELL: The District Boards have that power now.

MR. CANNING: I take it that a Minister would have more power than a District Board. The system is working very harmoniously at the present time, and it will continue to do so, I think, with the change indicated by the hon. the Premier and the change in detail which I have merely thrown out for the consideration of the Government. The present system, therefore, can be left without any alteration whatever at the present time. Under these circumstances I hope that no other change than that alluded to by the Premier last night will be allowed in the present education system of the colony.

MR. SIMPSON: I have listened with careful attention to the remarks of hon. members with regard to the motion which I have submitted to their consideration, and I would like to say that I did not in any way introduce a comparison of Assisted Schools with Government Schools. My effort was to direct the intelligence of this House to the positive and the absolute fact that there are 7,000 children in this colony of school age who are not being educated.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I do not believe it.

MR. SIMPSON: I believe the hon. member is open to conviction.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I am positive it is not correct. It is absurd.

MR. SIMPSON: It is "absurd;" it is ridiculous. The hon. member for the Moore also questioned my figures. I paid great attention to the hon. member. I am sure every member of this House will always listen attentively to any remarks that may come from him upon the subject of education. According to the census return there are 12,230 children in this colony of school age. I find on page 18 of the Central Board's report that there were 3,967 children who presented themselves for examination, and of these only 3,100 passed. This leaves a large margin, and allowing for private school education—

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): How many?

MR. SIMPSON: 1,700. I also allow for the item of education at home, 3,115;

but the compiler seems to doubt these figures, for he proceeds to state that of these children from the age of 4 to 16 there are 988, or nearly one-third, who cannot read or write. It is not my desire to go beyond the limits of the Act. That Act prescribes that children from 4 to 16 years of age shall be educated. That is the law of the land as laid down by the Elementary Education Act of 1871.

**MR. RANDELL:** Any child attaining to Standard VI. is exempted from further attendance.

**MR. SIMPSON:** There are not 5 per cent. of the children of the colony who have attained the sixth standard.

**MR. RANDELL:** I doubt that.

**MR. SIMPSON:** I have no wish, in connection with this matter, to adopt any captious attitude. I simply wish to direct attention to the fact that a great many children in this colony are not being educated. We are now spending £13,625 on education. I would like to see the gaols empty and the schools full; that is my reason for bringing forward this motion. I was a little surprised to see an argument introduced with regard to Assisted schools. The Inspector has pointed out in his report that these schools have done remarkably well in the standards in which they were examined. I am sure hon. members will find that it is the public desire that the children of the colony should be properly educated. I was surprised to hear the Premier state last night that the Government were not prepared to make any alteration in the Act, and then proceed to state that the Government might think it desirable to place the administration of the Act in the hands of a Minister. The Government do not seem to understand that they cannot establish a Minister of Education without they do alter the Act. There are other matters in connection with the Act which require careful consideration. I am no lawyer, but it seems to me that no local board can be elected at the present time. Clause 10 states, with regard to the election of Local Boards, that Local Boards shall be elected by electors of six months' residence in the colony, who are on the electoral roll for the election of members of the Legislative Council. That is absurd. We have no elected Legislative

Council in this colony; neither is there any such roll in existence. The hon. member for West Perth stated last night that he had carefully studied the subject, and that during the past few days he had carefully read through the Act. He had a copy of the Act with him, and it was certainly a well-thumbed one. He informed the House that he had no doubt he could floor all arguments that might be introduced on this motion had he had time. I do not quite understand what the hon. member meant by "flooring"—it savors very much of the skittle alley. My motion has nothing to do with Assisted Schools. All I wish is to endeavor to induce the Government to bring before the House next session such an amendment of the Act as will secure the children of the colony being better educated. I have been very careful in extracting my figures, and I saw that, eliminating those children educated in private schools, and allowing 50 per cent. for education at home, the serious fact remains that only one child in four is being educated in this colony. It has been suggested that I should give some outlines of the alterations which I wish made in the Act. I do not think that it is desirable that I should do so. During the recess hon. members will have an opportunity of considering the matter fully in all its details. My only desire in this matter is to make it clear that we are not accomplishing in education matters in this colony what we should do, and, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for the Moore, no more important consideration can come before a Ministry, an assembly, or a country, than that of seeing that the children of the state are carefully and intelligently educated, to give them an opportunity of becoming useful citizens of the colony.

**MR. MOLLOY:** The motion of the hon. member for Geraldton is, to my mind, a very important one; but I think the House should be informed more clearly in what direction it is intended to go. I gathered from the hon. member's speech that he desires to see some reform in regard to the qualifications of the teachers. That is a very important matter, and one in which I think all the members of the House will cordially agree, more especially as the Inspector in his report states that it is necessary. I remem-

ber a number of years ago,—about twenty-one I think—the agitation which was then inflaming the public mind in respect to this same subject. It caused considerable discord in the community, and after a number of years and considerable discussion upon the subject in the Press, the Government of the day thought fit to introduce this present Act of 1871. I must confess that I am not thoroughly conversant with the provisions of the Act, but I think that, taken as a whole, the country will agree that its working has been satisfactory. It was accepted by all creeds, and has worked harmoniously. I am sorry to see the hon. member for Geraldton has rather misquoted when he said the hon. member for West Perth had stated that he was prepared to “floor” any arguments that might be introduced. What he did say was that he intended to deprecate any interference with the vote for Assisted Schools, and that he had obtained such information with regard to the working of the system that he could floor him if such arguments had been adduced. Allusion has been made to the report of the Inspector of Schools, which states that last year’s percentage of passes was considerably smaller; and allusion has also been made to the Census, according to which we have a large number of persons who are unable to read or write. From the limited information which I have upon this subject with regard to the provisions of the Act, I think I am correct in saying that it makes the education of children compulsory. That being so, I am sure that we may take it, when we have such gentlemen as the hon. member for the Moore as principals in the administration of the Act, its provisions will be carried out; and, taking this as a fact, I fail to see how we can reconcile the statement of the hon. member for Geraldton as to the number of people who can neither read nor write. We have reason to be satisfied with the working of this Act. It has been stated by the hon. member for the Moore that this was a compromise, having respect to the conscientious opinions of a certain section of the community. I think the framers of the Act may feel proud of its working. They have stifled that prejudice, that feeling of discontent, which prevailed here at that time; and they

have reason to be proud of the state of things which has prevailed since its introduction. With regard to the assistance given to schools, this had been stated to be more particularly given to Roman Catholic schools. Roman Catholics form a considerable part of the community. They contribute largely to the revenue, and they ask for no undue proportion of that which has been collected. The Act provides that they shall receive a certain sum per head for the purpose of education. That they have fulfilled the object for which this provision was made I have no hesitation in asserting, because the proof of it is apparent throughout the country that they have been using the assistance afforded them well. I have here the report of the Inspector of Schools, which affords another proof that they have used the assistance given to them for the purpose for which it was intended. The hon. member who framed this motion gives us no definite index as to the meaning he attaches to the word “re-organisation.” For my part I fail to see the necessity for disturbing the provisions of an Act which, it has been admitted all round, is giving such satisfaction. We do not wish to court contention; we do not wish to court prejudice; but we do wish that we shall work harmoniously together for whatever object we have in hand, and I am sure the framer of this motion, when he brought it forward, had no such object as that of depriving the section of the community which has been alluded to of their just proportion of the grant. It is no doubt a great hardship that teachers should be expected to pay fees out of their own pockets rather than lose children, and thus lose the grant, and it seems to me that some amendment might be made in the Act to meet this case. I fail to see, however, why the State should do away with this contribution. It has been stated by the hon. member for the Moore that these fees, although small in themselves, taken in the aggregate, are a source of considerable assistance in the working of the Act, and have effected great improvements in respect of the school buildings, etc. I fail to see, when persons are not in want of this relief, why the State should go out of its way in this direction. If there are persons who are unable to pay for their



children attending school, the payment of the fees would not, I take it, be insisted upon. I think the District Boards would make due provision in this respect, and that the teacher would not be hindered in his work and in his results by these fees.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion): In instances such as these, children are admitted free.

**MR. MOLLOY**: I am thankful for this information. I take it no board would be so unreasonable as to inflict hardship. This does away with the argument in favor of the abolition of fees, and when the hon. member for Geraldton urged their abolition—

**MR. SIMPSON**: Pardon me, I did not urge the abolition of fees.

**MR. MOLLOY**: I misunderstood the hon. gentleman. If the hon. member could suggest any means by which teachers could be better paid, I, with other hon. members, and I dare say the great majority of this House, would endeavor to carry out his suggestions. The State has provided as far as possible, at the present time, for the education of children, and I fail to see where a much larger amount is to come from for this purpose; but, if we find we can increase the amount of the present grant, then I, with other members, will be very willing to vote the extra assistance required. I am glad to see that there is no disposition on the part of the hon. member that the present system of education should be disturbed, that Assisted schools be done away with, and that in this respect he is agreeable that the same principle shall apply in respect to Assisted and Government schools as prevails at the present time. I take it the only reasons why he wishes to have any amendments in respect of this Act are: in the first instance, he would like to see the teachers better paid; and he would like to see a higher standard of efficiency required of the teachers; and that the attainments of the children should reach a higher standard. I therefore cordially support the motion made by the hon. member for Geraldton, if these are the objects he is aiming at, as I understand them to be.

**MR. QUINLAN**: May I make an explanation?

**THE SPEAKER**: The hon. member may make an explanation, but he must not make a speech.

**MR. QUINLAN**: I simply wish to make an explanation with regard to what has fallen from the hon. members for the Moore and for Geraldton. I desire to say that it was far from my thought to reflect upon the action of the Central Board. I stated they had the power to make certain by-laws, and such by-laws not being made was the cause of any defects in the Education Act.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Most hon. members who have spoken seem to think that some alteration is necessary in the construction of the Act; and that the Central Board should be abolished in favor of a Minister. That cannot be done without an amendment of the Act. After the discussion which has taken place, perhaps it would meet the views of the hon. member to withdraw his motion, leaving the Government to consider the matter during the recess, and resolve what is best to be done in the direction indicated.

**MR. SIMPSON**: I am only too glad to meet the suggestion of the hon. the Premier. I have no sinister intention in bringing this matter before the House. After the assurance of the Premier—I take it to be an assurance that—the matter shall be considered during the recess with a view to amending the Act, I gladly, with the permission of the House, withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### GOLDFIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Order of the Day for the third reading of this Bill having been read, Mr. Burt, in accordance with notice, moved that the bill be recommitted.

Question—put and passed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) moved that clause 1 be numbered 2, and that clause 2 be numbered 1.

Question—put and passed.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the second preamble to the bill be struck out.

Question—put and passed.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the preamble to the

bill be struck out, and that the following preamble be inserted in lieu thereof:—  
 "Whereas doubts have arisen as to the validity of a certain Act of the Legislature of this colony, passed in the fiftieth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, intitled 'An Act for the Management of Goldfields,' and numbered 18; and whereas it is expedient to settle such doubts, and also to amend the said Act: Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows."

Question—put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the word "further," in the title of the bill, be struck out, and that the words "confirm and to" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Question—put and passed.

Bill reported.

#### WONNERUP ROADS BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I rise to move the second reading of this bill. The necessity for the bill arises from the desire of the Government to close certain roads and to open up others. The law requires that before that can be done a bill such as this shall be passed.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### ELECTRIC LIGHTING BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): It will be in the recollection of the House that some time ago a resolution was passed asking the Government to prepare and bring in a measure of this description. In accordance with that resolution the Government have prepared the measure now before us. The bill authorises, as will be seen, the various Municipal corporations to supply electricity for lighting purposes or to grant licenses for that supply, or to make contracts for the same supply for lighting or other purposes. And it will be seen that electricity may be supplied in three

ways,—the corporations themselves may make the supply in a similar manner to that in which they are authorised to supply gas or water; or, secondly, they may grant licenses to any persons to supply electricity; or, thirdly, they may make contracts with any persons to supply the same. Clause 4 provides that the contracts or licenses may be for a period not exceeding twenty-one years, subject to such regulations and conditions as to the performance by such company or person of their duties in connection with such contract. It provides also for the revocation of such contract when the duties are not satisfactorily performed. Clause 7 reads: "(1) The undertakers shall also be subject to such regulations and conditions as may from time to time be prescribed by the Governor, and published in the *Government Gazette*, with regard to the following matters: (a) The limits within which and the conditions under which a supply of electricity is to be compulsory or permissive; (b) Securing a regular and efficient supply of electricity; (c) Securing the safety of the public from personal injury or from fire or otherwise; (d) The limitation of the prices to be charged in respect of the supply of electricity and the rent and sale of meters and fittings; (e) Authorising inspection and inquiry from time to time by the Governor; (f) The enforcement of the due performance of the duties of the undertakers in relation to the supply of electricity by the imposition of penalties or otherwise; and (g) Generally with regard to any other matters in connection with the supply of the electricity. (2) Such proclamation and such regulations and conditions, or any of them, may be either general or restricted to some particular municipality. (3) The Governor may, by such regulations as aforesaid, impose penalties not exceeding Fifty pounds in each case for the breach of any such regulation." Provision is also made for the corporations to make by-laws. The Board of Trade in London have already made regulations which should be a very good guide for us here in making our regulations. Regulations in all places where measures of this description obtain are very much the same. There are the usual clauses in the bill, varied to meet the requirements of electricity, which are found in waterworks

bills, gas bills, etc., such as enabling the undertaker to break up the streets for the purpose of laying down wires. Provision is made for the cutting off of supply when default is made in payment of rent and for recovery of such rent. Provision is made for arbitration in certain cases. Part II., section 45, provides that when any dispute or difference authorised by this Act to be settled by arbitration shall have arisen, then, unless both parties shall concur in the appointment of a single arbitrator, each party on the request of the other party shall nominate and appoint an arbitrator, to whom such dispute or difference shall be referred. I may say that the whole purpose and object of the Bill is really contained in the preamble. I trust the House will find the bill acceptable.

MR. RANDELL: I desire on my own part to express my thanks for the promptitude with which the Government have taken up the resolution of the House by complying with it and introducing this bill. So far as I understand it the bill will, I think, meet all the necessities of the case. I take the opportunity of saying, with regard to clause 11, which permits the breaking up of streets, that I trust the Municipal Council will see that the streets are placed in the same good order and condition as before broken up. This has certainly not been done in the city of Perth, and I hope the matter, having been mentioned in this place, will reach city councillors, and urge them to do their duty. I allude more particularly to the disgraceful way in which the streets have been broken up and left by the waterworks.

MR. MOLLOY: In respect of what has been said by the hon. member for the Moore, as regards the Municipal Council doing their duty in seeing that the streets are put in proper repair, I may say that this duty has been fulfilled. Speaking as a member of the Municipal Council, I may say that I have repeatedly brought this matter forward. The members of the Council have done their duty, although I cannot say that the work has been performed.

MR. A. FORREST: I am glad that the hon. member for the Moore has brought this matter forward, because the Waterworks Company appear to be doing just as they like in tearing up the streets and

leaving them broken up. They do not stop at streets, but entrances to private property are left in a disgraceful state. I speak feelingly. I trust, therefore, that the hon. member for Perth will not only direct discussion to this matter in the Municipal Council, but will do his best to see that the work is performed.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9-20 p.m.

### Legislative Council,

Friday, 26th February, 1892.

Railway accommodation at Cottesloe and Buckland Hill:—Railway siding at Bullen's: cost of—Obstruction in Swan River—Married Women's Property Bill: first reading—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Bankruptcy Bill: third reading—Masters and Servants Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Western Australian Turf Club Bill: third reading—Aborigines Protection Act Amendment Bill: re-committal—Protection of Women and Girls Bill: second reading—Public Health Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Game Bill: Legislative Assembly's amendments—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 3 o'clock.

#### PRAYERS.

#### RAILWAY ACCOMMODATION AT COTTESLOE AND BUCKLAND HILL.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Secretary, whether it is the intention of the Government to ignore the wants of the landholders at Cottesloe and Buckland Hill as to railway accommodation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton) replied: The Government desire to assist, as far as possible, the residents of Buckland Hill and Cottesloe. The name of the station at Jarra Street is to be "Cottesloe," instead of "Grove," as previously intended.