

require your services any longer;" and, in that case, the officer would retire on his pension, which the Imperial authorities would pay. But if he entered the colonial service he would draw no pension at all but receive his regular salary, and on his retirement the Imperial Government would only pay him such pension as he would have been entitled to had he retired when the establishment was transferred to the Colonial Government. That was how he understood it. His own advice—and he thought it was the best advice both for the officers themselves and for the Government—would be to dispense with their services, when the transfer took place.

The resolution submitted by the Colonial Secretary, approving of the terms of the proposed transfer, was then put and passed.

#### IMPORTED STOCK AMENDMENT BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. P. Hensman), in moving the second reading of this bill, said its object was merely to extend the provisions of the Cattle Diseases Acts to camels introduced into the colony, and to any other animals which it may be desirable in the future to bring under the operation of the Act.

The motion for the second reading was agreed to in silence.

#### COLONIAL PASSENGERS AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was passed through committee, *sub silentio*.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 6th August, 1885.

Petition (No. 2): Route of Blackwood Railway—Locke-ville Post Office—Bridges over the Swan—Postal Notes: adjourned debate—Water-Boring, Eucla District (Message No. 9)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

#### PETITION (No. 2): ROUTE OF BLACK- WOOD RAILWAY.

MR. VENN presented a petition from certain settlers styling themselves as of the Central-Southern District, praying for an alteration in the direction of the proposed Blackwood Railway, and moved, That it be received.

Petition received and read.

#### LOCKEVILLE POST OFFICE.

MR. LAYMAN, in accordance with notice, asked for a return of the number of letters and papers that had gone through the Lockeville Post Office during the six months ending 30th June last; such return to show the annual cost of mail service between Busselton and Lockeville. The hon. member said he found from the Postmaster General's report for last year that the number of letters received during 1884 was 2,636, whereas the number sent was comparatively few, only 804, which he thought went to show that the position of the post office was not a convenient one for the settlers round about. There could be no doubt about that, and the money now paid for the service between Busselton and Lockeville was almost thrown away.

The return asked for was laid on the table.

#### BRIDGES, SWAN DISTRICT.

MR. BROCKMAN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates a sum of £700 for the construction of two new bridges in the Swan District." One of these bridges, the hon. member said, was to be an entirely new one, there being no bridge there at all, the Swan Roads Board having lately abandoned

the old road and made a new line, crossing at Helen's Brook. The estimated cost of this bridge was £400. The other portion of the grant it was proposed to be spent on the bridge on the main line of road between Guildford, Victoria Plains, and Gingin, where there was at present a bridge, but it was very much out of repair, and almost beyond patching. The Roads Board estimated the cost of putting this bridge in repair at about £300. As the Roads Board grant for the year was only £500 or £600 altogether, it was obviously impossible for the Board to undertake these works, and at the same time keep the roads of the districts in passable order.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) suggested that the hon. member should wait until the Estimates were brought in. There would be a certain amount available for roads and bridges, and possibly the House might recommend that a portion of it be appropriated for these two bridges.

MR. HARPER suggested that meanwhile an officer of the Public Works Department might be sent to inspect the locality of the proposed bridges, and report thereon.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### POSTAL NOTES. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser), in renewing the debate upon Mr. Steere's motion in favor of the introduction of the postal note system, said the Postmaster General had reported to the Government that there were certain drawbacks to the introduction of the system from a departmental point of view. In the first place it would necessitate a considerably additional amount of book-keeping at the chief office, and it would also necessitate cash advances being made from the Treasury to the various district post offices to enable country postmasters to cash these notes, which, Mr. Helmich submitted, would be obviously inconvenient in the present circumstances of the colony. The Postmaster General thought that if a reduction were made in the rates of commission now chargeable upon money orders, that would answer the object in view as well as postal notes, and be sufficient to meet the present requirements

of the public. The question had been twice referred to the Postmaster General, in February and in May last, the latter occasion being on the receipt of a circular letter on the subject from the Crown Agents, offering to supply the necessary plates; but the Postmaster General was still of opinion that the introduction of the system would be attended with inconvenience to the department, and that it would prove unsuccessful in its working. Personally, he (the Colonial Secretary) was in favor of the proposal, but, in the face of the opinion expressed by the head of the department, he doubted whether it would be advisable to press the change at present.

MR. STEERE said he thought the arguments used by the Postmaster General might be what was popularly called "knocked into a cocked hat," for he did not think they were valid ones at all. As to the proposed reduction in the commission at present charged upon money orders, he had already pointed out that it was not so much the high rate of commission as the delay and the difficulty of obtaining these orders that caused so much inconvenience in remote localities, whereas a supply of postal notes of various denominations could be kept by people at their homes, ready for use as required. As to its leading to an additional amount of book-keeping, he failed to see how it would do that, seeing that it was only intended at present that the system should extend to those offices where money orders were now obtainable. Nor would it necessitate any great additional advances of cash from the Treasury, as a certain amount of money had already to be advanced to postmasters for cashing post office orders. He had always found that it was a very difficult thing indeed to get any improvements introduced into the public departments of this colony, the *vis inertia* which prevailed being almost insurmountable. This was another case in point. He thought his position in this matter was materially strengthened by the suggestion made by the Crown Agents, as to the advisability of introducing the system here.

MR. WITTENOOM supported the motion. He was sure the system of postal notes would be of great convenience in the district where he resided.

In a district like the Murchison, where there was only one post office for miles around, such a system would be a great boon to shepherds and others having occasion to remit small sums for newspapers, periodicals, or other purposes. He felt sure the proposal must commend itself to everybody possessing any practical knowledge of the circumstances of the colony and of the requirements of bush life.

MR. VENN said that some years ago they were told that the system of embossed telegram forms would prove a great convenience to the public, but he found on inquiry that at the present moment there were hundreds of pounds worth of these forms lying idle at the post office, the public hardly ever applying for them; and he thought that possibly we should find ourselves over-legislating in the introduction of this postal note system. He understood that only two of the neighboring colonies had yet adopted it, and New Zealand. If introduced here, he hoped the Government would give the public ample notice of its introduction.

MR. LOTON said the system might be attended with considerable convenience to the residents of country districts; at the same time he did not think it would prove such a great boon as the hon. member who had moved in the matter anticipated. He understood these notes would not be obtainable except at post offices where money orders could now be procured, and that they were intended to be kept in stock at people's houses for use as required. The probability was that it would only be a few of the leading settlers—owners of stations, for instance—who would speculate in a stock of these notes, for the convenience of their men and their neighbors; and, as a rule, people in the bush did not care to have too much negotiable money about their houses. The probability also was that in a great many cases, as these notes would only be of certain denominations, people would not be able to remit the exact amount required. He did not intend to formally oppose the motion, but he did not think it would be found such a great boon as the hon. member imagined, and he did not think, if the system were introduced to-morrow, there would be any great demand for these notes.

MR. SHENTON said the Queensland system appeared to be the most convenient one. There these notes were of various denominations, ranging from 6d. to £1, and were payable on presentation at any post office, having the same currency as bank notes. He did not anticipate there would be any great difficulty in the working of the system here, or that it would entail any great amount of extra labor or expense. It had worked well wherever it had been introduced in the other colonies, and he thought it would be found to be a source of great convenience to people in country places.

MR. BROWN said he would be in favor of the motion, if it were amended, to provide that the system shall only extend at first to such post offices as are also money order offices.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) pointed out that the introduction of the system must be attended with some expense in the first instance, and the House must be prepared to provide for that expenditure. As had already been said, there were hundreds of pounds worth of embossed telegraph forms lying idle at the post office, there being little or no demand for them. The same thing might be said as to post cards. Large supplies of these cards were obtained from home, at considerable expense, but there was very little call for them, and he thought himself it was very questionable whether the public would avail themselves of these postal notes so largely as some hon. members seemed to anticipate. He had no intention, however, to divide the House on the subject, for personally he was in favor of the proposal. Hon. members were in possession of the views of the Postmaster General on the subject, and he was quite content to leave the matter in the hands of the House.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he believed it was he who first moved that embossed telegraph forms and postal cards should be introduced here. So far as regarded post cards, they may not have been used to the extent that was anticipated; still they were used to a considerable extent at any rate, and were of great convenience to the public. With regard to the embossed telegraph forms, the only reason, he conceived, why these forms were so little

used by the general public was because the Government did not let the public know that they were available. It was no use getting a large stock of these forms, and then stowing them away, where nobody ever saw or heard of them. As to the system of postal notes, from what he had read of the operation of the system in Queensland, it appeared to have given great satisfaction there, in circumstances similar to our own.

The motion was then put and passed.

#### WATER-BORING, EUCLA DISTRICT (MESSAGE No. 9).

On the order of the day for the consideration of His Excellency's message, forwarding an application from the W.A. Pastoral Association, Sydney, for assistance towards water-boring in the Eucla District,

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said hon. members were aware of the nature of the application. The company—who hold in the Eucla district, under pre-emptive right to purchase, 300,000 acres, and Crown leases to the extent of 5,215,000 acres, for which they are paying an annual rental of £2,803 10s.—asked the Government whether they were prepared to consider a proposal from the company to bore for water on the table-land north of the Hampton range, at the joint expense of the Government and the association, such expenditure not to exceed £3,000 on each side. The Governor, in his message to the House on the subject, asked the Council to consider whether it might not be well to expend the sum of £3,000 set apart for water-boring, in the schedule of the Loan Act, towards assisting private effort in sinking for water in the Eucla district; and His Excellency said he would be glad to learn the precise terms which the Council would advise, should the application otherwise meet with their support. Before submitting a formal resolution, in reply to His Excellency's message, he should like to say a few words on the subject. This question of boring for water in the Eucla district came before the House two years ago, and was supported by the Government then, but was lost on a division, and, from that time to this, the Eucla district had remained in about the same position as it was then.

Capitalists had not come forward to try to sink for water on the table-land, and the district was in no way more developed now than it was two years ago. The land, however, had been held, and was still held,—although this year it had been a great question whether the lessees would continue to pay for it or not. As a matter of fact they did not pay until after the date fixed by the regulations for doing so, and one company alone had paid a fine of £800. He thought the fact that these lessees did not pay their rents until the last moment showed that there had been grave doubts in their minds whether they would pay them at all, or throw up the land in despair. He was afraid that the hon. member and the public generally had not given this Eucla district that amount of consideration which its importance, as a source of revenue, entitled it to. He found that the contributions to the revenue, in the shape of pastoral rents, received from the various districts of the colony, were as follows: the Central Districts annually contributed about £15,000; the Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Districts (which latter included Eucla) yielded £18,000; of which about £9,000 was contributed by what he might call Eucla proper. The North District, that splendid territory represented in the House by the hon. member on his right (Mr. Grant), contributed £12,000 a year to the land revenue; and the far-famed Kimberley District yielded about £20,000. Hon. members would see from these figures that the Eucla District alone contributed a very fair proportion of the land revenue, and, up to the present time, it had never received, so far as he knew, any assistance out of public funds beyond the £1,000 which was now being expended on surveys in the district, although, during the past three years, it had contributed something like £8,000 or £10,000 annually to the public revenue. It was quite clear to his mind that these lessees were not going to pay these rents much longer. It would not pay them, in fact, to hold on. Business men and capitalists now-a-days were not content to see their capital lying idle and unproductive; and the company whose application was now under consideration came forward, as a last resource, with the proposal which had been sent down to

the House by the Governor. These lessees showed their *bona fides*, he thought, by offering themselves to contribute a moiety of the expense. Some hon. members might say that as the company held their land on very cheap terms, and some of it under a pre-emptive right to purchase, we would be benefiting them very largely indeed if water were to be found, and that they would then be able to sell their lands at a high price and make their fortunes. Well, he thought—as he had said when this subject was under consideration before—he thought this was a very narrow way to look at the matter. If these people *did* make their fortunes, the land would not run away. If they made their fortunes at all they would make their fortunes by developing that portion of our own territory. The land, if sold, would not take unto itself wings and fly away. The country would be utilised, and the colony would be benefited thereby. There were about 40,000,000 of acres in the district now lying altogether unproductive to the colony,—except as regards what we received in the shape of rents, which, although in itself a considerable amount to us, was yet unimportant compared with the benefits which would accrue to the colony if this vast extent of country were settled upon. Therefore, he thought, if by expending this £3,000 to the company's £3,000 the Government paved the way to having the country settled—even although a few persons did make their fortunes—it would be a grand thing for the colony. He hoped this was the view which hon. members would be inclined to take of this matter, and that they would not be disposed to take a too narrow-minded view of it. The hon. gentleman concluded by moving a resolution approving of the expenditure of £3000, as suggested by His Excellency the Governor in his message.

MR. BROWN asked hon. members to consider what they were asked to commit themselves to. The Governor asked them to set aside the £3,000 included last year in the schedule of the Loan Act, for the purpose of boring for water in various parts of the colony,—His Excellency asked them now to devote this sum to assist private enterprise, in one part of the colony, to discover water on one company's land, and one company's land only. That

was not the object which that House had in view when it included that £3,000 in the loan. The object which the House had in view was that this money should be expended in the purchase of boring machinery, to be used in any part of the colony, and, if required, to be used by the settlers themselves in various parts of the colony. He did not think it would be good policy to depart from that intention. He did not think it would be to the interest of the colony to appropriate this money to assist one particular company, and upon lands not belonging to the colony but belonging to the company to be benefited. No doubt, to some extent, it would benefit other holders of land in the district, to ascertain whether water is to be found on this company's land; but it would not be a direct benefit. At any rate it would be a very indirect advantage compared with the direct advantages that would accrue to the company itself. He must admit that his idea of liberality in this direction did not go anything to the extent that the Commissioner of Crown Lands' idea of liberality went. He desired to see the lands of the colony developed as much as any hon. member in that House did, and he would offer the most liberal terms towards the attainment of that object; but that was a very different thing from devoting £3,000 out of public funds to assist one company to improve its own land. He should like to see the Government dealing a little more liberally with our own people. It was not so very long ago that a Western Australian company, or a number of Western Australians, made a proposal to the Government with reference to searching for water on the Hampton Plains. They asked the Government to join them in their enterprise to this extent: they were prepared to sink for water and to keep an account of the money spent, and, if successful, they would not ask the Government for anything, but, if unsuccessful, they would ask the Government to refund 10s. for every £1 they had expended in the search. That, however, was a Western Australian company, and of course the Western Australian Government declined to enter into any such arrangement with them. He thought, however, it was desirable that the experiment should be made in the Eucla District.

He saw the other day that Mr. H. Y. L. Brown, a geologist, who was now in the service of the South Australian Government, and who had recently made an examination of the country adjoining our territory, expressed it as his opinion that water would be obtainable at a depth of 250ft. If so, it would be an uncommonly good thing for this colony, and it would be well to make the experiment. He thought we might very well sink in some part of the district and see whether water was obtainable at anything like that depth. He should prefer the Government doing this on its own lands and solely at its own expense; but he should not object so much to the present proposal, if it was not intended to divert to the company's use the money appropriated by the House last year, for general use, in any part of the colony; or if the experiment were to be conducted on land belonging to the Government and not to a private company. The hon. member suggested that the matter might be referred to a select committee.

MR. BURGESS said the question seemed to him a very simple one, and he saw no necessity for referring it to a select committee. The proposal, in its present form, might not be altogether acceptable to the House, but he thought if it were modified the House might entertain it. The question now presented to them was whether they were prepared to expend £3,000 in assisting this company to discover water in a district where the discovery of water would be of immense importance to the colony; and although some hon. members might object to such a large sum being expended, they might not object if the amount were cut down to £1,000 or even £2,000.

MR. SHENTON said he certainly would be opposed to setting aside any portion of the loan money appropriated for general use for water-boring purposes, and to give it to this company. He was in favor of giving the company some assistance, and he thought the easiest way out of the difficulty would be to allow the company one year's rent. They were now paying £2,800 a year as the rental of their lands: let them have their lands free for one year, conditionally upon their expending the money in searching for water. (MR. FORREST: We cannot do it.)

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. FRASER) did not think that the company, if they found water on their land, would object to others as well as themselves—people travelling with stock through the district—sharing their water; and he hoped hon. members would show their sympathy with the company in the enterprising spirit which they had shown in the matter. He could not understand this—he would not say dog-in-the-manger spirit—but he could not understand why, because no immediate or direct benefit might accrue to others, assistance should be withheld from a private enterprise of this character. He thought no one could over-rate the importance it would be to the colony itself if water were discovered in this otherwise magnificent district. It might not be necessary to expend the whole of this £3,000. If water were discovered at a cost of £1,000 or £2,000 we should only have to pay our proportion of it. Once water were discovered, he did not understand that it was proposed to continue the experiment until the whole of the money was expended.

MR. VENN thought it would be better, as a matter of principle, that the Government should conduct these experiments in testing their own land, rather than a private company's. It seemed a large sum of money (£3,000) to vote out of public funds to assist one company, and he certainly should be opposed to any diversion of the loan money for such a purpose.

MR. HARPER said there were a great many settlers in the Central-Eastern Districts of this colony who had for years past been struggling against many difficulties, due to the want of water, and those settlers were much encouraged last year by the action of the House in appropriating a portion of the loan for water-boring in various parts of the colony. He should be very sorry to see that money diverted from its original purpose, and he should oppose it; but he was strongly in favor of assisting the private enterprise of pioneers in the other way suggested.

MR. CROWTHER thought the money, if voted at all, should come out of general revenue; but he would have preferred to have seen it devoted to encourage and assist Western Australian enterprise, which, as a rule, was not

looked upon with much favor by the Western Australian Government.

MR. GRANT said these lessees had done nothing but hold the land since they got it, and they simply held it for the purposes of speculation. Had they attempted to stock it, and made a reasonable effort to obtain water and failed, he should have been the last to oppose the proposal. Instead of that, they had not spent a farthing, trusting to the good nature of this Government to assist them. As to throwing up their lands, let them do so. He should be prepared then to go to the extent of £20,000 or £30,000 in proving the existence of water; but he was opposed to any public funds being voted to assist mere speculators, who, if they discovered water, would only barter the land away.

MR. BURT said he could not agree with anything that had been said by the last speaker. For fifty years past we had had this large estate lying utterly worthless, and it would have remained a blank on the map to this day but for the enterprise of strangers. A proposal was now made to test the value of the country, by a systematic search for water, and no one could gainsay that if water should be discovered we should have a magnificent estate in this Eucla territory. He went most heartily with the proposal to assist private enterprise in thus attempting to develop our territory, even if at the same time these people made fortunes for themselves. The land was of no use to us now, and never would be if we depended on the unaided efforts of our own Government. He was opposed to any diversion of the loan money, and thought this assistance should come out of the general revenue.

MR. MARMION said they had been told by the Commissioner of Crown Lands how nearly the colony had been this year to lose a considerable amount of revenue, by the holders of land in this district throwing up their runs; but, living in the hope that some assistance would be forthcoming, it appeared they had paid a heavy penalty sooner than forfeit their lands altogether: and he hoped they would not be disappointed in their expectations this time. When this question was before the House two years ago, he endeavored to fence the proposal around so carefully that the colony, as he

thought, might receive the maximum of benefit at a minimum of outlay, and he suggested that, as soon as a certain supply of water was obtained, our proportion of the subsidy should cease. Unfortunately, however, the proposal which was then put forward was lost, and the Governor in his speech at the opening of the next session, referring to the development of the country, said: "The ultimate success of the Eucla District still, to a great extent, depends upon the undetermined question of the water supply. The excellence of the pasture over a large portion of the country taken up is undoubted."

In referring to this paragraph of His Excellency's Speech, in the debate on the Address-in-Reply, he (Mr. Marmion) said he felt somewhat pleased that he had been one of those who at the previous session of Council had advocated the expenditure of a certain sum of money with the view of settling the question of the existence of water in this district, and he then added that he thought it was still unwise on the part of the House that it did not vote a small sum out of public funds towards a solution of the problem, and that he trusted it was not yet too late to do so. He could only say now what he said then, that if we desired to keep up the revenue we were deriving from the Eucla District, but which we were not likely to derive much longer unless some steps were taken to discover water, it would be wise on our part to agree to this expenditure. If we settled the question satisfactorily we might depend upon it that the district was bound to become a fruitful source of revenue to the colony. He hoped the House would be inclined to deal more liberally with the proposal this session than it did two years ago. He quite agreed with the suggestion that, in the event of water being discovered, a public reserve should be declared around the spot where it was found, so that the company should not monopolise it after the Government sharing the expense of finding it, out of public funds.

MR. WITTENOOM said he would support the proposal conditionally upon the grant being made out of the general revenue, and upon such conditions as the Government might consider it necessary to impose.

MR. BROWN said he could not see how, if we gave this assistance to the present company, we could consistently refuse similar assistance to any other lessees in the same district. If the search for water were to be made in various parts of the district, the proposal would not be open to the same objections, and, if once water was found, the colony should not be pledged to any further expenditure. The hon. member said, if progress were reported, he would be prepared to move a resolution to that effect.

MR. MARMION said, as to other companies making similar applications hereafter, the answer to such applications would be a simple one. If the search now contemplated proved successful the Government would simply say, "We have done all we intend doing in the matter; we have proved the existence of water, and we are now satisfied." On the other hand, if after an expenditure of £6,000 the search for water should prove unsuccessful, he ventured to say we were not likely to receive many more proposals of this nature.

MR. STEERE said he approved of the terms of the resolution sketched out by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, so far as it went, but he would go further, and provide that the locality where the water was discovered should be declared a public reserve.

MR. BROWN thought the company would object to that, if they bore half the expense of the search for water.

MR. STEERE said that so long as they could use it themselves, he did not see why they should object. He did not think they ought to have a monopoly of the water, after the Government sharing the expense of finding it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said he was glad to find that hon. members were more inclined to favor the present proposal than they were the proposal submitted two years ago. He thought, now, that they were within reasonable distance at any rate of a practical solution of the difficulty. Reference had been made to the liberal terms and the special advantages offered to the lessees of land in the Eucla district. So far as he was aware there were very few advantages. They paid exactly the same rents as the holders

of second-class land in other parts of the colony. It was true they had pre-emptive rights, but, on the other hand, they had no water, which was a great drawback. As to any other companies coming in with similar applications for assistance, every application must be considered on its merits. These people applied two years ago, and they now applied again. He had heard of no other applicants.

MR. BROWN then moved that progress be reported and leave given to sit again.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at a quarter to five o'clock, p.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Friday, 7th August, 1885.*

Petition (No. 3): Governors of Collegiate School—Establishment of Geological Department—Duplication of Telegraph line to Albany—Inspection of Murray River by Sir John Coode—Charges against Medical Officer, Guildford—Correspondence re Appointment Second Mistress, Perth Girls' School—Steam communication with Eucla—Weir on the River Swan—Correspondence re Constitution of Federal Council—The Stamp Act and Bills of Exchange—Land Regulations (Message No. 3): referred to select committee—Explosives Bill: further considered in committee—Northern District Special Revenue Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

### PETITION FROM GOVERNORS OF COLLEGIATE SCHOOL.

MR. BURT presented a petition from the Governors of the Church of England Collegiate School, praying for a dissolution of that corporation and for vesting the buildings in the Standing Committee of the Church of England.

The petition was received and read.