

Legislative Assembly,
Tuesday, 5th September, 1893.

Moneys sent to Eastern Colonies for Investment in Sweepstakes—Cost of, and Business transacted at, various Post and Telegraph Offices—Cost, etc., of Cases treated at Katanning Hospital—Cost of American Saloon and Composite Railway Carriages—Costs, etc., in connection with the claims of Dr. Smith—Kensington Lane Closure Bill: second reading—Grand Jury Abolition Act Amendment Bill: second reading: in committee—Real Estates Administration Bill: in committee—Estimates, 1893-4: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

MONEYS TRANSMITTED TO EASTERN COLONIES FOR INVESTMENT IN SWEEPSTAKES.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved "That a return be laid on the table of the House showing the total amount of moneys transmitted to the Eastern Colonies by Post Office Orders, issued from this colony, during the year 1892, such return to show, as near as possible, how much was so transmitted for investment in sweeps or consultations."

Question put and passed.

COST OF, AND BUSINESS TRANSACTED AT, VARIOUS POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICES.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved "That a return be laid on the table of the House stating: 1. The names of all places where new Post and Telegraph Offices have been erected since the 1st January, 1891. 2. The cost of each such Post or Telegraph Office. 3. The number of officials employed at, and the total amount now payable annually in salaries in respect of each such office. 4. The dates when the Post and Telegraph Offices at Mount Barker, Pingelly, Wagin, and Narrogin were respectively opened. 5. The number of letters posted at and delivered from each of such offices since its opening until the 31st August ult.; and 6. The amount of money received at each such office from the sale of postage stamps during such period; also, 7. The number of telegrams transmitted from each such office to other places, and

the amount of fees received in respect thereof during the same period; and 8. The number of telegrams received at each such office for delivery in its district."

Question put and passed.

COST OF, AND CASES TREATED AT, KATANNING HOSPITAL.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved "That a return be laid on the table of the House showing: 1. The total cost of the erection of Hospital at Katanning. 2. The date when it was declared open for the reception of patients. 3. The number of persons permanently employed thereat, and the amount of salary now payable to each such person annually. 4. The number of in-patients who have received medical treatment therein up to the 31st August ult., and the nature of the ailment or injury for which so treated."

Question put and passed.

COST OF AMERICAN SALOON AND COMPOSITE BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY CARRIAGES.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved "That a return be laid on the table of the House showing: 1. The number of Railway Carriages of the American saloon type at present in the colony, or under order for delivery here. 2. The cost of each, delivered here. 3. The amount agreed to be paid for the erection of each such carriage. 4. The further amount (if any) since agreed to be paid as an extra on erection. 5. The number of persons for whom sitting accommodation is provided by each such carriage. 6. The cost of the ordinary composite (Birmingham) carriages for the accommodation of twelve first-class and thirty-two second-class passengers."

Question put and passed.

COSTS, ETC., IN CONNECTION WITH CLAIMS OF DR. SMITH.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved "That a return be laid on the table of the House showing: 1. The total costs actually paid by the Government in resisting the claim of Dr. Smith, of Albany, up to the present time. 2. The total amount (if any) for which the Government are still liable, including the amount awarded as compensation.

3. The terms upon which the Government have obtained leave to appeal to the Privy Council; and 4. The estimated cost of such appeal." The hon. member said it was generally understood that the Government proposed to carry this case to the Privy Council, and it was a question whether the game was worth the candle. He was told that the plaintiff, Dr. Smith, was about leaving the colony, if he had not already done so; and it was a question whether it would not be simply a waste of money for the Government to take any further action in the matter.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have already taken action to appeal.

KENSINGTON LANE CLOSURE BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I have to move the second reading of this Bill. It is purely a matter of form. The lane in question is the old open drain, running from Melbourne Road to Hutt Street. The Government lately boxed in the drain, and it is necessary we should, by Act of Parliament, close what was formerly a lane; which is the sole object of the Bill.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

GRAND JURY ABOLITION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): As members will have noticed, this is a very simple Bill indeed. Its intention is to provide for the absence from Perth of the Attorney General, who represents the Grand Jury in this colony, or to provide for the performance of the duty, in the event of the Attorney General being unable to do so himself, through sickness or any other cause. There have often been questions raised in the court—I must say they have not been successfully raised, but still they are raised whenever the Attorney General happens to be absent from the colony, and another law officer is appointed to perform the duties of a Grand Jury—as to whether it is competent for anyone but the Attorney General to perform those duties. In order to set the matter at rest once for all, my hon. friend the Attorney General thought it would be desirable, as he has been com-

pelled to leave Perth for a time, that this short Bill should be introduced with that view. The Bill provides that during the absence from Perth of the Attorney General, or in the event of his inability to perform his duties in this capacity, the duties shall be performed by the Solicitor General or Crown Solicitor, as the case may be. Members will recollect that the Attorney General was absent from the colony, more than a year ago now, for some considerable time; but his absence from the colony, although it gave rise to questions in the Supreme Court, is a different thing from his absence from head-quarters, when he may still be in the colony; and this Bill is intended to deal with his absence from Perth, or his inability to perform his duties by reason of sickness or otherwise. I think everyone will agree that the Bill is a very necessary Bill indeed, because it may happen that the Attorney General may be on a bed of sickness and quite unable to discharge the functions of his office, although he may be on the spot. There are cases also where he may not be on the spot, but away in some other part of the colony; and I think members will agree with me that it is absolutely necessary that some provision should be made whereby these duties may be performed by another law officer of the Crown. There is another provision in the Bill which empowers any person who may be acting as Crown Prosecutor to amend informations when necessary to amend them. A question has arisen where persons have been appointed to act as Crown Prosecutors—and even, I believe, in the case of the Crown Solicitor himself, when prosecuting in the Supreme Court—as to the right to amend informations, and to do all that the Attorney General is empowered to do. It has been argued that the Attorney General alone can do this. This Bill provides that whoever is appointed to act as *locum tenens* for the Attorney General shall have the same power as the Attorney General himself in this respect. It is an important Bill no doubt, but absolutely necessary in the interests of the administration of justice in the colony, and I hope it will commend itself to members. I beg to move its second reading.

MR. TRAYLEN: I think the Government are to be congratulated on being so

careful. Sometimes I have found an unwillingness on their part to be as careful. I think when the Bill places beyond question that certain acts are legal it is well worth our while to pass such a Bill. I would suggest whether some provision could not be made for preventing such a calamity perhaps is the correct term, as occurred in Victoria some time ago, when there was a dispute as to the respective powers and authority of the Attorney General and Solicitor General in that colony. Possibly two or three words might prevent our having such a fiasco here.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think it was argued in Victoria that because the two law officers were named in the Act they had concurrent jurisdiction; but here it is only when the Attorney General is absent that it is proposed that his *locum tenens* should exercise that officer's powers.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2:

Put and passed.

Clause 3: Powers of Crown prosecutors:

MR. TRAYLEN said he presumed, as this clause related to all Crown prosecutors, it referred to such officials as say Mr. Maitland Brown, at Geraldton, or the Police Magistrate at Perth. Must such magistrates still send the cases that had first been heard before them to the Attorney General, to find a true bill or otherwise?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said yes. The clause only meant that any person appointed as a public prosecutor by the Attorney General to represent him in any court should have the same powers as the Attorney General to amend informations. It had nothing to do with the Attorney General's powers in his capacity as Grand Jury.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

REAL ESTATES ADMINISTRATION BILL.

This Bill passed through committee without comment.

ESTIMATES, 1893-4.

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

Central Board of Health, £234:

Put and passed.

Crown Law Officers, £1,625:

Put and passed.

Supreme Court, £3,205:

Put and passed.

Official Receiver in Bankruptcy and Curator of Intestate Estates, £1,211:

MR. A. FORREST said he noticed that this department which started a short time ago with only the Official Receiver and one clerk had now grown up to an establishment costing the colony over £1,200—a very good jump in a few months. Whether the work had increased proportionately he was unable to say, and he should like, before this vote was passed, that the return asked for by the hon. member for Perth connected with the working of this department should be laid on the table.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member might move to postpone the vote.

MR. A. FORREST moved that the consideration of this Vote be postponed until after the consideration of the other votes.

Question put and passed, and Vote postponed.

Stipendiary Magistracy, £12,872:

MR. CONNOR asked whether it was the intention of the Government to pay £500 a year to the gentleman who was at present acting as Stipendiary Magistrate at Wyndham, for the district of East Kimberley? He should like to read a petition which had been forwarded to him by the settlers of the district asking for the removal of this officer on the ground of incompetency.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member would not be in order in reading the petition now.

MR. CONNOR said he would move that the item, "Kimberley, East, £500," be struck out. No doubt this placed him in an awkward position, and looked as if he was opposed to the money being voted for a Stipendiary Magistrate for this district. Of course that was not his intention. But he considered it was only his duty to the country and his constituents that he should object to the item, if it was to be used in payment for the services of the man who now held that position, and, who judging from the correspondence he had

in his possession, was notoriously incompetent in every way, both in his official capacity and as regards his conduct generally.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member had taken a very proper course in moving to strike out the item, with the view of calling attention to the matter. He did not suppose for a moment that the hon. member really wished to strike out the vote, for that would have the effect of the Government not being able to appoint anyone else, should the services of the present Magistrate be dispensed with. The hon. member had already moved in this matter, and the Government were taking steps to investigate the allegations which had been made. He believed it would be arranged that Dr. Black, the Resident Magistrate for West Kimberley, should almost immediately proceed to Wyndham for the purpose of investigating the charges which had been made against the officer referred to. Probably, with this assurance, the hon. member would be content to let the vote stand. The Government, though they had received these reports about this officer, were unable at present to admit the accuracy of them, or in any way to prejudice the case against him; but they would do the best thing they could do, both in that officer's own interests and the interests of the public,—appoint a gentleman, who would be recognised as just and impartial, to proceed to Wyndham as soon as possible to investigate the charges made.

MR. CONNOR said that after that assurance he would withdraw his motion. Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. DARLOT asked for some explanation as to the item "Special Magistrate, Gascoyne and Murchison, £52."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was an allowance of £1 a week that was allowed to Mr. Lodge, who was at the present time doing duty in the Murchison and Gascoyne districts. As members would recollect, there were great complaints from the settlers up there that the natives were slaughtering their sheep and cattle; and the Government, about a year ago, sent a special Magistrate up there to deal with these native offenders on the spot. Mr. Lodge was really an Inspector of Police, but he had acted before as Government Resident at Derby,

and he was considered a capable officer; and this £52 was a small allowance made so as to recompense him for the expense he was put to.

MR. DARLOT thought the allowance might well have been made up to £100. He believed the Resident Magistrate at the Gascoyne received £100 a year as travelling allowance, but he was sure that officer did not do half as much travelling as this special Magistrate at the Murchison did, who had not half as rosy times of it either.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this £52 was by way of a salary, and not an allowance. He supposed Mr. Lodge got his travelling allowance besides.

Vote agreed to.

Land Titles, £3,066:

MR. A. FORREST said he wished to draw the attention of the committee to this department. He noticed there was a considerable increase in the staff in the way of draughtsmen. It was a wonder that the Attorney General had not gone a little further and given the department a solicitor as well. He had taken all the work from the hands of private firms who had been in the habit hitherto of preparing plans and title deeds in connection with these transfers. He thought it was most unfair to professional draughtsmen and surveyors that the whole of the work of this office, which for many years had been given to private firms, should be taken away at one swoop. The Attorney General took good care not to interfere with the interests of a profession that was supposed to do everything right, while every other profession did everything wrong, and that was his own profession, the legal profession. He also wished to call attention to the item, "First Clerk, £220." This officer had been a great many years in the service, and had acted as Registrar of Titles, and received from the head of the department the highest commendations; yet they found him here at a paltry salary of £220, though occupying the position of chief clerk in one of the most important departments in the colony. He supposed it was because this gentleman was colonial born, and not a new comer, that he did not get any increase of salary, or a salary commensurate with the importance of his duties. He was one of the

best officers in the service, and a most obliging man to the public, and really deserved a much higher salary than this. He hoped the Government would see their way not only to alter the title of this officer, but also give him such a salary as he was worthy of. With regard to the increase in the staff in the way of draughtsmen, he should move that one item, "Draughtsman, £120," be struck out, because he did not think it was necessary to have such an officer in addition to the other staff employed. He could not conceive that this department required this large staff, especially when land transactions were at the lowest ebb, and not likely to increase for some considerable time.

MR. PATERSON said he was pleased to have the opportunity of bearing testimony to the value of the services of the officer who occupied the position of first clerk in this department. Every session since he had been in the House this officer had been recommended for an increase of salary, but he did not seem to get it. It seemed to him that this gentleman was very much underpaid, compared with other officers holding similar positions in other departments.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, in the absence of the Attorney General, he must say a few words in explanation of what had fallen from the hon. member for West Kimberley. No doubt, looking at the Estimates, there was some reason for the hon. member's remarks about this department growing considerably, but the intention of the gentleman in charge of it was that some of the work that was formerly done outside should now be done in the department. It was believed by the department that they could do the work cheaper and better than it was done outside,—considerably cheaper, at any rate; and, with that object, they proposed to employ these extra draughtsmen. He was aware it would interfere somewhat with the emoluments of those who had been doing this work outside, but the Government had to consider whether the public could not get the work done as well, and at less cost, in the office itself. He thought it was better to concentrate all the work in the office, if it could be done.

MR. A. FORREST: Why not have a lawyer there, too?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member himself, by his action in that House, had done away with the necessity of employing lawyers to prepare these transfers, which could now be prepared by anyone, not necessarily legal gentlemen. The Attorney General, who was the Ministerial head of the department, had always been good enough to refer any matters of this sort to him, and he had resisted as much as he could the proposal to increase the staff of the department. For some time he resisted it successfully, and said it could not be done; but at last he gave way, at the urgent request of the Commissioner of Titles himself, supported as he was by the Attorney General, as it was pointed out to him that it would be a great convenience to the public. This department was not a department that was not self-supporting. It cost £23,066 to work it, and the revenue received from it last year—exclusive of stamp revenue, which was very considerable—was about £5,000; so that it was not a department which took a lot of money to keep up, and did not contribute anything to the revenue in return. He was quite sure of this: the Attorney General would never have allowed these two draughtsmen to appear on the Estimates unless he knew they were absolutely necessary, and that they would conduce to the improved working of the department. While very sorry indeed that some of those outside gentlemen who had been in the habit of charging a considerable price for the small drawings necessary in the case of transfers should be deprived of the opportunity of doing so in the future, they must at the same time look to the interests of the public; and the question was whether it was not better to initiate this new system now, or at some future time, when the department had grown bigger. After all, they must be guided by those who had the control of the department, in these matters. As to the salary of the first clerk, who was no doubt an excellent officer, the Government would have been glad to increase the salary, but members knew there were very few increases on these Estimates, and that the present was not considered a time for increasing expenditure. He hoped that in a year or two this officer's salary might be increased, as he fully recognised that the officer in

question was deserving of a higher salary than he now received.

MR. PATERSON said he should like an account kept for twelve months, to see whether it was really a gain to the public or not to have these new officers attached to the department.

MR. SOLOMON thought it would be a good thing for the public, and a great improvement upon the present system, that those having business with this department could have their land titles completed without the necessity of having recourse to outside assistance to get their plans prepared.

Amendment negatived.

Vote agreed to, as printed.

Treasury, £4,045 :

MR. QUINLAN asked the Premier whether it was a fact, as had been stated in a letter which appeared in one of the newspapers, that the shorthand clerk recently appointed in the Treasury had been imported from one of the other colonies when there were several applicants for the position in the colony, well fitted for it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the shorthand clerk did come from one of the other colonies, some six months ago, but he was not sent for. He was not aware that there were any applicants for the office in the colony who would have accepted it on the terms this officer had accepted it. There were gentlemen who did apply for the appointment, but they expected some £200 to £300 a year, whereas this officer entered the service at £100 a year. He had desired for a long time to have a shorthand writer attached to the department, but he hesitated to employ one at a salary of £250 or £300 a year, because he did not think he really would be justified in going to such a large expenditure, for what he wanted; but when he got a young man, who came here well introduced, and he should say was a competent shorthand writer, who was willing to accept the office at £100 a year, he thought he would give him a trial, to see whether he could carry on the business of the Government better with the assistance of a shorthand writer. He must say he found it the greatest convenience, and he would advise all hon. members who had any large amount of business to do to get a shorthand writer, especially if they could get one on such easy terms as he had. This officer had

only been receiving £100 a year up to the 30th June last, and he did not know that he could have got an efficient shorthand clerk in the colony for that salary.

MR. QUINLAN said that as to the necessity for having a shorthand clerk he quite agreed with the Premier, but it was publicly stated in the Press that there were several applicants for the position residing in the colony—he could not say at what salary—and that this officer was imported for the office.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : No; he came here on his own account.

MR. DEHAMEL, referring to the item "Secretary to Premier, £50," asked what was the object of this appointment? It might be a good object, but he should like to know it. The gentleman who had acted as secretary to the Premier received another salary as clerk of the Executive Council, and this seemed a new item altogether.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member was quite right in saying that the secretary to the Premier was also clerk to the Executive Council. He had been secretary to the Premier for two and a half years, without any salary; and he (the Premier) thought the time had arrived when his secretary should get some small honorarium for his duties, and £50 was put down for him on these Estimates. It was not a high salary after all, £300, for being secretary to the Premier and clerk to the Executive Council. Members would readily understand that the duties, in both those positions, were of the most confidential character. It was thought they could not expect an officer to perform these duties efficiently without a fair salary, and, what induced him to propose this small honorarium to this officer as secretary to the Premier was that it seemed to him that this officer's salary would then be brought more in accord with the salaries of other officers similarly situated. For instance: the clerk of that House and the clerk of the other House received £300 a year; the private secretary to the Governor received £300; the chief clerks in the various offices received from £300 to £350 a year; and he thought that for an officer who was clerk to the Executive Council and also secretary to the Premier it would not be out of the way if he received £300 a year, especially as he had acted as the secretary to the Premier for

two years and a half for nothing. Of course if members thought the Premier should not have a secretary, or should not get this amount, £50 a year, he would have nothing to say; but he felt sure the House would readily grant this officer this small honorarium.

MR. A. FORREST thought the Premier certainly should have a secretary. He recollected, when he was at the Conference at Sydney a few years ago, that the Premier of this colony was the only Premier there who had not his secretary with him, and these secretaries seemed to him to almost boss the show and do all the work; and the Premier of this colony seemed a regular outsider. He was sure the House would gladly vote this small amount.

MR. DEHAMEL said as the salary of this officer was fixed by statute, and could not be increased, he had no objection to this addition to his salary.

Vote agreed to.

London Agency, £3,080:

MR. DEHAMEL said he regretted that this vote was increasing in a somewhat alarming way. When this department was first started, two or three years ago, it consisted of the Agent General and one clerk, but now they had an Agent General, a secretary, and three clerks. They heard all manner of things—though only based on rumour—about the present Agent General not filling the position in the most satisfactory manner, to say the least of it. They saw statements in the papers that he was seldom to be found in his office, and that he treated people who went to see him very brusquely. He did not know what truth there was in these rumours, but they found currency. They paid him a very high salary, and in addition to that he noticed £360 put down here for postage, telegrams, and stationery for the office.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he could not admit that the office of the Agent General was growing; it certainly had not grown since the beginning of the present year. The expenditure for last year was £2,473, and this year they had added to that a considerable sum for postage and telegrams, under the new system of distributing that expenditure. There was no increase in the staff or in the salaries. He thought it was marvellous the small salary that

was paid to these clerks in the Agent General's office. You certainly could not get them here at such salaries. The salary of the Agent General himself was a considerable one; he knew that. But the Government thought the time had arrived when the colony should have an officer occupying that position who could do justice to the representative character of the office he held. With regard to the performance of his duties, he had had no complaints about the present Agent General, who, he thought, was discharging the somewhat difficult business of his office in a satisfactory manner, and had proved himself thoroughly trustworthy and reliable in the conduct of some very important and very difficult business. He was engaged for the term of two years, which expired early next year, and the Government would have to consider whether his services would then be retained, or whether someone else would be appointed in his place. He thought he might venture to say this: that seeing we had had to establish this Agency in London on an entirely new footing, the task of arranging the whole business and putting it on a satisfactory basis had been a difficult one; and, speaking for himself as Treasurer, in whose department this office was, and which did the whole of the correspondence with the Agent General, he must say he had had no cause whatever to be otherwise than satisfied with the manner in which Sir Malcolm Fraser had performed his very multifarious and difficult duties.

MR. TRAYLEN said he did not want to say much, but it so happened that they had recently had access to a gentleman who knew a good deal about this matter. Whether Sir Malcolm Fraser went to his office regularly or not was not what he objected to so much, as that he did not spend more than £50 a year in travelling about, and making the colony better known.

Vote agreed to.

Customs, £9,108:

MR. MONGER said he would like to point out to the Premier that when the Estimates were under consideration last year, the question of the salary of the Collector of Customs was discussed, and he thought they were led to understand that a larger sum would be placed on the next Estimates for that officer. Considering

that he managed a department from which one-half the revenue of the country was derived, he thought that a paltry salary of £600 a year was altogether out of place for the services which this officer was called upon to render the country. The Collector of Customs filled a position equally as important almost as that occupied by any of our Ministers, and, since his accession to office, the present Collector had done more for the Customs business of this colony than any officer who ever held the same position before. He had made our merchants and importers thoroughly understand that intricate piece of legislation, the Customs Act, and he had proved himself a most vigilant officer. He thought he was safe in saying that each year since this officer had held this office, he had saved the country at least £20,000 or £30,000. An officer who had done that for the country, surely, was worthy of a higher salary than that which the Government thought fit to allow him. It appeared to him that the better the officer, the worse he was paid by the Government.

MR. A. FORREST wanted to know what was the reason for the appearance of the new item that appeared under the head of "Assistant Landing Waiter, Cossack, £120." He did not think that the amount of business likely to be done at Cossack during the next twelve months justified this new appointment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was found that the Landing Waiter at Cossack had too much to do, and that an assistant was necessary.

MR. H. W. SHOLL said he was rather surprised at the hon. member for West Kimberley carping at this item. An assistant at Cossack had been required for some years. The present Customs officer had a lot of work to do; some £20,000 passed through his hands last year. He should like to know what amount passed through the hands of the Customs officer at Derby; a few hundreds a year, and very little to do.

MR. CONNOR asked why the Landing Waiter and the Warehouseman at Wyndham had been knocked off the Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was simply because the Government had been able to appoint a new officer as clerk to the Resident Magistrate at Wyndham, who would include in

his duties as clerk those of landing waiter and warehouseman. They found there was not sufficient work for three officers, and they therefore combined the duties of the three, and got the clerk of the court to perform them, and he seemed perfectly satisfied with the arrangement.

Vote agreed to.

Post and Telegraph, £65,081 18s. :

MR. A. FORREST asked what steps the Government were taking in reference to the mail service on the Northern coast.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that negotiations were going on, but he was not able to inform hon. members more than that. He hoped some satisfactory arrangements would be made; but, after all, he heard no complaint from the North, or from members representing that part of the colony. He understood it had been the general wish of the House—certainly of the Northern members—that the Government should make no arrangement unless they could make a satisfactory one.

MR. CONNOR said that in a very few weeks from now there would be actual want in the North, if some arrangements were not made to continue the coastal service. The people were depending upon this service to bring up their mails and their food supplies, and they had received no notice of the service being cut off. It was a very serious matter for the Northern people, and he thought the contract, even though an expensive one, should be continued.

MR. A. FORREST said in another month's time Holt's line would cease to call at the Kimberley district, but only at the districts south of them; and the district he represented would be cut off from all communication unless there were wool freights. It was time something should be done, in order that these districts should not be cut off.

MR. H. W. SHOLL, while thinking it would be a great shame if the Northern districts should be cut off, thought the Government were justified in endeavouring to make a better bargain than the last one.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had gained the impression that the day of subsidies should soon come to an end on this coast. He understood from hon. members that the general impression was that the time had almost

ceased when subsidies should be given, and that the inducements of the traffic along the coast should of themselves be sufficient. Those companies that had been trading on the coast for years did not seem to recognise the changes which had occurred along the coast, and they seemed to think they should get as large subsidies now as they did years ago. The Government thought differently, and delay had arisen in consequence of the companies seeking to obtain more than the Government thought they would be justified in giving. The Government would be very glad to make arrangements to continue the steam service, provided it could be done on advantageous terms.

MR. PATERSON said he was of the same opinion as the Premier that the days of subsidies were at an end. There were great complaints about the way this Northern trade was carried on, especially as regards perishable goods, which seldom reached their destination without being broached, or they were not delivered at all. He was sorry to see that only £110 was placed on these Estimates for the successor of their worthy postmistress at Pinjarrah, who had recently resigned. Pinjarrah was quite as important a place as Newcastle, where the postmaster received £140 a year, and had two assistants. He could assure hon. members that Pinjarrah would soon be a very important place.

MR. SOLOMON said, with regard to subsidies, he thought they must all recognise that the circumstances and conditions of the colony were very different now from what they were some years ago, when subsidies first came into vogue. In the natural order of things, as trade increased, there had been a considerable amount of competition, and we had vessels now on the coast of much larger capacity than formerly, and more suitable in every way. He was sure that the Government, in endeavouring to secure the best terms they could for this Northern service, were only studying the best interests of the colony.

MR. TRAYLEN said he must again complain about the telephone service. Every now and again he had the pleasure of listening to Sir John Forrest talking to somebody else, or somebody else talking to Sir John Forrest; but it was very difficult to get your own message through.

Surely they ought to have a better service than this.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) was sorry to hear the same complaints about this service. He had mentioned the matter to the Telephone Department, and he understood the evil complained of had been remedied to some extent. Whether it could be wholly remedied he did not know, but he would take an opportunity of again bringing the matter to the notice of the department.

MR. A. FORREST asked what arrangements had been made for discharging the duties of the Superintendent of Telephones during his absence at the Chicago Exhibition?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Superintendent had received six months' leave, on the usual terms, the first three months on full pay, and the remainder on half pay. The department, he believed, was now being worked by Mr. Snook and Mr. Hardman. He would suggest that all subscribers who had reason to complain of the working of the telephone service should send their complaints to the Postmaster General; he could promise them that, at all events, the complaints would be investigated.

MR. TRAYLEN thought the absence of the Superintendent at the World's Fair was a matter for congratulation rather than otherwise, for this reason: that a science like telegraphy and telephony was constantly making improvements, and the Superintendent had gone where he could find out the latest and most improved methods of doing everything connected with his branch of the service. He only hoped that his visit to Chicago would result in an improvement in the service here, on his return, for there was certainly room for improvement.

Vote put and passed.

Harbour and Light, £9,208:

MR. SOLOMON called attention to the difference in the salaries of the pilot at Rottnest and the assistant pilot, one receiving £250 a year, and the other only £150. There was an increase in the salary of the pilot last year, and he thought there was some sort of a promise given that the same would be done with the assistant pilot.

MR. PEARSE thought £150 was a very small salary indeed for an officer

holding such a responsible position as the assistant pilot at Rottneest. Both these officers were good men, and deserved a good salary.

Vote agreed to.

Government Storekeeper, £3,659 10s. :

MR. MONGER, referring to the item "Labourers occasionally employed, £700," said this seemed to him rather a big item to pay for the occasional handling of Government stores, in addition to the wages of a storeman, a packer, a carter, and a daily labourer.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this vote was very much bigger altogether this year, owing to the proposed transfer of the railway stores to the charge of the Government Storekeeper. All the officers now employed in the Railway Stores at Fremantle would, if these estimates were passed, be transferred to the Government Storekeeper's department. The Government proposed to have one Stores Department for the whole service, under the control of the Government Storekeeper, and that the whole business should be done through him, and that he should be directly responsible to the Treasury, because these stores represented a portion of the actual assets of the colony. This change would entail a large increase of labour, but he believed all these men were paid out of the Railway vote last year. It would be his duty to look into this matter of the stores, and try to put it on as good a footing as he could. It seemed to him absurd that they should have a Government Storekeeper, at £400 a year, in charge of a little bit of stationery at the waterside in Perth, and another storekeeper, at £250 a year, down at Fremantle, in charge of quarter of a million's worth of railway stores. The Government now proposed to put the control of the whole of the Government Stores in the colony into the hands of the Government Storekeeper, and it would be their endeavour to put the whole business on a satisfactory footing. He did not know yet how it would work, but he thought the thing could be worked up into a proper Store Department, conducted on a proper basis. As all these stores represented so much cash in the Treasury, members would see that there was the greatest necessity not only for the exercise of every economy, but for the most precise and efficient administration ;

and he believed they could make this department an efficient one. What occurred to him, at present, as necessary to be done was to do away with the present Government Stores at Perth, and put everything down at Fremantle, in charge of the Government Storekeeper.

MR. SOLOMON said he had noticed lately that the Government Storekeeper sat very often on the magisterial bench. He thought that, drawing, as he did, £400 a year, this officer ought to have sufficient to occupy his time in his own office.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I quite agree with you.

MR. SOLOMON thought that gentlemen occupying such a position as the Government Storekeeper should not be allowed to act as an honorary justice.

MR. DEHAMEL said he quite agreed with the observation that had fallen from the hon. member for South Fremantle. He thought that when we had officers well paid by the public they ought not to neglect their duties in order to go and sit on the bench ; and he hoped it would be stopped, right through the service.

MR. A. FORREST said he also thought that no officer in the Government service should occupy the position of a justice during the time he remained in the service.

Vote agreed to.

Revenue Services, North-West Coast, £1,216 2s. :

MR. H. W. SHOLL asked why this vote had been cut down nearly one-half. Was it because Capt. Smith had been so successful in putting down smuggling on the coast, and doing other good service ?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government proposed to dispense with this Revenue Service altogether. They had had the matter under consideration for a long time, and they found that the Government were not deriving anything like the benefit it should from such a large expenditure. The commander of the revenue cutter had been told to come down here with his vessel at the end of the year, and they intended doing away with the *Meda* and doing away with the whole service. He thought the pearlery could look after themselves while at sea ; and while they

were on shore the Government could look after them. The Government proposed taking other steps to prevent smuggling, and he had no doubt more efficient means than had been taken by this revenue vessel. Ever since he took office, he had thought that this service should be discontinued, as it was not doing what they had a right to expect from such an expenditure; and, at the end of the year, the service would be disbanded.

MR. MONGER thought this was economising in the wrong direction. Ever since the first discovery of the pearl shell fisheries at the North-West it had been found absolutely necessary to have something in the shape of a revenue vessel up there, not only to look after the interests of the Government, but also the interests of those engaged in that industry. He thought if the Government were going to do away with this revenue cutter—which, in his opinion, had done good service to the whole country—they would be doing away with something that it would be far better to leave in existence.

Vote agreed to.

Ecclesiastical Grant, £3,543:

MR. A. FORREST asked what action the Government had taken since last session with reference to this grant. It was proposed last year to reduce it, but the motion was withdrawn in order to give the Government time to consider the matter. He thought this was another department that might be wiped out of existence, like the Revenue Service, —not all at once, but by a gradual reduction of the grant. He would now move that the vote be reduced by £543. At that rate, it would take about six years to wipe it out altogether, and this would give the various denominations concerned time to make other arrangements. There were a large number of people in the colony who were opposed to the grant altogether, and he thought he was quite justified in making this motion to reduce it.

MR. MONGER said it gave him very great pleasure to support the amendment. This was a vote that he never had liked; he had always maintained that every religious denomination should be self-supporting. He thought the time had now arrived in the history of Western Australia when each denomination was quite capable of supporting itself; and

it appeared to him that in moving for a gradual reduction of this vote, instead of abolishing it at once, the hon. member for West Kimberley had taken a course which would not only meet with the approval of those denominations that were interested, but also the approval of the whole colony.

MR. COOKWORTHY said he really could not agree with the two hon. members who had attacked this vote, nor did he think that the abolition of the grant would meet with the general approval of the people of this colony. If it concerned only the larger centres of population, he should say "Do away with the grant;" but, in the country districts of the colony, where the population was sparse and widely scattered, the abolition of this grant would result in either one of two things: either the maintenance of the clergy would depend upon a few settlers—for it would be thrown almost entirely upon a few—or there would be no ministers of religion whatever in those districts.

MR. A. FORREST: That does not say much for your country people.

MR. COOKWORTHY: How was that? There were only a few of them, and they were not wealthy. But he believed that a large portion of this grant was spent in Perth and Fremantle, which ought not to be the case. At any rate, he considered that the time had not arrived, considering the wants of the country districts, for the abolition of this very small grant, nor for its reduction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) hoped the hon. member who had moved to reduce this vote would not persist in his motion. What he said last year was this: he made no promise whatever that he would take any action in this matter, but he suggested that the proper course for the hon. member to take, or for any other hon. member, was to move a resolution to the effect that steps be taken, by the gradual reduction of the vote, to abolish it by degrees; and that if he found that the House agreed to it, it would be the duty of the Government to carry out that wish. But the hon. member had not taken that course. He thought it was clearly shown, last year, by the division that took place, in a full House, that it was not the desire of the majority of members that this vote

should at the present time be done away with. He expressed his views on the subject very clearly at the time, and said he thought it was a vote that they ought to encourage, rather than try and do away with it. He pointed out the good it had done in the way of teaching the young to grow up honourable and right-minded; and, he believed, he said that apart from the religious aspect of the question he thought that the expenditure upon this grant was really a reproductive expenditure, by diminishing crime. He really believed that if you took away from the colony all the ministers of religion and all those who are engaged in trying to do good, and trying to bring up the young in habits of morality and in right-thinking ideas, you would sooner or later reduce the country to a state of savagery. He could not understand any man who had any belief in the future of the colony, and any wish to see the rising generation growing up an honourable and God-fearing race of people, desiring to see all State assistance given to the various religious denominations abolished. With a sparse population, scattered over thousands of miles of coast-line, struggling to gain an existence, away from the centres of civilisation, the proposal to do away with this small assistance from the State towards providing religious ministrations for the people, in the interests of public morality, was altogether beyond his understanding. Of course he was prepared to hear it said that some denominations managed to exist without this assistance. He knew this: that all the churches were languishing in this colony; nearly all of them were in debt, and had the greatest difficulty in finding money to carry on their work; and, if you took away from them this source of income, what would be the result? He did not know whether their people were prepared to make it up; he hoped they were, in a measure. But he doubted if they were in a position to do it at once, or even at all. This was a very important matter, and this amendment struck at a principle; and if the hon. member persisted in it, he would ask him to allow them to report progress, in order that they might have a fuller House to discuss it. He did not wish to take upon himself the responsibility of dealing with such an important principle in a very thin House. He moved that progress

be now reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Question put and passed.
Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at six minutes to 5 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th September, 1893.

Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Chattels Foreclosure Bill: committee—Legal Practitioners Bill: committee—Grand Jury Abolition Act Amendment Bill: first reading: suspension of Standing Orders: second reading: committee; third reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

FREMANTLE GAS AND COKE COMPANY'S ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was, on the motion of the HON. J. W. HACKETT, read a third time, and passed.

CHATELS FORECLOSURE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3 were passed.

Clause 4.—“Registrar to advertise chattels for sale.”

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: As the clause reads, the notice might be inserted in the *Gazette* once before the time of sale and twice after. To make it clear, I move that the words “and the date of the first of the said weekly notices” be inserted after the word *Gazette* in the seventh line.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): The Registrar has to give the notice, and, of course, he will see it is properly done. This is an exact tran-