

## BUTTERINE BILL: REPORT STAGE.

The report of the Committee upon this bill was adopted *sub silentio*.

The House adjourned at half-past ten o'clock, p.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, 15th August, 1887.

Railway Proposals: Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains, and York to Eucla—Commission to inquire into Working of Government Schools—Commission to inquire into the Agricultural Interests—Appropriation Bill (Supplementary), 1887: first reading—Small Debts Bill: third reading—H.M.S. Prohibition Liquor Bill: third reading—Butterine Bill: third reading—Building Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Quarantine Bill: further consideration in committee—Beverley-Albany Railway Contract (Immigration Clause): adjourned debate—Revision of Customs Tariff (Message No. 15)—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## LAND GRANT RAILWAY PROPOSALS: ESPEANCE BAY TO HAMPTON PLAINS, AND YORK TO EUCLA.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL, in accordance with notice moved: "That the report of the select committee on Land Grant Railway proposals from York to Eucla and from the Hampton Plains to Esperance Bay be taken into consideration, with a view of passing the following resolutions based upon the recommendations embodied in the report: That this House has not before it such information as would justify its members in recommending that the Government should enter into negotiations with Mr. Ritso for the construction of a railway on the Land Grant System between York or Northam and Eucla: That with respect to the proposals of the Hampton Plains Syndicate to construct a railway, on the same principle, between their leaseholds and Esperance Bay, this House accepts

the recommendations of the select committee, and advises that the Government should enter into negotiations with the directors of the Company for the purpose of ascertaining whether, in their own interests and in those of the colony, they might not be induced to connect their Hampton Plains tenancies with the settlements and railway system of Western Australia, rather than with an isolated port in the Southern Bight." There were, the hon. baronet said, two very important schemes referred to the committee—one a gigantic scheme for the construction of a railway from the Eastern Districts to Eucla, and another for the construction of a railway from Hampton Plains to Esperance Bay. It was needless to dilate upon the advantages of such a scheme as a transcontinental line, but many hon. members seemed to think that such a work was not likely to be realised for a very long time to come. He might have thought that himself, but for the very rapid progress the colony had made during the last few years, and the large number of works carried out during that period. A dozen years ago they would never have dreamt that the works to which he referred could have been undertaken and carried out by this colony. They need not, therefore, despair that in the near future a transcontinental line may be commenced. It was impossible, however, for them to advise entering into negotiations with the gentleman making these proposals, Mr. Ritso. They had before them the evidence of Mr. Burt, one of the delegates to the Colonial Conference, who said he had made some inquiries about Mr. Ritso and could not learn anything about him. All that they knew was that there was an agreement for signature, and correspondence from certain agents of his with the Government on the subject, and that recently there was a gentleman here representing him. When the committee were sitting, however, there was no one from whom they could obtain information. The committee inferred, therefore, from all the details in their hands that Mr. Ritso was not a gentleman well known in the financial world. Under these circumstances, the committee had thought it undesirable that the Government should enter into negotiations with Mr. Ritso. His object apparently in seeking for this

concession was not to carry it out himself but simply to hawk the scheme about for sale. The committee thought, therefore, that it would injure the credit and prestige of the colony if they entered into negotiations with a person of that kind. They saw how difficult it had been to finance the smaller schemes in which the colony had been engaged; and certainly a gentleman like Mr. Ritso could not manage to finance so gigantic a scheme as a transcontinental line from Perth to Eucla. With regard to the Hampton Plains and Esperance Bay railway, they were able to obtain most satisfactory information. The names put forth as directors had not been considered very promising, but they had received satisfactory information from Mr. Burt with regard to the shareholders. Mr. Burt informed them that he had ascertained from reliable sources that some of these gentlemen were very wealthy men indeed, and perfectly well able themselves to carry the project through if they thought fit to do so. They had secured certain leases in the neighborhood of Hampton Plains, and were endeavoring to obtain possession of the leases on the Hampton Plains proper, which now belonged to Messrs. Henderson. They proposed to exercise their pre-emptive rights over the leases which they now held, and this would mean that they would pay a sum of £150,000 or £160,000 to the colony on those pre-emptive rights. The committee had in error stated the sum at £300,000, having included the pre-emptive rights in connection with the leases of Messrs. Henderson, which had lapsed. The leases which these gentlemen now hold were valueless, until the land was connected with the sea coast by railway, and, unless they could get that means of communication, they would be obliged to give their leases up. They proposed also to enter into large colonising schemes, and to settle their land and cultivate it. The committee had thought it necessary to point out that there were certain disadvantages connected with the scheme. In the first place, if the scheme were successful—if by means of conserving water and by means of irrigation they were able to carry it out, the colony would be creating a perfectly isolated settlement, a settlement completely cut off from the rest of the colony. The trade of this distinct settle-

ment, the committee thought, would certainly flow, not to this colony but to the Eastern colonies. He had seen in one of the letters written on this subject a statement that a steamer would be laid on between Esperance Bay and Albany to carry the trade to Albany. This was perfectly absurd, it was a mere bait. The gentlemen who now occupied Esperance Bay found it to their interest to treat with South Australia, and to do their business with South Australia, and in all probability the company would do the same. There was a prospect, he had said, if water was found, that the scheme would be successful, but it might not be successful, and then the line would become a white elephant, and a source of great loss to the colony. There was another thing to consider: if it were held that the transcontinental line was a matter of vast importance and should be considered a cardinal feature in their policy, and if they held that that transcontinental line could not be built except on the land grant system, would it not jeopardise that railway if they disposed of to the Hampton Plains Company some of the best land between the Eastern Districts and Eucla. The select committee had thought it best, therefore, to recommend that the matter should be put before the Hampton Plains Syndicate and negotiations entered into to induce them to connect their lands with the settlements in the settled parts of the colony—rather than with Esperance Bay—either at Northam, or York, or Elicup. It was said that their line would be a hundred miles longer if brought to the Eastern Districts, but if they took it to Esperance Bay they would have no market for their settlement—whereas if connected with the most populous parts of the colony, they would at once have a market. There was no doubt of the greater advantages to this colony of having the Hampton Plains connected with the settled districts of the colony. Then there was another thing to be considered—if the line were made from the Eastern Districts to Hampton Plains they would be in possession of three hundred miles of railway towards that transcontinental line which they had in view. Taking all these matters into consideration, the select committee came to the conclusion that it was earnestly desirable that the

Government should try and induce the Company to connect the Hampton Plains with the settled districts of the colony if they could be induced to do so. It appeared from the evidence given to the committee that the Company had not received quite correct information as to the relative distances of the two routes. If it were pointed out to the Company that the line to the Eastern Districts was not double the length of the Hampton Plains line, and that if they chose this route they would have a market for their produce, and that the line would pass through better land than if it went to Esperance Bay, they might be induced to alter their view. Hon. members would see that the hon. member for Kimberley did not agree with the report, and had tabled an amendment to the resolution. He supposed the hon. member would tell them that the agent of the Company was empowered to treat only for the scheme submitted to the House. The recommendation of the committee was that the Company should treat, not with the agent, who would not have power to make this change, but with the directors of the Company, laying before them the reasons for the proposed change in the route.

MR. HARPER seconded the resolution. It would be unwise, he said, to accept the proposal as put before the House, for it simply related to a railway between the ocean and a desert. The port of Esperance Bay was no foundation for a railway. They should, as far as possible, make the lines of railway terminate at centres of population.

MR. A. FORREST said that he rose with great reluctance to move the amendment of which he had given notice. He disagreed with the committee's report on the whole question, and he had stated his reasons for the view he took of the matter, at the end of that report. He believed that the House should not do anything that would in any way interfere with the carrying out of a transcontinental railway; but a plan would show plainly that a line running from Esperance Bay inland for 200 miles could not possibly affect the question of making a line from York to Eucla. It had been stated by the hon. member for Plantagenet that the Syndicate had been led astray as to the length of the line they proposed and of that suggested by the committee. In

the first place, the hon. member had said that a line from York to Hampton Plains would be 300 miles long. If the hon. member turned up the map, however, and measured the only practicable route, he would find that it was 360 miles long. Adding to this the 110 miles of line now in existence, they had 470 miles over which goods from the Hampton Plains would have to pay rates before they could reach a market. On the other hand, from Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains was about 200 miles, and at the outside the line would be 230 or 240 miles long. Surely, then, they would not ask the Syndicate to carry their produce nearly 500 miles over railway, when they could carry it a distance of 200 miles to a port. It had been said that the people of Albany got their food supplies from Adelaide; and did they not want to open up their own country to supply the Albany market? At the present time the people of Albany got everything from South Australia, even if they had to pay more for it than in this colony; and should not that House do something to change that state of things? In the proposals of the Hampton Plains Company they had the opportunity of doing this. The Hampton Plains was a rich district—good for pasture and good for agriculture, provided that provision were made for rainfall. The hon. member for York (Mr. Harper) had said that the railways of the colony should go into the centres of population. That was a proposition with which they all might agree, but surely they were not going to bring all the railways into the centres of population? Were they going to bring all the railways into Perth and Fremantle? He was in the happy position of having seen this country, and he could assure hon. members that the country for 150 miles to the eastward of York was nothing more nor less than a desert. This country had neither water nor grass nor anything else upon it, nor had it any rainfall. On the other hand, in the country round Esperance Bay there was a good rainfall, or, at any rate, a fair average rainfall, and, although it was mallee country, they knew that the mallee country of Victoria was being turned to account. A part of the offer of the Syndicate was that they would

purchase land to the value of £130,000. The agent of the Company had placed in his hands a power of attorney, giving him full power to sign a contract with the colony on the terms they proposed, and also to pay a deposit of £10,000. He had no doubt that the hon. member representing the Lands Department would be very pleased if he could get up in that House and announce that he had received £130,000 for the purchase of land. The statement would, no doubt, be received with cheers. Such a payment and such an announcement in that House would be one of the best advertisements for the colony, and the money would fill their pockets which now were pretty low. The Company could not carry away the land; they would have to utilise it, or be worse off still. He had seen Mr. Burt, who had just returned from England, and that gentleman had assured him that the Syndicate, in which were great names, were in a position to carry out the contract, and that any proposals from that House asking them to change the route would not be entertained by them. Mr. Burt had further informed him that when in England he had tried all he could to get the members of the Syndicate to change the route, because he knew that the people of this colony liked to centralise their railways—to make them all run into Perth and Fremantle—and because the majority of the members of that House lived in that part and liked to see the trade come that way. Mr. Burt had assured him that it would be useless for that House to pass the resolution proposed by the hon. member for Plantagenet, because the whole of the scheme rested on their own land and the land they had acquired at Esperance Bay. He (the hon. member) did hope, now that the House had the chance of a line of railway being built to a fertile district—whether there were any inhabitants there or not—they would accept the offer. He trusted they would not allow the question of the transcontinental railway to influence them. He believed in both the Hampton Plains and the transcontinental lines, but he was convinced that very few of the hon. members would see the latter built. They might see it go as far as Eucla, but could anyone in that House say there was any likelihood of South Australia

encouraging a project which had for its object the making of Fremantle the head quarters of the ocean steamers instead of Adelaide. Besides, in order to get ocean steamers to Fremantle, they must first spend a million of money upon the making of a harbor. The making of the transcontinental line as far as Eucla would, also, cost five millions of money, for the sleepers would have to be carried hundreds of miles, coal would have to be used owing to the absence of timber, and water would be costly. He did not think he need say more, as he believed that hon. members had made up their minds on the matter. He would, however, ask them to pause, and support the amendment that he had proposed. He had moved the amendment in the interests of this great colony. When they had a chance of getting capital brought into the colony, they should take it, and not turn round and propose some completely different scheme. His amendment was as follows: To strike out all the words after "That," and insert the following: "This House agrees and accepts the offer made by Messrs. Stone and Burt to construct a line of Railway from Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains, and that the Government be empowered to arrange the contract on terms similar to those granted to the Syndicate representing the Albany-Beverley Railway and Midland Railway contracts."

Mr. KEANE seconded the amendment. The colony had, he said, for a long while been chasing the shadow instead of going for the substance. They had now an opportunity of getting the substance. Although capitalists came to them and offered to bring in money and a railway and people, they were asked to turn round and say, "We don't want you at all if you don't do what we want you to do." That was not the way these gentlemen ought to be treated. It was suggested, also, that they should not deal with the agent but with the directors of the Company. He rather thought that if they did seek to treat with the directors of the Company they would find themselves referred back to the agent. The proposal to change the route and make a railway 430 miles long instead of one 230 miles long, was an extraordinary course. They might just as well propose that a railway from the goldfields should ter-

minate at Geraldton instead of at Derby. He objected to the suggestion that they should bring all the railways into the central districts. It was their business to legislate for the good of the colony as a whole, and Esperance Bay was as much a part of the colony as was Perth and Fremantle. The success or non-success of the proposed railway would settle the question as to the quality of the land through which it would run. It was held by some people that that land was of no use whatever. Even if it was a complete failure the colony would lose nothing; they were only asked to give some land. [Sir T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL: The line might be thrown on our hands.] Even if the line were thrown on their hands it would not matter; it could lie and rot, and the rails could be taken up and used elsewhere.

MR. RICHARDSON said that one of the arguments of the hon. member for Kimberley amounted to this: that in Albany they had an instance of a town getting all supplies from the Eastern Colonies and nothing from the markets of this colony; and that so enamored of this state of things were the colonists, and so beneficial did they find it, that they were ready to give a few million acres to establish a second Albany. By agreeing to the proposals of the Company they would simply be creating a second Albany, which town was no benefit to the rest of the colony. There was a prospect of their getting a transcontinental line. That was a geographical question. It was a question of shortening the route home to England, and connecting the colony with the outside world. It was a vaster and wider question than the question of whether the first hundred or two hundred miles might be of any use. They already knew that the feeling in South Australia against the proposed transcontinental line was not so strong as was supposed. It was possible even that in the immediate future they might have a chance of starting the transcontinental line, but if they gave away one of the best baits—Hampton Plains—for a company to establish the line, he did not see what the colony would have to offer as an inducement. By granting the demands of the Hampton Plains Company, they would be parting with the greatest bait they had to offer for

the making of a transcontinental railway. They would then have to offer for the work only a few million acres of desert.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said that what the committee had recommended was apart from the proposal put before them. They had been told by the agent of the company that it was formed for the purpose of opening up Esperance Bay, and making a railway from Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains. The value of the soil of the Plains was undeniable; the only question in doubt was whether the rainfall there was sufficient for the growth of cereals. From the reports he had read in past years and from the reports of Mr. Lefroy, it was certain there was most excellent soil in that country, and from the growth of grass there was little doubt that cereals would grow there. The Company had sent out to this colony its delegate, armed with a power of attorney and authorised to deposit a sum of £10,000 and to guarantee to redeem the large extent of lands which they held, and from which the colony would benefit to the extent of £150,000 or £160,000. That was the *bonâ fide* scheme they proposed. What the select committee proposed was a different scheme. The proposal which emanated from the select committee had nothing to do with the Company. For himself, however, he thought it was vain to go against the resolution based upon the report of the committee, as it was evident that the majority of hon. members would not support the amendment, having made up their minds to shelve the question. It was a pity that the House had arrived at that decision. It was a pity that hon. members had not devoted their attention to the consideration of the question before them. He hoped that the hon. member for Kimberley would not press his amendment to a division, as it would be lost, and it would, therefore, go forth to the world that the Council had decided against the scheme, and that would be a great misfortune. He would like to see the resolution of the hon. member for Plantagenet so worded as to make it perfectly clear that, whilst it was the desire of the House that the railway should be made from York to Hampton Plains instead of from Esperance Bay, the House in passing the

resolution were simply giving expression to an opinion, not to a definite rejection of the offer of the Company.

MR. LOTON said it scarcely seemed that the House was ready for this particular scheme. In considering it, they should not lose sight of the desirability of, in the future, carrying out the great scheme of a transcontinental railway. Keeping this in view, he thought that before they parted with what was the best portion of the land that would form an inducement to a company, or even to the Government, at some future time to construct such a line, they should look fully into the proposal before the House. Although the hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Forrest) had strong arguments on his side, it was, he thought, worth their while to endeavor to open up negotiations with the members of the Syndicate, or with the directors, with a view of inducing them to adopt the proposed new route. He would, therefore, support the resolution.

MR. SHENTON said that by allowing the matter to stand over for a time they would give the agent of the Company, Mr. Simpson, time to communicate with his principals, with a view to ascertaining their views of the proposal of the select committee. While being careful in dealing with this matter, they should not allow the scheme to fall through altogether, more particularly when they found that the Syndicate were prepared to come forward and pay some £125,000 to take up their pre-emptive rights on the land they had obtained on the Hampton Plains. He should vote, not in any hostile spirit, for the resolution, so that they might find out whether they were prepared to accept the scheme as propounded by the select committee.

MR. SHOLL said it was a pity they had not a little more time to consider this matter, and he should therefore like to see it postponed until the next session of Council. By that time, no doubt, other arrangements might be made or negotiations entered into with a view to arranging the matter. He was opposed to the proposed railway. Whether the Company refused, or did not refuse, to carry the line on to York, he was opposed to the building of the line from Esperance Bay to the Hampton Plains. The great object they had in view was to get a trans-

continental line connecting this colony with South Australia, and the Hampton Plains country would be a great inducement to a company to make that line on the land grant system. They had had several schemes brought before that House, but the Government had supplied hon. members with very little information with regard to them. He thought the Government, when they submitted proposals of that sort to the House, should supply hon. members with statistics, and full information bearing upon it. The select committee had examined only two witnesses with regard to the scheme, and they had been able to get only very little information bearing upon it. It would be as well, therefore, if the consideration of the matter were postponed.

MR. RANDELL said that he hoped the House would not run away with the idea of making Fremantle a Brindisi, for the latter was only a small place of no importance except as a landing spot for mails. He did not think they should go far out of their way to secure for Fremantle the benefit of being a Brindisi. The speed of steamers was increasing every year, and soon they might have the mail steamers travelling at a speed that would almost compete with the railway if the mails were landed at Fremantle. Besides, he did not think that the carrying of mails would pay for the upkeep of a railway which would be more than a thousand miles long. They had before them a definite proposal from the Hampton Plains Company, and the agent of the Company was in the colony duly empowered to enter into the proposed contract. In considering this question they must remember that if the traffic on the Eastern Railway were greatly increased they would have to find a new route through the hills. The opposition to the proposal of the Company looked very much like centralisation, and there was a great deal of feeling in that direction in that House. They must not, however, centralise to the extent of bringing all large undertakings to bear upon Perth and Fremantle. They should consider what would be acts of justice towards the more distant portions of the colony. It had been suggested that the Syndicate had a large interest in the Hampton Plains. Well, their desire was to utilise the land

there to make it a source of profit to themselves. If they wished to settle the country and spend a great deal of money, although upon a part of the colony at a great distance from Perth and Fremantle, hon. members of that House ought to be only too delighted to allow them to do so. He did not see why trade should not be carried on from Esperance Bay with Albany as well as with Adelaide. They must look at the proposal as an opportunity of utilising their lands, and of settling upon them a considerable population under circumstances which were likely to prove prosperous. They should encourage settlement in any portion of the colony, although it might not pecuniarily enhance and forward their own interests. They should look at the question from a broad and patriotic point of view. He did not see how they could ask the Syndicate to build a line of 400 miles instead of one 230 miles long, and they should not jeopardise the present proposal by suggesting another, and he therefore hoped the House would accept the amendment of the hon. member for Kimberley.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he was not going to urge the claims of Perth and Fremantle against the rest of the colony. He looked upon it that every hon. member was doing his best for the colony, and advising what he believed to be for the benefit of the colony at large. The question before them was twofold. The first question related to a transcontinental line from Northam or York to Eucla, and the other to a branch line from Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains. Both of these lines would go through the Hampton Plains, and the Hampton Plains might be called the plum for which both syndicates were going. What the House had to do was not to lose sight of the substance, and the substance was the transcontinental line between Northam and Adelaide. There was no doubt of that. Anything that was in the slightest degree to endanger that scheme was a thing that should be abandoned and should be looked at with great distrust. The line proposed was a line completely isolated. It was a line that started from Esperance Bay, where there was nothing, and went to Hampton Plains. That was the

whole scheme. What benefit would that be to the colony? The people settled along the line would simply live for themselves. They would provide themselves for most of their own wants, and what they had to import they would, like Albany, get from Adelaide. They had seen brilliant little stories in the papers about fleets of steamers flying between Albany and Adelaide, but they had not seen the steamers. The question was, should the line be made from Esperance Bay or from Northam? The committee thought it should be made from Northam. He would not throw over the proposed scheme altogether. But he did think that if the members of the Company in London—who were clever men and monied men, and men not likely to throw their money away—had shown to them in an unbiassed way the benefits they would gain by joining their railway with the railway systems of the colony, and if they were offered proper inducements they would, as hard-headed men of business, see the whole thing at once. They would see another thing. They would see that this transcontinental line must eventually be made, and, with regard to that great scheme, they would see that they held the key of the position. The 300 miles of line that they would hold would be the key of the line that would have to be made, and, seeing this, they would, as business men, be willing to spend a little more money to gain this great advantage. The colony should go to these gentlemen and say—"We offer you a better line—a line better for the colony and for your own interests—and better land. If you accept that, we will give you such terms as you will take." Anyone who had the good of the colony at heart would agree with what he had said.

Mr. CONGDON said that it seemed to him that the select committee had departed from the objects for which they were appointed. They were, however, of opinion that the proposed railway from Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains would not be a benefit to the colony. If they succeeded in inducing the Company to change their route, the Government would be acting in the best interests of the colony.

Mr. MARMION moved the adjournment of the debate until Wednesday.

The motion was negatived on a division, the numbers being—

Ayes ... .. 7

Noes ... .. 13

Majority against ... 6

**AYES.**  
Mr. Forrest  
Mr. Keane  
Mr. Layman  
Mr. McRae  
Mr. Pearce  
Mr. Scott  
Mr. Marmion (Teller.)

**NOES.**  
Mr. E. R. Brockman  
Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart.  
Mr. Congdon  
Captain Lawcett  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. James  
Mr. Loton  
Mr. Randell  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. Shenton  
Mr. Sholl  
Hon. C. N. Warton  
Hon. J. A. Wright (Teller.)

**SIR T. COCKBURN - CAMPBELL** said that all he could have wished to say in reply had been put before the House by the hon. the Director of Public Works and other members. The hon. member, Mr. Randell, had stated that the report of the select committee seemed to be entirely in favor of central interests. The hon. member had been long enough in the House to know that he (the hon. baronet) had always urged that they should study the interests of the colony and not the interests of the central towns in particular. His view and the view of the select committee was that it was in the interests of the colony at large that they were suggesting a change of route. The hon. member for Kimberley (Mr. Forrest) had told them that the land on the line from York to Hampton Plains was poor, and that though they gave away the Hampton Plains—which was the largest and best portion of the good land—they should not be jeopardising the construction of a transcontinental line on the land grant system. The resolution was not a rejection of the scheme. It was, however, impossible for one not to arrive at the conclusion that in the interests of Western Australia it was highly desirable that a new settlement should be connected with the settled portions of the colony, and not be made a separate settlement. He had had a good deal of conversation with Mr. Burt, who had never told him that it would be utterly impossible to induce the members of the Company to alter their view and connect their proposed settlement with the settled parts of the colony. He had told him that they had considered

it, and from the information they had before them they did not feel inclined to take it in hand. He, for one, would be prepared to offer the Company terms that might induce them to alter their minds. He would ask the hon. member for Kimberley not to force his amendment upon the House unless he was certain that it would be carried. If the resolution were carried against the amendment, it would look as though the House had definitely refused to accept the scheme of the Company.

**MR. A. FORREST**, at the suggestion of several members, rose to withdraw his amendment, but the hon. member was ruled out of order.

The question was then put, in accordance with the forms of the House, "That the words proposed to be left out of the resolution stand part of the question," and it was carried.

The resolution was then put, and carried on the voices.

Ordered—that the resolution be presented to His Excellency the Governor, by humble address.

#### COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO THE WORKING OF THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS.

**MR. HENSMAN**, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the system of instruction pursued in the Government schools of the colony and the management and working of those schools should be inquired into; and that a Commission should be appointed for that purpose, and that an humble address be presented to His Excellency, praying that a Commission may be appointed for that purpose." No more important question, the hon. member said, could be brought before an assembly of that kind, than that involved in his resolution, because the future of the colony to a great extent depended upon the education which the children at the present time were receiving. In view of the adoption of Responsible Government, the question of the capacity of men and women in the future to govern themselves would be one of even greater importance than their training and education was at the present day. Indeed, when they came to consider the education of the masses of the people, they must admit that it was a matter specially under



the care of that House. The upper and middle classes—by which he meant the classes possessed of worldly means—had it in their own power to provide largely for the education of their children; but when they came to those whom he did not call the lower classes in any other sense than that they were not possessed of so much worldly wealth as the upper classes—it would be admitted that they had not the means to give their children an education, and that they had a right to look to the Government and the State to provide schools. It must be admitted that this colony had been quick to adopt the English Education Act of 1870, for in 1871 an Act was passed adopting the same principle. The Central Board of Education, he need hardly remind the House, consisted of five nominees, of whom the Colonial Secretary was chairman, and of certain district boards appointed by vote of the people throughout the colony. There was this very curious feature of the Central Board that no two persons upon it were to be of the same religious opinion; that is, that there had to be no less than five different views of religion in this colony. The Board was to make a full report to the Government in each year, and such report had to be laid before the Legislative Council at its next ensuing session. From the report of the Board for the year ending December 31, 1886, it appeared that although during the year the population of the colony had increased some thousands by immigration, the number of children on the rolls and the average attendance in the Government schools had decreased. The report went on to show that the compulsory clauses had failed in their object in the country districts, and the Board asserted that until the Act was altered in this and other most important respects they could never hope to see the public elementary schools of the colony in a really flourishing condition. Such remarks appearing in the report of the Central Board were sufficient ground for the holding of an inquiry. But he should not be doing right if he did not refer to another matter brought to the attention of the public, and that was with regard to the kind of books used in the Government schools. His attention had been called to this matter by the letters in the

public press of a certain reverend gentleman, who was always very active in the cause of education. Certain books were provided for the children for reading, and it was very important that those books should be well selected. No one, he thought, could deny that it was essential that these books should be brought up to date, and also that they should be suitable for the use of children under fourteen years of age. There was one book used in the schools—Constable's Seventh Reading Book—which it had been stated was adopted by the London and provincial schools. He could say that this book was not used in any of the other colonies, and he was also certain that this book—or at any rate the edition he had before him—was not used at the present time in England. [The hon. member then proceeded to read an extract from the book describing slavery in America, and stating that this was the only English-speaking country where slavery was allowed by law.] Proceeding, he said that when he reminded hon. members that it was exactly twenty-five years ago since slavery was abolished in the United States, it would, he thought, be admitted that a book more up to date was needed. He did not know what the book had cost. He did not know whether it had been got cheap. He would, however, rather pay to keep such a book away than to have it in use in the schools. Besides being inaccurate, the book went above the heads of children between six and fourteen in its chapters on geology and other scientific subjects. In these elementary schools, children should be taught to read, write, do arithmetic, and not to tell lies, and that was enough. They did not want to make them little "prigs." They should be taught to speak naturally, and not instructed, as in Morrell's grammar, in the analysis of the English tongue. If they wished the children to be more highly educated, they could remain longer at school and go on to college. In reply to a question put in the House the other evening, the hon. the Colonial Secretary had stated that a child, if he passed in one of three subjects, was pushed on into the next higher standard. The effect of this was that a child who passed in only one subject, and was put into a higher standard, could not be on a level with those in that higher

standard. He had a letter from the Inspector of the Education Department of South Australia, who said that in the schools of that colony the subjects for examination varied in different classes. In the various classes children must, before they could be put into a higher standard, pass as follows: Junior class, in three out of four subjects; Class 1, four out of seven; Classes 2 and 3, seven out of eleven; Class 4, eight out of twelve. In the higher classes they must pass in two out of three subjects before passing into a higher standard. It was very desirable that if there was anything wrong in the method pursued in the schools it should be altered. Another matter to which he wished to draw attention was the announcement to the District Boards and to the teachers of the results of the examinations. He was not going to refer more particularly to the individual case which gave rise to some discussion in the newspapers, because he thought it best to confine what he had to say on this subject to the general question. It did appear that at present there had not been any communication of the results of the examinations to the District Board or to the schoolmaster or mistress. He thought that it would be found that this was contrary to the rules, because by the by-laws made, under the Education Act of the colony, it appeared that it was the duty of the Inspector of Schools to report the result of each half-yearly examination to the Central Board, within fourteen days of the examination, and to transmit a copy of such report for the information of the district school board. On a recent occasion application had been made for the result of a school examination in Perth, and the information was not given. This matter had been referred to the Secretary of State, who had replied that the Education Department had informed him that it was customary to give full information of the results of examinations to District Boards, and also to the masters and mistresses. If therefore the Education Department of England made no secret of the results of examinations, why should there be any secrecy in such a matter here? Examinations were matters that ought to be made known to those interested in them. He thought he had given grounds enough to enable the House to

say that this was a matter deserving inquiry, and the best form for such an inquiry to take was that of a Commission appointed by the Governor.

MR. A. FORREST seconded the resolution.

MR. RANDELL, as a member of the Central Board of Education, said that he did not think the Board would object to the appointing of the proposed Commission. Equally with Mr. Hensman, he held that the education of the youth of the colony ought to be a subject of the greatest importance, especially in view of the introduction of Responsible Government. The hon. member, however, had not quite correctly represented the Central Board when he said that they could not account for an increase in the school attendance taking place proportionately with the increase of the population of the colony. When the clause in the report to which Mr. Hensman had referred was written, perhaps it did not occur to the minds of the members of the Board that there was a reason why there had not been any large increase in the attendance at the Government schools, when there had taken place a large increase in the population. It arose from the fact that there had arisen within a few years a number of private schools, and parents preferred, although they had to pay a slightly advanced fee, to send their children to these more select schools. The population of Perth and Fremantle had considerably increased, and they would naturally expect that the attendance at Government schools would be also increased. They must remember, however, that although there had been a considerable addition made to the population, yet amongst the immigrants there were not a very large number of children of school age. Indeed, it was a fact that certain schools in the country had been closed for the want of attendance. Reference had been made to the books in use in the schools, and reference had also been made to the books used in the schools in the Eastern Colonies. He found that in the case of the reading books, Nelson's series, used in Victoria, the name of Christ did not appear in them. He took it that none of them would be prepared to introduce into this colony a book destructive of the highest morality. He did not think it would pay publishers to supply

books specially for this colony. The book list, however, he did admit did need some revision. As to the reporting the results of examinations to the masters and mistresses, it was the custom he might say for the latter to be present at the examinations, and they, therefore, were in a position to know how it had proceeded. On one occasion, however, a mistress was ill, and consequently unable to attend the examination of her school. There was no clause in the Act requiring the Inspector to make out a report showing individual results and forward them to the school, but the Act did require him to report generally the result of the school examination. This had generally been done, though there might have been a failure to do so on one or two occasions. If the House required detailed reports to be made, increased expenditure would be necessitated; but if the Education vote were increased, the Board would be glad to carry out the wishes of the House. The changing of the books used in the schools was a work that should be done carefully and deliberately, and after full and fair consideration. Whether a Commission was more likely than the Central Board to obtain the information required before making the proposed changes was for the House to decide. In view of the change of Constitution which would, he presumed, take place in a short time, the Central Board would become defunct and, most probably, a Minister of Education would be appointed. Whether, therefore, it was advisable for the proposed Commission to be appointed he was not prepared to say. One change that might properly be made was the placing of the appointment of all teachers in the hands of the Central Board, instead of the District Boards. Throughout the colony the District Boards had worked cordially with the Central Board, and there had been nothing like friction except between one District Board and the Central Board. He would conclude by saying that, if the Commission were appointed, the members of the Central Board would give their assistance in getting evidence, and would give every information in their power. They would do all in their power to promote the objects the hon. member had in view.

Mr. RICHARDSON said that the Commission could do no harm and might do a great deal of good. If the work of

education had been well carried on by the Central Board, the report would no doubt be favorable; and if the report were unfavorable, the appointment of the Commission would be vindicated.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the Central Board of Education had been in existence for sixteen years. Only one District Board in the whole colony had ever approached the Central Board in anything like a feeling of antagonism. Having been pressed on the matter, the Government were desirous of bringing forward certain amendments in the Elementary Education Act, providing that the teaching staff throughout the colony should be appointed, not by the District Boards but by the Central Board. In all the other Australian colonies the teachers were appointed by the controlling power or central authority. There were other amendments which he had had in view and intended to bring forward in the proposed bill, but finding in the early part of the session that the feeling of hon. members was against making amendments on matters which might alter their form under a new Constitution, he had refrained from bringing forward the bill. With regard to the resolution which had been put before them, he might say that he saw no objection to the appointment of the Commission, because such a Commission would have to be an independent body—men outside the Central Board and the District Boards.

The resolution was then passed, *nem. con.*

#### COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO THE AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS.

Mr. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased, during the recess, to appoint a Commission to inquire into and report on the agricultural interests of this colony, with a view to ascertaining what steps should be taken to alleviate the depression under which this industry now appears to suffer." The question of the state of agriculture had been, he said, very prominently brought before the colony of late. In one district, State aid to farmers had been discussed, and the Commission might be of opinion that

some assistance should be given to the farmer in order to enable him to clear his land and put it under cultivation. In other districts the farmers had a different opinion on this subject. It must be acknowledged, however, that agriculturists in this colony were in a depressed state, and a Commission might be able to do a great deal towards finding a way out of their difficulties for them. In bringing forward his resolution he was not advocating any novel idea. Commissions of this kind had been appointed in all parts of the world. They had had reports of the Commissions appointed in the Eastern colonies, and hon. members knew that those reports contained a great amount of valuable information, which was useful to agriculturists and also to persons belonging to other industries. The Commission would be able to deal with the question of treating agricultural land with artificial manure. There was no doubt that the present system of cropping land year after year was the cause of the returns being so low. By systematic manuring, the crops would be largely increased. Then there was the question of railway rates. At the present time the large farmer could make arrangements for having his produce brought down at low rates, but the small man had to pay a high tariff. It must be considered that some concession should be made to the agriculturist in the way of allowing all agricultural implements to be brought into the colony free of duty. All these subjects would be carefully inquired into by a Commission, and their report would have great weight with that House.

MR. HARPER seconded the resolution. If they could not, he said, do very much in the way of removing the depression in agriculture, which was in a great measure due to the state of trade, they might do a great deal in collecting such information as would enable agriculturists to compete with the outside world. One question that might very well be discussed by the committee, with a view to some recommendation, was that as to the starting of an experimental farm. In all agricultural countries, experimental farms were largely supported by the State. He was inclined to think that it would be beyond the means of this colony to establish experimental farms that would be of the value

which they should be, but much might be done in a smaller way. For instance, subsidies might be allowed to agricultural societies for the trying of experiments which the residents of any district might desire to prove, and the results of which would be published and circulated throughout the colony. An experimental farm in one part of the colony would be of little or no value to another part, the conditions varied so greatly; and therefore one experimental farm for the whole colony would be of little use. Another kind of information which might be very easily obtained and put into the hands of agricultural societies was that contained in the reports of agricultural colleges and experimental farms. Such information would keep farmers abreast of the time, and they could put into practice many little hints gained in that way.

MR. KEANE said he would have liked to see the resolution go further, and request the Government to bring in a bill dealing in a more comprehensive way with agricultural lands. He would have liked to see a sum put on the Estimates for the purpose of clearing and developing the land, because he was of opinion that they should never have a thriving agricultural population until they were in a position to offer them cleared land. He had much pleasure in supporting the resolution of the hon. member for Tooday, and he hoped the Governor would appoint capable men both inside and outside the House upon the Commission.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said that the Government had no objection to the resolution.

MR. MARMION moved the adjournment of the debate. It was, he said, an important subject, and he should be sorry to see it dealt with hastily.

MR. SHOLL seconded the motion for the adjournment of the debate.

MR. RICHARDSON said that the question was the appointment of a Commission, and they could not help the members of that body very much by continuing the debate.

The motion for the adjournment was negatived.

The resolution was then carried, *nem. con.*

# APPROPRIATION BILL (SUPPLEMENTARY), 1887.

Read a first time.

## SMALL DEBTS BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

## H.M.S. PROHIBITION LIQUOR BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

## BUTTERINE BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

## BUILDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This bill was taken into committee, and several amendments proposed by the hon. the ATTORNEY GENERAL were agreed to, without discussion. [*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings," pp. 148 and 149.]

## QUARANTINE BILL.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of this bill.

Clause 1 (reverted to):

Question put—That the words proposed to be struck out be struck out (p. 361, *ante*).

Carried.

Clause 2—Liability of shipowner as to supply of food and medicine to quarantined persons:

MR. SHENTON, without comment, moved that the words "and passengers," in the second line, be struck out.

Agreed to.

MR. RICHARDSON moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Committee divided, with following result:

Ayes ... .. 7

Noes ... .. 14

Majority against ... 7

### AYES.

Mr. Congdon  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. McRae  
Mr. Pearce  
Mr. Richardson  
Hon. C. N. Warton  
(Teller.)

### NOES.

Mr. E. R. Brockman  
Captain Fawcett  
Hon. Sir M. Fraser  
Mr. Hensman  
Mr. James  
Mr. Keane  
Mr. Loton  
Mr. Randell  
Mr. Scott  
Mr. Shenton  
Mr. Sholl  
Hon. J. G. Lee Steere  
Hon. J. A. Wright  
Mr. Forrest (Teller.)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) moved that the Chairman leave the Chair.

Carried.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair.

## BEVERLEY-ALBANY CONTRACT.

The debate on the resolution of the hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY (*vide* p. 367, *ante*) was resumed,—the question being that the immigration clause of the contract be cancelled.

MR. SCOTT said that there was evidently a good deal of labor in the colony which could not find employment, and he thought that, if the hon. members were not in accord with regard to the other proposals contained in the resolution, they would agree to that part dealing with immigration.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said that in dealing with this matter regard must be had to the engagements of the W.A. Land Company. They had already entered into certain engagements for the shipment of certain immigrants. One steamer was on her way to this colony, and he believed another shipment was still to follow. If the resolution was passed, the House must understand that they could not interfere with any engagements the Company had entered into, and which they were bound to carry out.

The amendment was then put and passed.

MR. RANDELL moved that the words "or to arrange for the earlier completion of the railway" be struck out.

MR. A. FORREST said they could not expect the Company would allow the House to cancel the immigration clauses of the contract, and get nothing in return for it. If they brought in more immigrants and could not find them work, and there were no public works going on, these people would have to go to the poor house and be maintained at the public expense. The power to arrange for the early completion of the railway should be given to the Government.

The amendment was carried.

The resolution, as amended, was then agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) moved that the resolu-

tion be presented to His Excellency in an humble address.

Carried.

#### ALTERATIONS IN CUSTOMS TARIFF (MESSAGE No. 15).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser), without comment, moved "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency in reply to Message No. 15, informing His Excellency that this House approves of the report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the advisability of making alterations in the Customs tariff."

Motion put and passed.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock, p.m.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Tuesday, 16th August, 1887.*

Roads Bill: in committee—Innkeepers Relief Bill: in committee—Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Acts Amendment Bill: further considered in committee—Crown Lessees Arbitration Bill: further considered in committee—Building Act Amendment Bill: adoption of report—Message (No. 13): Amendments in Kimberley Goldfields Regulations: report of select committee—Message (No. 26): Prohibition on Importation of Fruit Trees: consideration of postponed—Message (No. 27): Establishment of Victoria Public Library: consideration of—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

#### ROADS BILL.

On the order of the day for the further consideration of this bill in committee, MR. SHENTON moved that progress

be reported; and, the committee having divided, the numbers were—

Ayes ...	...	...	8
Noes ...	...	...	8

Majority for ... 1

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Hensman	Mr. E. R. Brockman
Mr. Keane	Mr. Congdon
Mr. Loton	Hon. Sir M. Fraser
Mr. McRae	Mr. James
Mr. Parker	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Pearce	Mr. Randell
Mr. Sholl	Mr. Richardson
Hon. J. G. Lee Steere	Hon. C. N. Warton
Mr. Shenton (Teller.)	(Teller.)

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again on Thursday, August 18.

#### INNKEEPERS RELIEF BILL.

This bill passed through committee without amendment, or discussion.

#### PEARL SHELL FISHERY REGULATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On the order of the day for the consideration of the report on this bill, Mr. RICHARDSON moved that the bill be re-committed, for the purpose of moving an amendment in clause 3.

The motion was carried, and the amendment—the insertion of "and a Justice of the Peace" in clause 3, adopted in committee.

On the Speaker resuming the Chair, the ATTORNEY GENERAL did not, according to the custom of the House, move the adoption of the report of the committee.

THE SPEAKER asked who was in charge of the bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said that he was. He was willing to help members in their amendments, but he had been defeated on a question of principle, and did not intend to do anything further with the bill.

THE SPEAKER then asked if any other member wished to move the adoption of the report.

MR. PARKER said he would move the adoption of the report. The third reading could be moved at any time, on notice being given.

The report was then adopted.

#### CROWN LESSEES ARBITRATION BILL.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of this bill, and