

Mr. R. F. SHOLL moved that item 39—"Clerk to magistrate, Katanning, £100"—be struck out.

Mr. LOTON said he noticed there was also an item of £55 for a clerk at the Williams. That salary would not, under the arrangement proposed by the Government, be drawn, and it would therefore be available for the payment of the salary of the clerk at Katanning.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the Government did not know exactly what would be done, but the two salaries would not be drawn together. The gentleman who received the £55 at the Williams was also telegraphist. Surely hon. members could trust the Government with the expenditure of a paltry £100. It did not follow that because it was voted it would be spent.

The amendment to strike out the item was negatived.

The vote was then agreed to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that progress be reported.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:30 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th February, 1892.

Floating of second instalment of Loan—Northern Goldfields: Funds available for development of—Further assistance to the Midland Railway Company—Equipment of Midland Railway and selection of lands—Bullen's Railway Platform—Rewards for Destruction of Eagle-hawks—Leave of absence—Printing a return showing Expenditure by Midland Railway Company—Customs Laws Consolidation Bill: second reading—Estimates, 1892: further consideration of—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

FLOATING OF SECOND INSTALMENT OF LOAN.

Mr. CANNING: I wish, with leave, without notice, to ask the Premier

whether the Government is prepared to give this House any information with regard to the floating of the second instalment of £250,000 of the authorised loan? Telegrams, paragraphs, and leading articles have appeared in the newspapers referring to this matter and discussing it, but no intimation whatever has been made to this House on the subject; and I wish to ask the hon. gentleman, if I may be permitted to do so, whether the Government is prepared to give this House any information on the subject?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I shall only be too glad to tell the House all I know, but I think members already possess all the information we have on the subject. The Government published, in the Press of the colony, full information relating to this loan, and I do not know that I have anything further to add. The loan (£250,000) was placed on the market at a minimum of £99; it realised £99 2s.; and it was fully subscribed.

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GOLDFIELDS.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works—

1. Whether any funds were now available for the development of goldfields.

2. Whether any applications for money to improve the water supply on Nullagine, Marble Bar, or Ashburton fields had lately been received; and if they could be granted.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): In reply to the hon. member, I have to state—

1. There are funds available for the development of goldfields.

2. The following grants have been made during 1891:

Well at Petermurra (balance of cost) ...	£	s.	d.
108	9	3	
For expenditure by War-			
den—			
Wells, &c., Nullagine ...	400	0	0
Do. Western Shaw ...	250	0	0
Ashburton — For expenditure by Roads Board on Water Supply on road to Fields ...	200	0	0

**MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY:
FURTHER ASSISTANCE TO.**

MR. DE HAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, Whether, in the event of the Midland Railway Company being unable to continue the construction of their railway, after the sum of £60,000 now being advanced under the existing Government guarantee has been expended, the Government would refuse to render the said Company any further assistance, either by guarantee or otherwise, without first obtaining the sanction of this House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government would give no further guarantee or pecuniary assistance without the sanction of the House.

**MIDLAND RAILWAY: EQUIPMENT OF
COMPLETED SECTIONS AND SELEC-
TION OF LAND BY CONTRACTORS.**

MR. LOTON, pursuant to notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways:—

1. Whether the sections of railway between Guildford and Greenough, which are open for the public conveyance of passengers, have been equipped by the contractors, and maintained with sufficient plant and rolling stock for the efficient working thereof.

2. Whether the contractors have selected all or what portion of the lands to which they are entitled as a subsidy in consideration of the construction and working of the sections of railway opened.

3. Whether the certificates of title of the first moiety of such selected lands have been issued to the contractors.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. The sections of the Midland Railway which have been completed and opened for traffic have not been entirely equipped by the Contractor, the passenger carriages at either end of the line having been rented to the Contractor by the Government, for which he pays until his own carriages, which are in the Colony, are ready to be placed at his disposal. The line, plant, and rolling stock are maintained and kept in efficient working order.

2. The Contractors have made 43 selections, amounting to 823,535 acres, but the applications have not been formally approved. As soon as 150 miles are

completed and equipped, and opened for traffic, the Company will be entitled to one moiety of the land which they are entitled to, viz., 900,000 acres.

3. No title deeds have yet been issued.

**ERECTION AND NAMING OF RAILWAY
STATION AT "BULLEN'S."**

MR. MOLLOY, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways the nature of the information supplied to him which decided him to refuse to erect the railway station near Salvado Street, at Cottesloe, and why the station at Bullen's was to be named "The Grove."

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied:—

1. That on careful examination of the grades of the two places (Salvado Street and Bullen's) it was found that Bullen's was at the bottom of two considerable grades, while Salvado Street was at the top of a grade with a level of only a few chains. Whether or not the locality was otherwise a desirable one or not for a station, there remained the fact that if any trucks got away at any time while being shunted or moved at the siding, they would plunge along the line down to Bullen's. This would be a constant source of danger, leading probably to serious accidents.

2. That the estimates for the making of either of these stations were very much the same, being about equal.

3. That it would be highly undesirable, unnecessary, and unprofitable to have two stations in such close proximity as fifty chains, even though the surroundings of each had individual inducements of population and traffic far in excess of what either possesses at present, or is likely to possess in the near future.

4. That the platform known as "Bullen's" had been used as a platform by the public for several years. That very considerable areas of land in small lots had been sold to the public and built upon entirely because of the existence of the platform at Bullen's.

5. That at present the number of people served by Bullen's platform was considerably in excess of those who might be served by a platform at Salvado Street.

6. That from the existence and usage of Bullen's platform a certain right had

accrued to those interested in keeping this platform in its present locality.

7. That under these circumstances it would be unwise and improper to close it.

8. That as the proposed entrance to this platform would be at Jarrah Street, from the main road to the South of Bullen's estate, all those who would use Salvado Street Station would be much better served than by using Bullen's station as it now stands.

9. That the name "The Grove" suggested itself to his (the Commissioner's) mind as being a far more euphonious name than "Bullen's."

REWARD FOR DESTRUCTION OF EAGLE-HAWKS.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that rewards should be offered for the destruction of eagle-hawks, as is done in the case of native dogs." Rearers of sheep (he said) suffered considerable loss every year from these birds of prey. They were extremely fond of lambs and very destructive, and it was highly desirable that some steps should be taken to destroy them. Sheepowners at the North suffered severely from these hawks in addition to their other losses, and sheepbreeders generally sustained great losses annually from them. The effect of offering rewards for the destruction of native dogs was admitted on all hands to have been very beneficial to the country generally, and, for the same reason, he thought it was desirable we should carry out the same principle in destroying these other almost equally destructive pests. He hoped members would bear in mind the very trying time which sheep-breeders were now having, from drought and other causes, and that there would be no opposition to granting them this small assistance.

MR. PIESSE, in seconding the motion, said he could bear out the facts stated by the hon. member for Beverley. In his district they found these eagle-hawks were becoming very numerous and very destructive,—almost as destructive as native dogs; and he hoped the motion would commend itself to the House and to the Government, and that some provision

would be made to deal with this scourge.

MR. R. F. SHOLL did not think anyone could accuse him of not being in sympathy with the squatters of the colony, but he thought, if this motion were carried, and the Government were to pay for the destruction of eagle-hawks, we should find that a very considerable sum would have to come out of the revenue. Although it was a difficult thing to poison native dogs, there was no difficulty at all in poisoning eagle-hawks. —[MR. HARPER: Question.]—If an eagle-hawk attacked a poisoned carcase, the probability was that a dozen more eagle-hawks would meet with the same fate. —[MR. HARPER: Question.]—He questioned, really, whether there was so much destruction caused by these hawks as they were led to believe there was. We were now paying £1,400 a year out of the revenue for the destruction of native dogs, and he thought if this motion were carried we should have to pay considerably more for these eagle-hawks. Though he represented a pastoral constituency, he was not prepared to support this motion.

MR. LOTON asked whether the motion was in order, involving as it did an expenditure of public money?

THE SPEAKER said he could hardly rule the motion, as worded, a breach of the Standing Orders. It was merely an abstract resolution. It did not even say that the reward should take the form of money.

MR. LOTON said if it was only to be a leather medal there could be no objection to it.

MR. CLARKSON said it was a fact that these eagle-hawks were nearly as destructive on lambs as native dogs, and they were very difficult to poison. He had known two of these hawks kill some scores of lambs in a paddock. He had poisoned lambs to try and destroy the hawks, but the beggars would not touch the poisoned meat; they seemed to have an instinctive appreciation of the presence of poison, and kept away from that particular carcase. The motion did not specify what the amount of the reward should be. He thought that 5s.—the reward offered for native dogs—would be too high altogether in the case of eagle-hawks. Although it was so difficult to

poison these birds, it was easy enough to shoot them; and the reward offered should be a small one.

MR. PARKER said he was fortunate or unfortunate enough to possess a garden, up in the hills, where he had some fruit trees, and he found the opossums very annoying and destructive, and he was put to great expense in trying to keep these opossums away. He thought, if this motion were agreed to, he might as well ask the Government to offer a reward for killing his opossums. Really, it did seem to him it was about time that the people of the colony generally, and sheep-owners particularly, should try and cultivate the art of doing something for themselves, and not come to the Government to do everything for them. He thought it was about time that the days of "grandmotherly government" should be numbered with the things of the past. We were really going out of our way in legislating for the protection of sheep-farmers. He thought the Legislature had gone far enough when it agreed to offer rewards out of public funds for the destruction of native dogs, and he did not think that, in justice to the general body of taxpayers, they should go any further in this direction. Why should not the merchant, troubled with rats in his warehouse, come to that House for assistance, and say, "These rats destroy a lot of goods every year in my store, and, as the Government give rewards for destroying the squatter's pests, I must ask the Government to offer a reward for the destruction of these pests also." One was just as reasonable as the other. The hon. member for Toodyay told them that this reward, if offered, should be a very small one. From that, one would gather that these hawks are easily destroyed; and, if so, surely sheep-owners themselves and those interested in this question ought to adopt their own measures for destroying them, without coming to the State. Some people, especially those who owned gardens, might argue that, instead of being a pest, these hawks were rather a benefit, as they destroyed a lot of birds that were very destructive to fruit. He also believed—so he was informed at any rate—that these hawks acted as scavengers. He had been told that in the Northern districts, about the camps in the gold

regions, these camps would be uninhabitable were it not for these hawks acting as scavengers.—[THE PREMIER: Oh!]—He only repeated what he had been told. He submitted it was not fair to the taxpayers of the colony that we should tax the whole community for the benefit of a small class, and, for his part, he must oppose the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not think this was a very important matter. No doubt these eagle-hawks did a lot of damage, and, if some incentive were given in the shape of a small reward for their destruction, probably it would be better for the country than to allow our flocks to be destroyed in this manner. Of course it might be said that people themselves should do the best they can to protect their flocks. That was right enough, but there were lots of others besides sheep-owners who would probably be induced to join in the work of destruction if a small reward were offered as an incentive to them. If (as they had been told by the hon. member for Toodyay) two of these eagle-hawks had killed 20 or 30 lambs in one paddock, the loss caused throughout the colony must be very serious. He knew that when he was in South Australia some years ago, there was just as much attention paid to the destruction of eagle-hawks as native dogs, one being considered as destructive as the other. He knew from his own experience in our own Northern Districts that these eagle-hawks were very destructive. He had no objection to the motion himself; it would not cost the country much; he really thought it would be profitable to the country rather than otherwise, in saving a large number of sheep that were now destroyed. He thought we might, at all events, offer a small reward, for a few years, to see what the result was.

MR. DE HAMEL said it was not so much a question of cost as a question of whether it would be more profitable to the country to have these hawks destroyed or not. They were all looking forward to the time when the whole country between here and the Vasse would be covered with vineyards and orchards, and he knew there were thousands and thousands of parrots in that part of the colony, which were dreadfully destructive to fruit.

These hawks killed these parrots, and, without the hawks, these parrots would be a perfect curse to the fruit-growers. It appeared to him to be simply a question of choosing the lesser of two evils.

Mr. HARPER was sorry that some hon. members before opposing this motion had not studied natural history a little more. One said that these eagle-hawks acted as scavengers. That was a most extraordinary statement. That hon. member had probably heard of the scavenger hawk, known about the North, and which would actually come and take a bone out of your hand, and he did not know the difference between it and the eagle-hawk. Another hon. member said that eagle-hawks were very destructive to parrots. He did not know where that hon. member obtained that information from. He (Mr. Harper) had never heard of an eagle-hawk touching parrots. The hon. member was probably thinking of sparrow-hawks, and did not know the difference. Some members seemed to imagine that this motion was brought forward distinctly in the interests of the squatter. He wished to state distinctly that it was not. The squatter was generally in a position to protect his flocks; the men who suffered mostly belonged to the class we wanted to see more of, and that was the small settler, who while occupied in cultivating his land was unable to protect his lambs from these eagle-hawks. They were the greatest sufferers; and it was far more in the interests of this class than of the squatter that he had moved this resolution.

Motion put; and a division being called for, the numbers were—

Ayes 16

Noes 9

Majority for ... 7

AYES.
Mr. Burt
Mr. Clarkson
Mr. Cookworthy
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Marminion
Mr. Pearse
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Simpson
Mr. Symon
Mr. Traylen
Mr. Venn
Mr. Harper (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Canning
Mr. Darlot
Mr. De Hamel
Mr. Loton
Mr. Molloy
Mr. Parker
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Randell
Mr. E. F. Sholl (Teller).

Question—put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO MR. BAKER.

On the motion of Mr. A. FORREST, leave of absence was granted to the hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Baker) for fourteen days.

MIDLAND RAILWAY: PRINTING OF A RETURN SHOWING THE EXPENDITURE SINCE GOVERNMENT GUARANTEE OF £60,000.

MR. MOLLOY: I beg to move the motion standing in my name,—“That the return laid upon the table, showing the amounts expended on the Midland Railway since the guarantee of the £60,000 by the Government, be printed.” Some days ago I asked in this House for this return to be laid on the table, showing “the amount of value of work certified to have been done, the quantity of such work, and upon what basis the value was then calculated.” That return has been placed on the table, covering a portion of the period, some three months, since the agreement was made, but the return was so intricate, so complicated, and presented such a mass of figures, that it would require most careful study, with these figures constantly before you, before you could really come to any conclusion upon it. Therefore it is that I now move to have this return printed, so that members may be perfectly informed upon this matter before they are asked to express an opinion upon it. I notice that in the concluding paragraph of the guarantee to the Bank, for the advances to be made to the Company, it is said, “Such advances shall not exceed the sum of £12,000 per month, and shall not be made unless upon the production to the Bank of a certificate of the value of work done upon the Midland Railway, signed by the Commissioner of Railways for Western Australia, or upon the written approval of the Commissioner of Railways, and then only for the amount so certified or approved.” So far as I can learn from the return laid on the table, no such certificate of the value of the work done has been made by the Commissioner of Railways; the authorisation for the advances by the Bank has been made upon the report of the Midland Railway itself, without any other certificate of the value of the work performed. Now, the object of the Government in coming to the aid of this

Company—so I understood from the statements made by the Premier—the main object of the Government in coming to the assistance of this Company was to prevent a large number of men being thrown on the labor market if these works were stopped, and also to prevent a bad impression being caused in financial circles in England, and also that it was stipulated that the money advanced was to be expended on work done in the colony. These were the reasons given by the Premier in justifying the action of the Government in giving this guarantee. It was also said that this guarantee would help the proprietors of the concession in London to finance it, and enable them to complete the contract; and that if the Government had not done this, a number of prominent citizens would have been involved in ruin. These were the reasons alleged by the Government for coming to the rescue of the Company, the principal reason of all, as I understood, being to prevent a large number of men being thrown out of employment and disorganising the labor market. It was said there were 400 men employed on these works, and, if there was a stoppage of the works, if the Government had not come to the rescue, these 400 men would have been thrown on the labor market. It was stated that these 400 men would be kept on, now that the Government had come to the assistance of the Company. But I have learnt from a good authority that since the commencement of this guarantee and the issue of these advances, there have not been more than 100 men employed on this line. A great point was also made of the statement that all the money advanced was to be expended in the colony, on new work, and that nothing was to be paid for without the certificate of the Commissioner of Railways. From a few of the items I have been able to pick out from this return, as being intelligible to me, I find that the item of ballasting alone, for the month of October, amounted to £5,495 8s.; for November, £7,846 13s.; and for December, £3,773 1s. 5d.,—making a total in respect of this one item alone of £17,115 2s. 5d., or an average of nearly £6,000 a month for ballasting alone. According to this, about one-half of the monthly advance (£12,000) guaranteed by the Govern-

ment, and which was to be expended on new work, had really not been spent as it was intended it should be. In the month of October, we find that in sleepers alone, to construct 10½ miles of railway, there was an amount of £5,495 8s., which was at the rate of £576 a mile for this one item alone. Now, seeing that in the contract for the Bunbury line we are having that railway completed at the rate of about £1,200 a mile, this sum of £576 a mile for sleepers does seem altogether unreasonable; and I submit that the Government was not warranted in lending or guaranteeing the money under such circumstances. We know the Government was not in a position to be able to do without money, for we find it going into the money market itself to borrow money. Yet they go out of their way to lend money, which they say they had the greatest difficulty in obtaining,—they go out of their way to bolster up this private venture, in which they have no concern. I have always maintained the inadvisability of this action on the part of the Government, and I think that opinion is confirmed by what has subsequently transpired. I find that not later than last Saturday a number of men from this railway were thrown upon the labor market. If this money was guaranteed by the Government in order to prevent these men being thrown on the labor market, how is it that we find them now without employment, and seeking for work elsewhere? It also appears to me that we have no guarantee whatever, beyond the word of the Midland Railway people themselves, that the work paid for is of the value represented. According to the agreement no work was to be paid for except upon the certificate or written approval of the Commissioner of Railways; but, from what I can make out from this return, the only certificates given are given by the Company's own servants, and the Government have not themselves ascertained the value of the work done. I think it is very desirable that this House should be placed in possession of all the information available, and it is in order that they may be assisted to an understanding of the position as it now stands, that I ask to have this formidable array of figures printed, so that the House may be able to express some opinion upon this matter, which, I understand, it will

have an opportunity of doing on another occasion.

MR. CANNING: I rise to support the motion. I myself have also been struck by some of the figures in the return laid on the table. I find that for the month of October there was an expenditure of £1,754 on viaducts, £7,250 for ballasting, and £5,495 for sleepers; or a total of £14,499, which for ten miles of railway would (roughly) come to £1,450 per mile for these three items alone. I am quite prepared to believe that a very reasonable explanation may be forthcoming with regard to this matter; but I think it is most desirable that the House should be placed in possession of the fullest information, and that every possible means should be afforded it for arriving at a thorough understanding of the whole matter. I do not wish to prejudge the matter in the least. We simply want to know whether the amounts guaranteed by the Government have been advanced for the purposes for which it was stipulated they should be advanced. We want to know whether this £12,000 a month, which was intended, as stated, to prevent the collapse of this undertaking and the disastrous consequences that would have followed to the colony from that collapse, throwing a large number of men out of employment and consequently disorganising the labor market and all the inconveniences that would follow from such a disaster; I say we want to know, and I think it is very desirable we should know, whether—these having been the reasons assigned for advancing the money—that money has been directly and legitimately applied to these purposes. I only desire to arrive at a thorough understanding of the question, and I have no other object in view in supporting this motion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The motion before the House is that the return laid upon the table be printed. That is the only question now before the House, and we do not propose, on a motion of this sort, to enter into a general discussion of the action of the Government as to the payments that have been made under the guarantee that was given—though that may be a very good question to raise on another occasion. When it is raised, the Government will be prepared to deal with it.

But the motion at present is that this return be printed, and we are not now called to go into the general question at all as to the contents of these certificates. The hon. member for East Perth, who seconded the motion, has not, I think, set read the motion, for he told us that the question is whether these amounts have been legitimately expended. That is not the question at all. The question, and the only question now, is shall this return be printed?

MR. CANNING: It has a direct bearing upon it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): At the present moment we are not going to give him any information at all as to the details of how this money was spent by the contractors; the Government are not prepared to answer such a question upon such a motion as this. If the question is raised in a proper form, the information will be given to the House by the Minister in charge of this department, but we cannot go into that question to-night. I would like to ask the House what is the necessity for printing this return? It has been on the table for some days, open to every member; and I would point out that this return is in reality rather in the nature of a private certificate between the contractor and the Company. The Government were furnished with a copy of it, to see that they only paid what they ought to pay. We take care of that. For instance, we have been told this evening that there is a sum of £17,000 for October, for three items; and I believe the total amount of the certificate for that month was £20,000. But they did not pay £20,000, nor £17,000, but £12,000. We are told we paid for sleepers. Surely sleepers are necessary for the construction of a railway. Surely that is a legitimate item of expenditure. But, as I have said, we do not propose, on such a motion as this, to go into these matters. I say this House has no right to be asked to sanction the printing of this certificate. What good would be effected by it, if it were printed? It is on the table of the House, and anyone can copy it, if he wishes. If it was printed and published to-morrow, it would not be understood by half-a-dozen people. Besides, we have no right to print and publish this document to the world with-

out the permission of those to whom it belongs.

MR. PARKER: It is a public document, having been laid on the table.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): It is a certificate between the Company and the contractor, of which they furnished the Government with a copy. That is what it is.

MR. PARKER: As soon as it was laid on the table of the House it became public.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I think members ought to be thankful to the Government for straining a point, and giving them this information.

MR. CANNING: The public are entitled to every information.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): One would think the hon. member for East Perth was the only member in this House who represents the public. What does he know about it? The hon. member is always talking about the public, as if nobody else had anything to do with the public. I venture to say that the public has not such a big idea of the hon. member as he has of the public.

MR. CANNING: That is not the question. Permit me to say, that is an improper way of dealing with the question. It is not what the opinion of the hon. and learned gentleman is,—that is of no consequence whatever—but what the opinion of the public is. I am speaking in the name of the people of the colony, and the people of the colony are not to be set aside by such a flimsy argument, which has neither reasoning nor sophistry to commend it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): This is not a question of whether the hon. member for East Perth represents the public, or whether this was a legitimate expenditure or not, but whether this document shall be printed; and I say we have no right in printing it and disseminating this information, which is between the contractor and the Company. What public ground is there for printing all these figures? I think the House will agree with the Government that there is no occasion whatever for it.

MR. DE HAMEL: I cannot agree with the Attorney General in his remarks—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You never do.

MR. DE HAMEL: I cannot agree with the Attorney General that these certificates are private certificates, and that we have no right to have them printed. What does the agreement say, "Such advances shall not exceed the sum of £12,000 per month, and shall not be made unless upon the production to the bank of a certificate of the value of the work done upon the Midland Railway, signed by the Commissioner of Railways for Western Australia." I submit that the Commissioner of Railways is one of the paid servants of the public of the colony, and, as he has to certify to this work, we in this House are entitled to have these certificates printed. I agree with the Attorney General in one thing: that the only question before the House now is whether this return shall be printed or not. But of this I am absolutely certain: that we shall have a debate on these certificates before this session closes, and it is absolutely impossible for members to deal fairly with these certificates and matters arising out of them unless they have printed copies in their hands. To say that we can make copies of them ourselves is simply absurd. We give our time to the country, and we pay our expenses ourselves, and we are not here to sit and slave in copying out documents that we require in order to enable us to perform our duties to the public and our constituencies, and one of the most important of those duties is to see that the public estate is not wasted. I hope the House will agree that these certificates shall be printed.

MR. MOLLOY: In reply to what has fallen from the Attorney General, I may say that when I moved for this return I did not ask for the contractor's certificates; I simply asked for a return showing the value of the work done and upon what basis it was calculated, to justify the Government in authorising the issue of £12,000 a month to the contractor. What I wanted to know was how the Commissioner of Railways had arrived at the conclusion that these payments were justified. If the Commissioner of Railways thought fit to get that information from another source, that has nothing to do with this House. It has his certificate

endorsed upon it, and having been laid on the table of the House, it is public property. It was laid on the table, I presume, for this House to make use of it; and, that being so, I cannot see why there should be any objection to printing it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not intend to say anything on this occasion, but it really seems to me that this Midland Railway, as I said on a former occasion, is a perfect godsend to some members. They have threshed it out once, and they are threshing it out now, and they say they mean to thresh it out again before the session closes. I think somebody moved a vote of want of confidence, or something, with reference to it, but I believe that motion found no seconder; and one would think these members would have been satisfied. But, no; one or two members seem to think that this action of the Government has shown a little weak spot in their armour, and they are determined to probe that small hole on every possible occasion. I do not know whether the House is going to take much notice of these repetitions. I can speak on behalf of the public quite as much, I think, as the hon. member for East Perth, and I say that the public are perfectly satisfied with the action of the Government in this matter. I have been all over the country, and I think I am in a position to know the views of people quite as well as one or two members in Perth; and I say that, wherever I have been, I have been congratulated on the action of the Government in this matter; and are we, because one or two members in Perth who, I will not say represent, but misrepresent, the views of their constituencies in this matter—

MR. MOLLOY: I rise to order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in saying that we misrepresent the views of our constituencies?

THE SPEAKER: I do not think he ought to have said that.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I withdraw it at once. I know this: there is no place in the colony so much benefited by the action of the Government in this matter as the city of Perth. It seems to me really that I ought not to have to stand up here and speak on this subject any more. I have spoken of it publicly all over the colony,

and also in this House, and have told the House everything we know about it. We are carrying out what we undertook to carry out. These certificates are merely the certificates which the Commissioner has to sign before the money can be advanced by the Bank. We have taken all necessary precautions to see that the work is properly done; we sent an officer from one end of the line to the other to keep us informed; and, instead of only 100 men having been employed since this agreement was made, I was informed that there were 440 men when I made my financial statement. The Government have nothing to hide in this matter. We have informed the House of everything we have done, and we are quite satisfied that our action has received the general approval of the country. I think we are in a position to know the views of the country quite as well as one or two members on the opposite bench.

MR. PARKER: I understand that the question now is that this return—I have not seen it, myself—should be printed. I, at any rate, cannot be accused of never agreeing with my hon. and learned friend the Attorney General, for I am generally in accord with him; but I certainly am not in accord with him that we have no right to have this document printed, and that it is of a semi-private character. Having been placed on the table of the House, it is public property. The Government may have done wrong in placing it there—I do not know anything about that; but, once it was placed on the table, it became public property, so far as its contents are concerned. If it is not printed now, in all probability it will be printed at the end of the session, with other sessional papers, and published with our "Votes and Proceedings." I agree with the Attorney General that this is not the time to discuss the policy or the action of the Government in this matter. The only question now before us is whether this paper shall be printed or not; and I think the Government, in their own interest, ought not to oppose the printing of it. We are told the Government have nothing to hide. That being the case, they ought to be only too glad to disseminate all the information in their power; and certainly this particular information will be much more readily understood by members if printed

than in manuscript. I know I would not take the trouble to peruse it in manuscript, but, if printed, I may probably study it carefully. At any rate, we have a perfect right to have it printed, if the House thinks fit.

Question put—That the return be printed.

A division being called for, the numbers were—

Ayes	...	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	...	13
AYES.				
Mr. Canning				Mr. Burt
Mr. Darlot				Mr. Clarkson
Mr. De Hamel				Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Harper				Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Loton				Mr. Hassell
Mr. Parker				Mr. Marmion
Mr. Phillips				Mr. Pearse
Mr. Quinlan				Mr. Piesse
Mr. R. F. Sholl				Mr. Randell
Mr. H. W. Sholl				Mr. Symon
Mr. Simpson				Mr. Throssell
Mr. Traylen				Mr. Venn
Mr. Molloy (Teller).				Sir John Forrest (Teller).

The numbers being equal,—

THE SPEAKER said: I give my vote with the Ayes, and for this reason, that this paper would probably be ordered to be printed by the Printing Committee at the end of the session, and I think it might as well be printed now as then.

Motion passed.

CUSTOMS LAWS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I rise to move the second reading of a bill entitled "An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to Customs." This is rather a lengthy bill, it will be seen, and it is a bill that consolidates the whole of the existing laws relating to Customs, trade, and navigation. By reference to the first schedule of the bill, it will be seen what a large number of Acts and ordinances are repealed and consolidated in this one measure—something like thirteen or fourteen Acts in all. Throughout these numerous Acts the laws relating to Customs are now scattered, but in this bill they are all brought into a comparatively small compass, and they may all be readily found within its four corners. In clause 1 there is a sort of synopsis of the different parts of the bill, and a perusal of that section alone will give members some idea what the contents of this measure are. I may say that although it is a very big bill, there is little or nothing new in the bill itself.

I do not know that there is anything whatever new in it, with the exception of some provisions which are to be found in Part XXI., with reference to infirm passengers, with regard to which I will say a word or two in a moment. The rest of the bill is simply a consolidation, and at the same time I think an improvement, of the present Acts, which have been in force since 1860—that being the year in which our general Customs law was passed. Of course there have been improvements as to the regulation of Customs generally throughout the world I may say, since that year, and this bill picks up (so to speak) all those improvements, found in the mother country and also throughout the colonies, Canada, and other large possessions of the Crown elsewhere. The parts of the bill enumerated in clause 1 will be familiar to anyone who has had anything to do with business relating to Customs. Merchants and others will see at once from the headings that there is little or nothing absolutely new in the bill, and I do not think there is any occasion for me to dilate at present upon the desirability of having such provisions as appear here, such as collection of duties, warehousing, bonds and securities, disputes as to duties payable, exportation, importation, smuggling, drawbacks, oaths and affirmations, false declarations—all of which are dealt with in the Customs Acts of the colony at the present moment. With regard to private warehouses, these warehouses can only be used as a bond by the owners; in other words, a private bond cannot be used as a general bond indiscriminately. I am not sure whether that is not the law at the present time. I am informed that it is. It is the same under this bill. With regard to infirm passengers, which are dealt with in Part XXI. of the bill, we propose to take steps here, as is done in other countries, to prevent the indiscriminate landing of people on our shores who are likely to become immediately chargeable to the colony. It is the same provision that obtains in New Zealand, and, I believe, in all the other colonies. Clause 339 provides that if the Collector of Customs certifies that any passenger arriving in the colony is a lunatic, or deaf and dumb, or infirm, or completely indigent, and likely, in his opinion, to become a charge upon public charity, he may re-

quire the owner or charterer of the ship, or the master, to find two sureties in addition to himself, in the sum of £200, for each such passenger, to secure the public from being called upon to provide for the maintenance or support of any of these infirm passengers. If the public Treasury should be called upon to support these people at any time within five years after their arrival in the colony—if they are allowed to land—the bond of the sureties may be enforced to the extent of the amount incurred for their maintenance and support. Unless the master of the vessel can find the necessary sureties, he will not be allowed to land any passenger likely to become a charge upon the public. This is a provision, as I have said, that already obtains in other countries. I have known instances where the masters of vessels, on many occasions, have been obliged by the Collector or other duly authorised officer to take his passengers back where he brought them from, because they were utterly indigent, infirm, imbecile, or had something the matter with them that made them undesirable additions to the population. I know one case in particular of a person who was unable to land in two different parts of the British possessions, one being Canada and the other New Zealand, neither of which places would have him. I believe he afterwards obtained a footing in another colony, where this provision was not in force. Beyond this provision dealing with this class of passengers, I do not know that there is anything novel in this bill. I do not say that when we go into committee it may not turn out that there are not one or two clauses that may be new and involve a new principle; I can only say that at the present moment I do not bear in mind any throughout the bill. Certainly there are no great changes made. Should anything strike any member in committee as an innovation, the Government will only be too glad to give their reasons for importing it into this measure. I think it is important in one sense that we should endeavor to pass this bill this session; it is a very long bill, and it is now in type, and it is very desirable that the bill should be disposed of, so that the type may be released—unless there is some good reason shown for delaying the passage of the bill. If so, the Government

would have no objection to defer it; still it will be seen that it is undesirable that a long bill like this, 115 pages, should have to be set up in type again. I am not aware that the House will rise for some days yet, and we shall have ample time to consider the bill. If it were a new bill, dealing with a new subject, I would not ask the House to read it a second time at this late period of the session; but being merely a consolidation of the present law into one Act, I think, as the bill is now in type, it would be desirable, if possible, to try and get it through before the House prorogues. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. DE HAMEL: It was my intention to have moved an amendment, that this bill be read a second time this day six months; but, after the remarks of the Attorney General, I do not think that will be necessary. The hon. and learned gentleman told us that the Government would not object to deferring the bill, if good reason could be shown for doing so. I think there is one very good reason why a bill of this length should not be taken into consideration at this late period of the session. I have taken the trouble to ascertain the number and the duration of the sittings we have had this session, and I find that we have now sat 59 days, but the sittings have only averaged from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours daily; and it appears to me there has been ample time for bringing this bill before us at an earlier period of the session. It has not been the fault of members that we had these short sittings; we were quite willing to work longer.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think it is correct to say that the House has had no work to go on with. There has been plenty of work before members ever since the session began.

MR. DE HAMEL: Taking the whole session, up to the last adjournment, the average length of the sittings has been 2 hours and 20 minutes. I do not think that at this late period we ought to be asked to go into a bill of this length, containing 358 sections. I am satisfied, from questions I have put to many members, there is not one (beyond the members of the Government) who has read this bill. It is a bill that in many of its clauses deals with the liberty of the sub-

ject, powers of search, the enforcement of penalties, and so on.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): It is the present law.

MR. DE HAMEL: The Attorney General says it is the present law; I do not say for a moment that it is not. But when we have a bill of this kind placed before us, it is our duty to see for ourselves, and not take the hon. and learned gentleman's word. It is our duty to see that we are not unduly interfering with the liberty of the subject, and not simply accept the Attorney General's statement that there is nothing new in the bill. If we are to take the Attorney General's word for everything, we may as well remain at home in bed, and be connected with the House by telephone, and when the hon. gentleman rings us up and asks, "Shall we read this bill a first time?" we would simply have to answer "Yes;" and when he asks again, "Pass the second reading?" we would do the same; and so on at every stage. If we are to take the hon. gentleman's word as to everything that comes before us, we may as well keep out of the House. It is simply a farce our coming here. If a bill is laid before us at all, it is laid before us to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it, and we cannot do that with a bill of this size unless we have some time to consider it. It was my intention, as I have said, to have moved that it be read a second time this day six months; but if it is not the intention of the Government to press it this session—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We are going to go on with it. The Attorney General has told you so.

MR. DE HAMEL: Then I move that it be read a second time this day six months.

MR. CANNING: We have had during the present session some most important measures brought before us, and I have noticed that the tendency of all these lengthy bills brought before the House has been in the direction of curtailing the liberty of the subject—curtailing liberty of action.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member did not object, at any rate.

MR. CANNING: Nearly all the Government measures that have passed through this House this session, all important

measures, have been in a retrograde direction, tending backward to a state of things that existed in Europe, and in America probably before the War of Independence, and in the West Indies, something like a century ago, and altogether opposed to the modern tendency of legislation and opposed to the spirit of the age, which is in the direction of allowing the most complete liberty of action to the people generally. You may call it democratic tendency, if you like; for democratic tendency simply means in the interests of the mass of the people generally, and not the interests of a privileged few. That is the tendency of modern legislation in other countries, in all enlightened communities; but all legislation of any importance brought before this House this session has been in an absolutely retrograde direction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Name some of them.

MR. CANNING: In every direction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Name one of them.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): He never does.

MR. CANNING: I say that, in every instance, every measure of any importance has been in that direction.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Name one bill.

MR. CANNING: Take this bill itself. Let me ask hon. members whether it is possible for them to grasp the full meaning and purport and effects of such a measure as this within half-an-hour, or within an hour, or even a day. Every member of this House has other avocations, and cannot devote himself exclusively to the consideration of measures of this kind, which require a very considerable amount of attention. This bill is only a sample of the measures brought before the House this session, and we are asked to deal with it at once. I must, in justice to the hon. and learned Attorney General, say that he himself hinted it was possible that members might not be prepared to deal with this measure at once; at least that is what I understood to be the drift of an observation he made. I certainly do think that such a measure does require very careful and mature consideration on the part of every member; and, seeing that the session is so far advanced, and that there are many other questions of

importance yet to be considered by this House, questions of more pressing urgency—I do not say of greater importance, but of greater urgency than this—I think the consideration of this very bulky measure might fairly be put off until another session at all events. I therefore shall support the amendment of the hon. member for Albany.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member's arguments are very general. He says that every single bill brought forward this session has been with the view of curtailing the liberty of the subject.

MR. CANNING: Every measure of importance.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think that is a very loose, a very random, statement. Why does he not name some of these measures, instead of making a random statement like that? We have challenged him to name one of these bills, but he won't. He cannot; so he makes this random assertion that every bill brought forward has had a tendency to curtail the liberty of the subject. I do not think there has been a single bill, except perhaps those dealing with the aborigines, that contained any provision that is not founded upon laws existing elsewhere, in the mother country, or the colonies. We know the Bankruptcy Bill, one of the most important bills of the session, is the law of England at the present moment. I do not know whether it can be said that a law which exists in England in these days, and which has existed there for some years, is likely to have for its object the curtailment of the liberty of the subject. Then, again, there is the Married Women's Property Bill. I do not know whether it can be said that that bill curtails the liberty of the subject. I need not go through all the bills passed this session, for the hon. member has failed to specify one single bill that has curtailed the liberty of the subject. When an hon. member makes such a wild, reckless, random statement as that, I do not think it is worth while taking the trouble to answer him. I would point out to members who say that this Customs Bill is a very long and very difficult measure that they should recollect the difficulty and the labor it has given the Government to prepare such a

large bill. If members would consider that, perhaps they would not be out of sympathy with the Government in their desire to get it passed into law. So far as I know, this bill has been very carefully drafted. It consolidates a great many of our local statutes, and I believe it is founded upon the Customs laws and regulations in force in most parts of the world. I think the more members will look at it, the more comprehensive and the more useful they will find it. I do not mean to say that the Government wish to press it, if the House prefers not to have it; but I really cannot think there will be any great objections to it, when it is looked into, and, with the view of allowing members an opportunity of going through it before dealing with it in detail, the committee stage might be postponed for a week or so. The bill has been before members since last Monday, and if they like, we could name this day week for going into committee. I believe it is a bill that will be found very useful to the mercantile community. It has cost a lot of trouble to prepare it, and it is now in print; and, unless members can show that there is something in it that requires more careful consideration than can be given to it in another week, I think we had better try and get through it.

MR. LOTON: I understand from the Attorney General that it is merely a consolidation bill, with some little new matter. I have looked through the bill, but not carefully, and I think it will be found a very useful bill; and if we are not likely to prorogue for a fortnight I do not see the object of throwing out the bill, or in postponing it for another week. There is another point: the bill, which is a very voluminous one, is now in print, and, if it is not proceeded with this session, it will cause considerable trouble and expense in having it printed again; and, as there is nothing particularly new about it, surely, in the interests of the colony generally, and in the interests of public business, it would be well to proceed with the bill. It will surely be a great boon to those who have anything to do with the Customs Regulations to have all the laws in one Act, instead of spread over a dozen Acts.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I am inclined to agree it would be a pity to throw out

this bill. If we postpone the committee stage for a week, we shall have ample opportunity for looking through the bill. I do not think it would be in the interests of the country that we should postpone the bill until another session.

MR. DE HAMEL: After the remarks that have fallen from the Premier, suggesting that the committee stage be postponed for a week, I shall ask to withdraw my amendment. If we find we cannot get through the bill in committee before the session closes, we may postpone it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Before the amendment is withdrawn I should like to say that it never was suggested that the Government intended to press the committee stage for some days. I fully intended to fix the day for going into committee on the bill for some day next week. We have no desire in any way to press the bill, if members desire further time to consider it. As for curtailing the liberty of the subject, I don't know I'm sure. It is new to me to hear that a bill of this kind, which is the law of England, and the law of every British possession, and which has been the law here for the last twenty years, is a law that curtails the liberty of the subject. I don't know about curtailing the liberty of the subject, but I know it has cost somebody connected with the Government a great deal of labor to bring the provisions of fourteen different Acts into this one bill, with its 300 or 400 clauses. Somebody has been at work, at any rate. I hope that between this and the committee stage, members will peruse the bill. I know some members will, and we trust to have their assistance in committee. Any assistance, any suggestions, with the view of improving the bill, will be thankfully received by the Government, and, if they commend themselves, they will be acted upon. But as for a Customs Bill curtailing the liberty of the subject, that seems to me quite a novel idea. It is something quite new.

MR. RANDELL: I hardly see the necessity for postponing the committee stage on this bill for a week. I must confess that when I first saw the bill, I was a little alarmed at the bulk of the bill, and thought possibly something had crept into it that was not in the existing

law, in the direction of curtailing the liberty of the subject. But, from inquiry, and after an examination of the bill, I see there is nothing of the kind in it. I am quite prepared, from a cursory examination of the bill, to admit that nothing that is material has been introduced into it that is new. On the other hand, the bill is one that cannot fail to be of great assistance to the commercial community.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill read a second time.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I move that the consideration of the bill in committee be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next. If members then desire further time, the Government will be quite willing to grant it.

Agreed to.

ESTIMATES, 1892.

The House resolved itself into a committee of supply for the further consideration of the Estimates.

Land Titles Department, £2,270:

MR. A. FORREST said he noticed there was an increase of £100 in the salary of the Commissioner of Titles. He did not wish to object to it, but he wished to draw the attention of the Attorney General that it would be a good thing for this office if the head of the department were not to sit on the bench at the police court, as he did, for the greater portion of his time. This was notorious, and people who had business with the office and wanted their titles could not get them. He thought if we paid an officer £700 a year, as head of the department, he ought to be in his office, and not be performing the duties of the "Great Unpaid" at the police court, which could be very well undertaken by other magistrates. He hoped the Attorney General would call the attention of this officer to this matter. He did not object to his having £700 or even £800 a year, but he ought not to devote a large portion of his time to police court duties, and he hoped we should hear no more about it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) admitted that he was not surprised at something being said about this matter, because, unfortunately, there had lately been some very heavy cases of

inquests, and the Commissioner of Titles had promised to assist the gentleman who was temporarily performing the duties of Police Magistrate at Perth, in the absence of Mr. Cowan. The Commissioner had promised to assist Mr. Fairbairn on certain days of the week, and one of those days was Monday; and it so happened that these inquests had fallen on a Monday. But he might point out that, with the exception of viewing the body (which did not occupy more than half-an-hour), these inquest proceedings did not commence until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, so that the Commissioner only gave an hour of his official time to these proceedings. As for the police court business, he generally went there at half-past nine in the morning, and got away at ten. This was only on certain days in the week; therefore it was not right to say that he spent the greater portion of his time at the police court. His (the Attorney General's) attention had been directed to the fact that the Commissioner did attend at the police court, but, on inquiry, he ascertained that the work in the Land Titles Office had not been in any way neglected. There were no arrears at the present moment whatever. There was no work remaining undone, up to that very day, that could possibly have been done; there were no applications undealt with whatever. That being so, there was certainly not the same room for finding fault as if there had been a great deal of work in arrear. The Commissioner always went back to his office immediately he left the court. The hon. member said this work ought to be left to the "Great Unpaid." He was afraid the hon. member would find that the "Great Unpaid" did not come very readily forward to undertake the work. It seemed that in all these cases, both at Perth and Fremantle, a great deal of this kind of work, in the absence of the regular Magistrate, devolved upon justices who held Government offices.

MR. PARKER said he could not understand the complaint of the hon. member for West Kimberley as to persons being unable to see the Commissioner of Titles. The Commissioner of Titles was not the man they wanted to see when applying for a transfer; it was the Registrar. So far as he knew of the working of this office, the Commissioner

of Titles need not go to the office at all. All papers might be sent to him to his own house, and he could do the work just as well there as in the office. There was no occasion for the public to see the Commissioner at all. They might as well say that a man who had an account against the Government could not get paid at the Treasury, if the Premier was out of town. He knew as much about the working of this Land Titles Office as any man in this colony at any rate; and he knew that, so far as his firm was concerned, they had never heard a single word of complaint about the Commissioner being absent. He did not see how anyone could. If the Registrar were to absent himself, he could understand there being cause for complaint; but it was perfectly ridiculous to say that there was any difficulty or any delay, or that there should be any outcry about the Commissioner not being in his office, so long as he did his work.

MR. CANNING was rather glad that the hon. member for West Kimberley had called attention to this matter, because it had afforded an opportunity for those who understood the working of this department to furnish a very full and complete explanation, which he was sure would be satisfactory to the hon. member and to the public. He might say, from his own experience of this department—and perhaps he had had more to do with this department of the Government than any other—he could speak with perfect confidence of the efficient and satisfactory way in which all matters connected with it were conducted. He never had had the slightest difficulty in obtaining any information he desired, or in getting any work carried through; and he believed that was the feeling of the public generally. It might appear, on the face of it, somewhat remarkable that the head of the department should be engaged in other public duties at certain times. But it must be borne in mind that this officer was peculiarly fitted for the performance of these police court duties, being a barrister by training, and it seemed only right that in the absence of the Stipendiary Magistrate he should give his assistance to the public in carrying out this work, more especially when he took care that the work in his own office did not suffer by it. Something

had been said about the Great Unpaid. He knew it was not always easy to secure the services of the Great Unpaid when required, and he thought that to some extent the Commissioner of Titles deserved the thanks of the community for occasionally attending at the police court in the absence of the regular magistrate, when it was borne in mind that the public service, in connection with the duties of his own department, was not allowed to suffer in any way whatever.

MR. A. FORREST said that when he drew attention to this matter he did not cast any reflection at all upon this officer. All he meant to say was that it would be as well it should be intimated to him that he should devote himself to the department which he presided over, and presided over with honor to himself and the country. When they found an extra £100 added to his salary, he thought they had a right to expect that his time should be devoted to his own particular duties. He could quite understand lawyers, like his hon. friends the Attorney General and the hon. member for York, having no difficulty in getting their applications through; but there were many people who did not always care to employ lawyers to do the work for them, and these people might not be able to get their titles or transfers in the same expeditious way as his two hon. and learned friends. He had been under the impression that this perhaps was owing to the Commissioner being away from his office; but, being now assured that this was not the case, he was very glad to hear it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he did not know anything about the working of this office, but, if there was no work in arrear, why was it necessary to apply for extra clerical assistance on these Estimates? He believed the department, as a rule, gave general satisfaction. No doubt a great deal of the Commissioner's time had been taken up in giving his services to the country in another direction, but it appeared from what they were told by those who were in a position to know that the work of his own office was not allowed to get into arrear. With regard to the work at the police court, he thought it would be well, while the regular magistrate was away, that someone with legal knowledge and training should do the

work. It was hardly fair to expect honorary justices to take important cases which required a good deal of legal knowledge to deal with them. He was one of the Great Unpaid himself, and occasionally gave his services at this police court, but what he complained of was that the police, who knew what cases were coming on and that the Police Magistrate was away, did not give honorary justices longer notice that they were expected to attend, instead of rushing into a man's house, ten minutes after the time for commencing business, and requesting his instant attendance, without giving him any notice at all, as had been done in his own case.

MR. MOLLOY thought the Government were to be complimented upon their appreciation of the value of the services of the gentleman at the head of this Land Titles Department, as evidenced by their increasing his salary by £100 a year. He was only sorry they had not followed this up by also increasing the salaries of other meritorious officers in the same department.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) explained that it was proposed to give the chief clerk an increase of £20, but, through a clerical error, the increase appeared in another item, which would be correspondingly reduced.

Vote agreed to.

Crown Lands Department, £19,015:

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked the meaning of the new item "Chief Clerk, £350."

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it was due to a reorganisation or rearrangement of the department. It had been found absolutely necessary to get assistance, and of the very best possible character, for the Under Secretary, owing to the increasing amount of correspondence and other work that came under his control. In order to give the Under Secretary the best available assistance, it had been decided to give the position of chief clerk to Mr. Prinsep, who had been so many years connected with the department, and than whom there was probably no better officer in it,—certainly no one better acquainted with the details of the department in its various branches. It was a very small increase, he might say, so far as that officer's salary was concerned.

It had also been found necessary to appoint an Inspector of Plans and Surveys, as the Deputy Surveyor General found he had quite enough to do in his own particular branch of the department.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he noticed a very large increase in the item of advertising, stationery, &c.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said that during the past year the amount of the advertising connected with the sales of land had increased five-fold, if not ten-fold, and the vote last year had proved insufficient, and consequently was overdrawn.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought these advertisements might be so arranged as to occupy much less space, by putting them in smaller print. The Government would get more for their money than they did now. In the other colonies these advertisements were not arranged like they were here, column after column, and spread out over a large space; and he thought the Government might save a few hundred pounds a year by economising in this direction.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he did his best to economise, but it was new to him to hear that it was an advantage to advertise in small type. He thought the object of advertising was to attract public attention, and that the better an advertisement was displayed the more likely it was to attract attention. He believed the extra amount spent on advertising had considerably increased the prices realised at these land sales.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to the item "Surveys, £8,000," hoped the Government would pay greater care, when surveying agricultural areas, in selecting the land included in these surveys, and in seeing that only land fit for agricultural purposes was included in these areas. Some of the areas set apart down Beverley way, along the Great Southern Railway, included land that could not be said to be adapted for agriculture at all, and he hoped more care would be exercised in future in connection with preliminary surveys. It was no use trying to settle people on bad land. It simply meant starvation to the occupier, and a bad name for the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said anybody would think from the hon. member's remarks that the department was trying to induce people to take up land that was worthless for their purpose. These people were not required to take up their lands from the office plans; these plans were to assist them in finding out the land when they went to examine it. If the land did not suit them they were not forced to take it. It would be ridiculous to send out surveyors with instruction to pick out 1,000 acres here and 1,000 acres there in isolated patches, because the intervening land was not quite so good. Every care was taken in laying out these agricultural areas to the best advantage. The areas referred to by the hon. member had been laid out on the recommendation of one of the most experienced surveyors in the colony, Mr. Ranford.

MR. A. FORREST: Then I am perfectly satisfied.

MR. CLARKSON thought it was quite right to survey the land before it was thrown open for selection, so that a man might know what he was buying. The only thing he objected to was the Government charging the same price for all lands, good, bad, and indifferent, which he thought was absurd. We should never get the lands of the colony settled until we adopted some system of classifying the land.

MR. PLESSE thought some latitude should be given to the surveyors to increase the area of selection when the quality of the land made it desirable to do so. He thought this would be better than sticking to a hard-and-fast rule as to the size of the blocks, no matter whether the land included was good or bad.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he quite agreed with the hon. member's remarks, and instructions had been given that in future the selections shall embrace a larger area.

MR. TRAYLEN asked what machinery it was proposed to get for the photographic office for the £600 set down for it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it was proposed to get a lithographic press to be worked by a gas-engine, to assist in overtaking the large amount of work

that was being done in this department, and which was likely to increase in the future. This plant was not utilised alone for work connected with land; it was also largely used for the reproduction of other plans, connected with railways and other public works.

Vote agreed to.

Mining, £3,960:

MR. SIMPSON was sorry the Government had not put the Warden on the Murchison goldfield on the same footing as regards salary as the Wardens on other goldfields. While the other Wardens were to receive £300, this officer was down for £250. He hoped the Government, as soon as the opportunity offered, would place this Warden on the same footing as the rest. He could assure them it was anything but a rosy billet to be a warden on the Murchison goldfield, and he presumed this officer would not have been appointed unless he was competent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said this officer had only lately joined the service, and he was quite satisfied with the salary offered; in fact, he was getting more than was promised to him. He was satisfied to join at £200, without forage; but he was getting £250, and also £50 forage allowance, like the other wardens.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it would have been absurd to have given an officer who had only been six months in the service the same salary as those who had been years in the service. As for the £50 for forage allowance, the only forage a horse could get on the Murchison goldfields was what he could pick up in the bush.

Vote agreed to.

Geological, £1,200:

Put and passed.

Railways and Tramways, £86,368:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Before this vote is gone into, I should like to say a few words, generally, with reference to the department, because I have not had an opportunity, hitherto, this session of saying one word with regard to the general management of the department under my control. Before doing so, I would like to refer back to the Estimates of last year. I told members then that those Estimates had not been framed by me, nor had I at that time, having only

just entered upon office, any particular knowledge of the Estimates as framed, and that therefore I had to accept the figures of others. But I promised members that if I occupied this office this year, I would know a little more about the estimates of the department. I think I may fairly say that I am in a position to fulfil that promise. I may remind the committee that according to the Estimates brought forward last year, we anticipated a probable loss on our railways of about £8,000 for the year 1891, as against an average loss of £14,000 in preceding years. Before going any further, I wish to offer a few remarks with reference to a statement made by my hon. friend, the Premier, when making his financial statement to this House a few evenings ago, and which I am afraid was somewhat misleading—unintentionally so, of course—so far as this department is concerned. I think the impression left on the minds of members at the time was that there was a loss of something like £5,000 on the working of our railways and tramways last year. My hon. friend afterwards corrected that statement, by explaining that while taking into account the expenditure upon both railways and tramways, he had inadvertently omitted to give credit for the receipts from tramways, and that this would reduce the loss on the working of the two branches from about £5,000 to about £3,000. But it still left an impression on the minds of members that there was an actual loss last year of £3,000. I wish to remove that impression. What the Premier said was perfectly right from a Treasury point of view. He only gave you the actual receipts at the Treasury from the 1st January to the 31st December, without taking into account any outstanding debts due to the department on account of its earnings. I may say that at the end of 1890 there was only a very small amount (something like £1,000) that remained uncollected on the 31st December, and which, of course, went to the credit of 1891. But at the end of 1891 we had a considerable sum outstanding, consequent on the increased amount of business done,—there was about £4,000 uncollected on the 31st December last. Of course the Treasurer, in his financial statement, did not take this amount into considera-

tion at all; he knew nothing about it. He was simply dealing with the Treasury receipts, and, having omitted to give the department credit for this outstanding sum, he naturally left an impression on the minds of members and of the public that our railways last year were worked at a loss of about £3,000, whereas in reality there was a slight profit, for the first time in the history of our railways. The actual earnings of our railways and tramways during the year 1891, including these outstanding accounts—and I can assure members there are no bad accounts amongst them—amounted to £67,859, while the actual expenditure for the same period amounted to £56,277, leaving a credit balance on the year's transactions of £11,582. That being so, I think I may claim that the words I made use of last year have been somewhat verified by the events. I then said that although we anticipated a probable loss of £8,000—as compared with £14,000, the average of previous years—on the transactions of 1891, I hoped that by 1892 the figures would probably be reversed, and instead of there being a loss there would probably be a profit. I have shown that last year, instead of there being a loss of £14,000 on the working of our railway system there was an absolute profit—small it is true, but an absolute profit—of £11,582. With regard to the Eastern Railway, commencing at Fremantle and ending at Beverley, I find that the expenditure in 1891 was £55,780, and the revenue £59,583, showing that this portion of our railway system earned £3,803 more than the expenditure on it. I think these figures should be exceedingly satisfactory to the House. I should like to draw some comparisons between the expenditure on our lines and the expenditure on railways in other parts of the world, and I do so in order to show the House that we are at a disadvantage as compared with other lines, as regards the comparative cost of working our lines. In dealing with the question of train mileage, you have to look at three things,—the grades, the weight of your rails, and the style or type of your rolling stock. The success of the economical working of a railway must depend upon these three things. Our grades here are 1 in 27 in some parts, and 1 in

30 in others; and on the well-known principle that the strength of a chain is only equal to its weakest link, so the hauling power of our engines is only equal to 1 in 27. It is these heavy grades and the long distances that reduce the earnings on some of our lines, and must always necessarily do so. For instance, our train mileage last year was 293,306 miles in order to earn the comparatively small sum of £59,583; while in New Zealand with a very similar grade, generally speaking, they only had a train mileage of 331,000 (only 8,000 miles more than ours) to earn £114,000, or nearly double our earnings. These figures are very significant. Members may ask if this result can be produced in New Zealand, why cannot we do the same here? This is a question that will have to be considered by this House sooner or later, and I hope the Government may yet be able to place before Parliament some proposal by which the present drawbacks may be remedied. I am alluding to an alteration of our grades. I devoted the whole of my time last year to ascertaining the workings not only of our own railways, but also of railways in other parts of the world; and it is obvious to me, as it must be to anyone who gives the subject his consideration, that so long as we have a grade of 1 in 27 to negotiate, and a 46-lb. rail, and light engines, it will be impossible for us to make our lines profitable, or do more than just make our revenue and expenditure assimilate. The Government, as hon. members are aware, have lately been taking steps to ascertain how far the present expensive grades on our Eastern Railway may be reduced. A professional gentleman, whose services were lent to us by the Victorian Government, has made a thorough survey of this difficult portion of our railway, with the view of improving the grade, but I regret to say that so far as the grades on the present line are concerned, the thing is found to be almost impracticable. But I believe the Government, later on, will be able to give the House some information—which I myself already possess, as head of the department, but which is not yet in the possession of my colleagues—which will show that it will be possible to get a line with a ruling grade of 1 in 50, which of course would make a considerable difference in our working ex-

penses. But it will involve a large amount of expenditure in the first instance. With regard to the Estimates now before the committee, I should like to say that I have given a considerable amount of attention to the compiling of these Estimates, so that if any question is asked with reference to any item I shall be in a position to answer it. I can only say that we are doing all we can—consistently with maintaining the efficiency of the service—to reduce the ratio between the expenditure and the revenue. In 1890 the expenditure for the year represented a ratio of 127 per cent. compared with the revenue. In 1891, the year just past, the expenditure bore the proportion of 97 per cent., when compared with the revenue. In 1892, this present year, the result of course is to a certain extent problematical; but, whatever the revenue may be, I think I may fairly pledge myself that, if I am able to carry out my intentions, the expenditure for the year will not amount to more than 92 per cent. of the revenue, and I hope it may be reduced very much below that, if the revenue realises anything up to my expectation. Having made these few introductory remarks, before the committee proceeded to deal with this vote, I can only add that I shall be happy to furnish members with any further information they may desire with regard to any particular item.

MR. PARKER asked for some information with reference to the item "Engineer in charge of existing lines, £600." When the Legislature voted a salary of £550 for the officer who held this position, or an analogous position, but who afterwards became Collector of Customs, he understood that when we obtained the services of an Engineer-in-Chief, at more than double the salary, that officer was to take the position of the gentleman removed to Fremantle (Mr. Clayton Mason), and that this item would no longer appear on the Estimates. But, so far from that being the case, he found that not only had we the item (with a slight increase to it) still on the Estimates, but also that there was another engineer at £550 added to the Works Department. Therefore, so far as he could see, we had now to look after our railways and public works—certainly there were new works

going on—but we had now to do the work formerly performed by the gentleman who was now Collector of Customs, an Engineer-in-Chief and two assistant engineers-in-chief. It must certainly be complimentary to the late General Manager to find that it now took three competent men to do what he performed alone. What he should like to know was,—was it really necessary to have all these engineers, for, after all, our lines of railway were not very long, and he believed the longest of them, our Eastern Railway, was a well-constructed line, and could not require a great deal of looking after.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the present Engineer in Charge of Existing Lines was an entirely new appointment. There was no engineer holding this appointment before. There was a General Manager and Maintenance Engineer, but he was not an engineer in the sense this other officer was. This gentleman (Mr. Martin) was not only a civil engineer but also a mechanical engineer, and it was necessary to make this appointment. The Engineer-in-Chief had his time fully occupied in dealing with the railways provided for in the Loan Act, connected with which there was an immense amount of work in getting out plans and a thousand-and-one other things; and it was impossible for the Engineer-in-Chief to attend to the engineering supervision of existing lines. Mr. Martin was a man of very considerable ability, and it was considered by the Government most desirable they should appoint an engineer in charge of existing lines. His business would be the designing and carrying out of improvements on existing lines of railway, not only between here and Beverley, on the Eastern Districts line, but also on the Bunbury line, and the Yilgarn line, and other new lines about to be started. It was his duty to design and lay out the stations, station yards, sidings, and also the workshops for our general railway system, and other important work of that character.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he was informed this gentleman was a marine engineer, and that he knew nothing at all about railway engineering,—he may have been misinformed; but, if such was

the case, he thought it would be rather a pity to put him to the kind of work that he had not been used to.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the officer in question was an experienced marine engineer undoubtedly, of considerable reputation; but he was also a highly qualified civil engineer and a mechanical engineer; and at the present moment he was so employed. His services would also be available for marine work. He might say that this officer had the whole of the designing of the South-Western Railway (in conjunction with Mr. Baglay), the contract for which had been let at a very low figure, £66,000. Had that line not been designed as it was, the probability was we should not have had it done for anything like that sum. He could assure the House that he was very loth to pay any officer out of the railway revenue unless he was doing railway work. He felt very strongly on that point; and if an officer was employed on marine work he should decidedly object to his appearing on these Estimates as a railway man.

MR. LOTON asked whether this officer had had any practical experience as a railway engineer before he came to this colony, or was he only learning that kind of work now?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said this gentleman had had considerable experience in that capacity, and he also had been engaged as a marine engineer under Mr. O'Connor (the Engineer-in-Chief), in New Zealand.

MR. MOLLOY failed to see the necessity for this appointment. Bearing in mind that this department up to a year ago was only employing an Engineer-in-Chief at £800 a year, and a General Manager at £550, it appeared to him—as we had no new lines constructed since—that it was altogether unnecessary to employ an Engineer-in-Chief at £1,200, and two assistants, one at £600 and another at £550. In fact, we were becoming swamped with engineers and experts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it must be apparent to everyone, now that we were embarking on large public works and railways in all directions, that we must have competent and reliable men to look after them. They

all knew that our present Engineer-in-Chief was a hard worker, and that he was very hard worked, and must have an immense deal to do in preparing for these new works, all over the colony, even in the work of supervision. Then we should be embarking in harbor works, directly, and it was absolutely necessary that we should have the necessary engineering staff to carry out all these undertakings. In the past we had no engineer at all to examine and look after the permanent way, on existing lines, unless the Engineer-in-Chief could spare the time to do so; and they knew it would be impossible for the Engineer-in-Chief to travel all over the colony to look after all these railways when they were constructed. It seemed to him that, in the interests of the travelling public, we ought to have somebody responsible for this work. If this particular officer was only engaged on marine works, they might depend upon it he would not appear on these railway estimates; for he (the Premier) must say he had seldom had to do with anyone who was more of a stickler about things being charged to his department that were not properly so chargeable than his colleague the Commissioner of Railways was. They might depend upon it this item would not appear here unless his hon. friend had been advised that such an officer was necessary.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he was only afraid that the Commissioner had lately been advised a little too much. There was an opinion abroad that this department was being filled too much by importations from New Zealand.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said, if they were good ones, that was all right.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said there was a general feeling outside that there was too much of this New Zealand element introduced, and that there were just as capable men here or in the other colonies. He supposed the next thing we should be doing would be importing New Zealand timber for our public works. He thought this Engineer in Charge of Existing Lines should be paid out of loan funds, if he was going to supervise all these new railways. He had been informed—and this gentleman told his informant so himself—that

he had never been engaged on railways, but on marine works. If so, he thought it would be as well if he had been kept to that kind of work.

MR. QUINLAN asked what was the term of the engagement entered into with the new General Traffic Manager (Mr. Davies)?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said, if he recollected rightly, the term of the engagement was three years (*vide p. 598, post*) at £800. A distinct pledge was made to the House last year that a competent gentleman, who had some knowledge and experience of the working of railways from a commercial standpoint, would be provided to manage our railway system; and, in fulfilment of that pledge, this gentleman was appointed in England, by the Attorney General (Mr. Burt). He had been strongly recommended by one of the highest authorities on railway management in England (Mr. Findlay). He was a man qualified for the position in every way. He had worked himself up through different grades of the service, at home, until he became station-master and business manager of a line of railway in England. His duties here as General Traffic Manager would be to attend to everything relating to the commercial management of the traffic on our railways, throughout the colony, and our tramways also, and all district traffic managers would be under him, and subject to him; and it was to him that he (the Commissioner) would look for the proper working of our railways on a commercial basis.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the hon. gentleman had mentioned something about a pledge given to the House about this appointment. What pledge?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was mentioned in the Governor's Speech at the opening of Parliament last session that the Government intended to make such an appointment, and the House acquiesced in it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Nonsense. Had they not been told over and over again that the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech was a mere matter of form, and that the discussion was only waste of time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said no objection was taken to the announcement.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: What did the Governor's Speech say? "You will be asked to vote an adequate sum to enable the Government to secure the services of an Engineer-in-Chief of recognised standing, as also of an officer of experience to manage the railways of the colony on a commercial and economical basis." Instead of that, the Government actually appointed this officer, without any adequate or any other sum being voted or asked for. They acted differently in the case of the Engineer-in-Chief, and placed a sum on the Estimates last year, before the appointment was made, and gave the House an opportunity of discussing the vote.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): One was immediately required.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The Government knew this one was required too. They said so. But they probably thought they would not have been able to carry it if they had put it on the Estimates before the appointment was made, so they shirked the responsibility. They ought to have come to that House for a vote first, as they did in the case of the Engineer-in-Chief. He moved that the item be struck out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) asked what the hon. member thought the Government wanted to make the appointment for? Did he think the Government had any private interests to serve in going to England to appoint this gentleman, at £800 a year? He was not a relation of any of the Ministers; he was not even known to them. The hon. member said they were shirking their responsibilities. What responsibilities? If they had shirked their responsibilities they would not have appointed him until they had a vote. But, knowing they had promised to make such an appointment, and that it was necessary to make it, they did not hesitate to do so, in the belief that the House would approve of it.

MR. DE HAMEL said he quite agreed with the hon. member for the Gascoyne. —[THE PREMIER: You generally do.]— The Government should have come to that House and asked them to sanction this appointment being made, and not make the appointment and then put the money

on the Estimates. He called that "putting the cart before the horse" altogether. What encouragement was it to old officers in the service, when they saw themselves passed over in favor of outsiders? The present Traffic Manager was quite as capable of regulating the traffic on our railways as a man who had only been a station-master on a small line, 20 or 30 miles long in England, and possibly a kind of general manager of the line. Our present Traffic Manager was also a man who had risen in the service, and in the service of this colony, and knew the requirements of the service thoroughly. He would refer to him by his name straight away—Mr. Roberts. He was perfectly certain that the general feeling in this colony was that Mr. Roberts had been shamefully and abominably treated, in being passed over, as he had been, without any cause whatever. What encouragement was it for any civil servant, in the railway or any other department, to do their duty by the colony or by the department they served, if they found that strangers from England or New Zealand were put over them, and told to teach them their duty, which they knew better than those put over them. It seemed to him that this particular appointment was one there was no call for whatever, and that the Government had done wrong in making such an appointment, without first asking that House to sanction it. To say that it was authorised because it was referred to in the Governor's Speech was folly. The House did not sanction it in any way whatever, and the Government failed in their duty to the colony and to the House in not having put this appointment before them before it was made. He should follow the hon. member for the Gascoyne in striking the item out, if he called for a division.

MR. MOLLOY said he would support the hon. member for the Gascoyne in striking out this vote. For the last 12 or 14 years the present Traffic Manager, Mr. Roberts, had given universal satisfaction, and had proved himself capable of occupying the position. Having been left to his own resources for a considerable portion of last year, he had worked the railway successfully, and according to the statement just made by the hon. the Commissioner, the traffic had so in-

creased as to show, for the first time, a profit on the working expenses. During the previous year they were told that there was a loss of £14,000, but by the management of Mr. Roberts this deficiency had been swept away, and a balance to credit shown in its place. It was therefore wrong of those in authority to place someone over his head instead of promoting him, as he justly merited. He thought Mr. Roberts deserved better treatment. Instead of affording him an opportunity of doing still greater things, the Government brought out a man from England and gave him a position over the head of a tried servant at an enormous salary of £800. In the past the Engineer-in-Chief, who had the control of the whole of the lines of the colony, did not receive a greater salary, and yet here was a gentleman without any guarantee as to his efficiency for the post imported and placed over the head of a tried and valued public servant at double his salary. He would support the striking out of the item.

MR. A. FORREST said it had long been admitted that it was necessary to have a business man at the head of the Railway department. It was stated in the Governor's Speech last year that the Government were going to make this appointment, and no objection was taken to it. The Attorney General when in England was instructed to seek out a man fit for the post, and he did so. No one, he was sure, wished to cast the slightest slur on the present Traffic Manager. He believed he was a most capable man, and he had the highest opinion of him, but they wanted a business man at the head of affairs. If he thought this appointment would in the slightest degree affect the present Traffic Manager, he would vote against the item. He knew that the head of the department had the highest opinion of Mr. Roberts, but the Government had made this appointment, which was for three years, and if the item was not now passed the country would be in a very awkward position, for they might rest assured that the gentleman in question would have his pay for the whole of the term.

MR. PARKER asked whether the former Traffic Manager would still continue to have charge of the traffic on the Eastern Line.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said Mr. Roberts would not lose his status in any way. He would be District Traffic Manager under the General Traffic Manager, who would be in charge of the whole of the railways of the colony.

MR. PARKER said the objection he saw to this item was that they were now going to have two men to do the work which one had done and was quite able to do. Mr. Roberts had performed his duties as Traffic Manager so extraordinarily well that the Commissioner had been able to put a most satisfactory account of the railways before the House.

MR. A. FORREST: That is due to the Engineer-in-Chief.

MR. PARKER said he understood the Engineer-in-Chief had been making designs for harbors, and he was sure, if the hon. member inquired, he would find Mr. O'Connor had had nothing to do with it. Mr. Roberts had been a most obliging officer, and had done his duty well, and he was glad to understand that it was not proposed to interfere with his status as Traffic Manager for the Eastern Line. That being so, he would like to know what there was for the other gentleman to do.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the Eastern Line was only a small portion of the railways of the colony at the present time, and shortly they expected that other lines would be opened. Besides these they hoped shortly to have the Midland Railway completed.

MR. PARKER: That is a private line.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Still there were certain arrangements to make between the Company and the Government. No member of the House had greater respect for Mr. Roberts than he had, and no one was more ready to give him praise for the good work he had done, and for the general civility and kindness he showed to every one who travelled on the line; but still when it was suggested that it was intended to obtain a man of superior attainments (and in saying this he did not intend anything to the disparagement of Mr. Roberts) no objection was taken to it, and hon. members by their silence confirmed the policy indicated by the Government. Steps had been taken

to carry out this policy, and it would be for the future to show whether the policy was a wise one. Some objection had been taken to the salary this gentleman was to get; but did the hon. gentleman know what salaries were paid elsewhere to general managers? In New South Wales and Victoria about £4,500 a year was paid, but this colony had obtained the services of a gentleman at £800. Perhaps he did not possess the same attainments as those gentlemen in the other colonies, but he was recommended by the same gentleman who selected the general managers of New South Wales and Victoria and who were now paid such large salaries. It was quite time enough, he thought, for hon. members to complain, when it was shown that the Government had failed.

MR. LOTON said that after what had fallen from the Ministerial bench that Mr. Roberts had been competent to discharge the duties that had devolved upon him, and that he had discharged them faithfully and well, he would like to know what new duties there were for the new Traffic Manager to perform. It appeared to him that there were none. There might be some two years hence when the new railways were completed, but now they had one Traffic Manager to supervise the other, and he thought this last appointment was unnecessarily premature.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said there was nothing led to so much warmth as these new appointments, but they should look at the matter calmly and reasonably. It had been asked what would this gentleman have to do. Was it not notorious that the country, for a long time past, had been crying out against the management of our railways? He did not blame the present Traffic Manager of the Eastern Railway for what took place, for a great deal of it was caused through the insufficiency of the rolling stock. As far as Mr. Roberts was concerned, he would be the last man to do him any harm. He had done him what he hoped was a good service in the past, and he should be very sorry to turn his back on him at the present moment. At the same time, if the Government were to work these railways they must be allowed some latitude, and if the committee would not allow that, all he could

say was let someone else do it. If he said he could not manage his department without a clerk, and the committee would not give it to him, it would be tantamount to a want of confidence. It should not be forgotten that the present Collector of Customs had been the General Traffic Manager, in addition to Mr. Roberts as Manager of the Eastern Railway. Mr. Roberts had recently reported that the work could not be done satisfactorily without someone to travel up and down the railway line, especially about the timber mills. Therefore the very officer who had been referred to had himself recommended that another person was necessary as a kind of out-door manager, to be moving about. This work they proposed Mr. Roberts should undertake. Lately some trucks came down from Greenmount loaded with 10 tons instead of five tons, which was the maximum load. Mr. Roberts, as a good officer, reported this, and said it should be stopped, but that it could not be until there was someone to look after these mills. This showed the necessity of someone being about who could see that everything was properly managed besides procuring traffic for the railway. This could now be done. The General Traffic Manager could be at head-quarters supervising the whole of the railways, while Mr. Roberts could be travelling about and looking after things on the line. Perhaps the immediate necessity for this appointment had not arisen, but the Government, rightly or wrongly, thought that when the other lines were open there would be too much for one man to do. Then a great deal had been said with the object of throwing discredit upon the gentleman who had been appointed. He had been deputed to choose this gentleman, and he was for some time in communication with the heads and managers of all the great English lines. There were a number of candidates for the position, and their qualifications were weighed and re-weighed, and ultimately Mr. Findlay, the manager of the London and North-Western Railway, who also chose the Commissioners for South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, told him that Mr. Davies was the very man we wanted. He had had experience of sea-port traffic and wharves and also of a single line of railway.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Seventeen miles long.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): It was a portion of the London and North-Western Railway, under the control of Mr. Findlay. It really came to this, that if the Commissioner of Railways was to continue at the head of the department he must be allowed some latitude. If this item were now struck out it might, seeing that the gentleman was already here, produce some very serious consequences.

MR. SIMPSON said he agreed that the appointment was rather premature, for he did not think there would be a wheel running over any of the new lines for 12 months. He agreed with other hon. members who had spoken that Mr. Roberts had proved himself a very able servant, and he failed to see why the Government should not have afforded him a further opportunity of displaying his abilities. All through, he had shown himself to be the most useful man in the service. Some little time ago there were many complaints about the railway, but the public knew where to locate the blame, and it was not on Mr. Roberts. He was sure the head of the department was endeavoring to do his best, although he must say that, in his opinion, the staff was growing unnecessarily large. This appointment, for one, was premature, and, therefore, the salary was being wasted. He could not understand why Mr. Roberts was not given an opportunity to show his ability in a larger sphere. Perhaps at the termination of the three years for which this gentleman was engaged, something in this direction might be done.

MR. DE HAMEL said that the Attorney General had put it that this appointment was necessary, so that Mr. Roberts could superintend the traffic from the saw mills. It seemed to him that a man who was paid £100 or £200 a year would do for this work, but surely they were not going to pay £400 for it. Were they going to have a man of Mr. Roberts' capabilities seeing that trucks were properly loaded and the traffic at the saw mills properly managed? They had not 200 miles of line open, and over what they had got only one passenger and one goods train ran a day. What, therefore, was there

to manage on such a wretched little system as this? If they had given Mr. Roberts another hundred a year they would have been rewarding him for his good service in the past—beside ensuring that the work would be well done in the future. If they had done this they could have complied with Mr. Roberts' request and appointed another man to look after the mills at £150 a year; whereas they now had to pay £800 a year for a man to sit in his office. He thought that Mr. Roberts would have been a better man than the gentleman they had brought from England. They were now told that practically they must vote the money because the gentleman was here, but he maintained they were bound to do nothing of the sort.

MR. CANNING said he objected to the view which had been put forward that because something appeared in a Governor's speech which was not challenged hon. members must be taken to have assented to it. When matters were referred to in a Governor's speech it was simply an indication that they would be brought before the House, and nothing of the kind had occurred in this instance. With regard to Mr. Roberts, no question whatever had been raised as to his efficiency. No accident had happened and there had been no inconvenience to the public, and therefore he did not think that one good and valid reason had been brought forward in support of this appointment.

MR. COOKWORTHY said it must have been known last session that the Government intended to obtain from England some gentleman to manage our railways on a proper basis. Hon. members were told so in the Governor's Speech, and although the debates on the Address-in-Reply were very lengthy no objection whatever was taken to the proposal. The time to object was last session—not now.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was distinctly stated in the Governor's Speech that the House would be asked to vote a certain sum for this purpose; and when the amount was brought forward would have been the proper time for hon. members to object, but it had never been done. The Government evidently took advantage of their strength and made the appointment without consulting the

House. He intended to protest in the strongest manner possible by dividing the committee on this vote. The estimates for this department were £23,000 more than last year, and the bulk of the increase was made up of the salaries of highly-paid officers.

MR. QUINLAN said it was only right that he should state how he intended to vote. The engagement had been entered into, and if they struck out the item, the money would ultimately have to be paid and probably through the channel of a court of law. No one felt more warmly on the subject than he did; but he saw no alternative but to vote the money. When the Attorney General left for England he (Mr. Quinlan) spoke to the Premier on this subject, and was assured that the Government fully recognised Mr. Roberts' ability; and that it was their intention to increase his salary. He noticed that this had been done to the extent of £50.

MR. CLARKSON said that if the Government had made an appointment such as this, and it was not required, the sooner they were turned out of office the better. There were several matters in connection with the traffic which were in a very unsatisfactory state, and someone was required to put things right. Even if they did not require this officer at the present time, they would in the near future, when the lines under construction were opened.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that by that time the three years for which this gentleman was engaged would have expired.

MR. PARKER said he agreed that in matters like this they must give the Government a great deal of latitude. Whether the Government acted wisely or unwisely, they evidently thought the appointment necessary. He could not, however, help thinking that, having told the House last session that they intended to ask for a vote for this purpose, it would have been much better to have there and then placed the amount on the Estimates. This would have given hon. members an opportunity of discussing the question before anything was done. It was hardly a good argument to say that it was not objected to in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, because many members did not think it advisable to speak then. He hoped that before

the Government made any appointments for 1893, the House would have an opportunity of considering them. He would like to ask the Commissioner of Railways a question before he sat down. Some time ago when he travelled to Albany the truck which carried the luggage was sent right through. On their recent trip everything was pitched out on to the platform. He inquired what the reason of this was, and it was stated that the Government would not allow their trucks to go on. He hoped that now they had a new Traffic Manager this sort of thing would be altered, because, as it was, the luggage was left on the platform all night without any protection whatever. Then, again, the other day the Government ran a train at special fares and the tickets were made returnable on the following Monday. Some went by the ordinary trains, and others by the special, but Monday was the last day on which they could return, and, therefore, knowing the tickets that had been issued the number of passengers wishing to travel might have been fairly accurately gauged. On arrival at Beverley the station-master seemed surprised at the number of passengers, and said he did not know how he was going to send them on with the conveniences at his command. He did not for one moment assume that the Commissioner of Railways was responsible for this, nor could he think that Mr. Roberts was to blame; at any rate they had to travel in an overcrowded train until they arrived at the Northam junction, where they took on a carriage from the Northam train. This did not look as if the General Traffic Manager was doing much for the comfort of passengers.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that he thought that on the occasion referred to the luggage was carried in the guard's van, and not in a truck. If that were so the van would have to go back, but had it been a truck it might have gone on. Mr. Roberts had made the whole of the arrangements for this special train, and this was a matter he would be responsible for at any time, notwithstanding the appointment of the new Traffic Manager. Hon. members had referred a great deal to Mr. Roberts. He might say that, so far as he

knew, Mr. Roberts was a very efficient servant in the position in which he was placed. It was not until the present Government took office that he was made traffic manager. Before that he was station-master, and as such he was a very efficient officer indeed. But still someone was required, for he could tell hon. members that he was not going into details as he had done last year. Someone was necessary to do the work which he now did.

Question—That the item be omitted—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes ...	...	...	5
Noes ...	...	...	19

Majority against ... 14

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Canning	Mr. Burt
Mr. De Hamel	Mr. Clarkson
Mr. Molloy	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. H. W. Sholl	Mr. Darlôt
Mr. R. P. Sholl (Teller).	Mr. A. Forrest
	Mr. Harper
	Mr. Hassell
	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Parker
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Simpson
	Sir J. G. Lee Steere
	Mr. Symon
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Venn
	Sir John Forrest (Teller).

Question—put and negatived.

Item agreed to.

MR. PARKER asked whether this gentleman (Mr. Davies) would be the head of his department, independently of the Engineer-in-Chief, or would he be subject to the control of that gentleman.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he would be under the Engineer-in-Chief.

MR. PARKER said he thought this was a mistake.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that on points not connected with the Engineering Branch he would be directly responsible to the Commissioner.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that progress be reported.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 12 o'clock p.m.