

taxation on the ground that the land was appropriated and used for purposes of recreation.

MR. A. FORREST said it was well known that different religious denominations from time to time bought up lands in different parts of the colony, and more especially in towns; he should like to ask the Attorney General whether land bought in this way by any religious denomination would be still liable to be rated as it was before, or whether it would be exempted if it became the property of a religious body?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that, under this clause, lands held by any religious body unless used or occupied as a place of residence of a minister, or as a convent or nunnery, or as a place of worship, or for some of the purposes specified, would be subject to taxation. If vacant, or unless used or occupied for the purposes mentioned in the clause, it would be chargeable with rates like any other land.

The amendments, including a proviso submitted by the Attorney General, were then agreed to, and the clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 4—Rate book for 1892 may include any property not exempted by this Act:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved some verbal amendments, which were agreed to without comment.

Clauses 5 to 12—put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported.

THIRD JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT BILL.

This bill passed through committee without discussion.

GOLDFIELDS ACT, 1886, AMENDMENT BILL.

This bill was committed, and agreed to *sub silentio*.

SUPREME COURT ACT, 1880, AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a first time.

AFFIRMATIONS BILL.

Read a first time.

FREMANTLE HARBOR WORKS: RETURN OF MONEYS PAID TO SIR JOHN COODE.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That a return be laid upon the table of the House showing the total sum of money already paid to Sir John Coode, in respect of his reports and advice upon Harbor Works at Fremantle; and what further sum would be payable to him should each or any of the schemes be carried out under his direction. Also, what expenses have been incurred in referring to Sir John Coode the question of the possibility of opening a passage through Success Bank." He thought that in view of the active steps proposed to be taken shortly for improving the harbor accommodation at Fremantle, it was desirable they should know what expenses had been incurred hitherto in connection with the reports and plans obtained from Sir John Coode. That was his object in moving for this return.

Motion—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 11th January, 1892.

Forest Conservation—Fremantle Harbor Works: opening of Challenger Passage—Public Officers Bill: third reading—Third Judge Bill: third reading—Police Bill: first reading—Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Affirmations Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FOREST CONSERVATION.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House the Government should use efficient measures for conserving the for-

est trees of the colony, especially young timber trees growing on areas that have been denuded of mature timber; and should also promote afforestation generally." He said that a few days previously the Commissioner of Crown Lands, replying to him, said that the question he had asked opened up a wide subject, and one which would receive consideration at the hands of the Government. He thought he might conclude by that that the Government were fully alive to this most important question, and would, therefore, in all probability, be glad to get an expression of opinion from members of the House as to how far the colony might go in the direction indicated. Some few years ago, when discussing the question of railway communication in the colony, it used to be alleged that we had such large supplies of timber that practically they were inexhaustible. They had, however, now learnt not to describe the supply in this way, for they were aware that much of the mature timber had been cut down, making it more difficult to obtain than it was a few years ago. Taking the neighborhood of Smith's Mill as a typical area, they found that the mature timber had been cut down and that now the young trees were being destroyed for the purpose of obtaining firewood. This was to be deplored, and it should be prevented, if they had any hope of obtaining timber there a few years hence. He did not think the same arguments used in other parts of the world against the cutting down of trees would apply here, but there were other equally sound reasons. In Greece he learnt that the objections to the cutting down of trees was that the snow melted more rapidly, and in consequence the water supply could not be kept up. In regard to India, he had heard that the effect of cutting down the trees on the mountains had been to allow the loose sand to come down and fill up the fertile valleys. We here had no such dangers as these; but if we did not take steps to conserve the forests we would soon be in the position of having no accessible timber for local use or exportation. One of the first things it would be necessary for the Ministry to do would be to appoint a conservator of forests, whose duty it would be to inquire into the circumstances of the cutting down of timber in the locality

he had indicated, and following that up it would be necessary to frame regulations, or perhaps introduce a bill for the better conservation of our forests. In addition to this he had to ask the attention of the House to the question of afforestation, which was of as much importance as the growth of indigenous trees. A few years ago the importations of soft timber into Australasia had amounted to more than £1,500,000 in value. If the importations continued at this rate the source of supply of this class of timber must necessarily become exhausted, and consequently the question arose as to what they would do for their future wants. From seeing the different varieties of pine tree growing in this colony it seemed possible to acclimatise trees yielding soft woods, and he thought it would be of immense advantage to the colony if experiments were made in this direction. For these reasons he moved the resolution standing in his name.

MR. THROSSELL said he had much pleasure in seconding the motion, although for his part he would be prepared to at once vote for the appointment of a conservator of forests. Had such an appointment been made earlier we should not now be deploring the want of sandalwood within a reasonable radius of settlement. Twenty years ago farmers in his district could go out in the morning and bring in a load of sandalwood in the evening; but now they had to travel about 80 miles to get it. The other colonies had long since seen the necessity of making such an appointment, and they had found that instead of its proving a loss to them it had been a large source of profit. The growth of pine trees in various parts showed what could be done in the direction of cultivating the growth of soft wood, and it only needed some competent person to direct the operations of those who were prepared to go in for this industry.

MR. RANDELL said that this was a subject which deserved the serious consideration of the Ministry at a very early date. He did not know that there was any immediate necessity for moving in the matter, but it should not be lost sight of. Fourteen or fifteen years ago a Commission was appointed to consider this matter, and they made a report. He was a member of it, but he did not go to

the Southern districts because at that time he made a trip to England. He believed there was a general consensus of opinion that we had immense supplies of jarrah, but that when we used the term "inexhaustible" we did so wrongly. We were, no doubt, at the present time using a considerable amount of it, and the supplies were, in consequence, being constantly drained. The ultimate result of this would be that if we did not take steps to preserve or replant the forests they would become exhausted, and that not at such a distant date as some imagined. When he moved in the direction of a Botanic Garden it was with a view of the persons connected with it devoting their attention to the introduction and acclimatisation of timber-producing trees, especially those yielding soft woods, as well as shade and ornamental trees. The result had not been up to his expectations, but possibly it was because the amount of funds at disposal was limited, as well as that there was no suitable locality to carry on experiments. He thought that such an institution should be introduced at an early date. Some qualified person should be in a position to distribute trees and plants and be able to give information to those willing to go in for timber growing. He believed there was a large field for operations in this direction, and those who first went into this industry would, he felt sure, ultimately receive a large reward. In his opinion the climate of this colony was suitable for the growth of pine and other soft woods, besides, perhaps, the cedar tree of New South Wales and the trees of New Zealand. He trusted that the Ministry would take this matter into their most serious consideration, and see whether something could not be done, if not on an expensive scale, in a way that would be likely to give useful results. He therefore heartily supported the motion.

MR. PIESSE said this was a subject which was specially interesting to country members. The way ring-barking was being carried on would, in his opinion, cause great trouble in future. It might be said that the remedy was in the hands of the persons who took up the land, who should not ring-bark the whole of their holding, but should reserve a portion for future use. In places the country had been

ring-barked for miles, and this was most unfair to those who would reside there in the future and would require to fence. Certain portions of the various districts, he thought, might be reserved for growing fencing timber for the future. Those who took up land now had no difficulty, because the timber was growing upon it, but when everyone had finished ring-barking there would be a very serious difficulty in the future.

MR. CLARKSON said his experience was that if he killed one tree, twenty more sprang up in its place. If a piece of country had been ring-barked, and it was then left for five years or so, it became ten times worse than it was at first. As far as the jarrah was concerned, it might be as well to preserve it, but where the land was suitable for agricultural or grazing purposes the timber was a great drawback.

MR. PIESSE said that the timber which the hon. member referred to was York gum, and was of very little use.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak a second time.

MR. COOKWORTHY said that so far as his experience went he did not think ring-barking would interfere with the growth of the jarrah tree.

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh yes.

MR. A. FORREST presumed the hon. member for Greenough intended to direct his remarks only to the jarrah country, because everyone who had had any experience in farming or grazing must be aware of the efficacy of ring-barking. Land which would not grow grass before the trees were ring-barked had become some of the finest feeding land it was possible to get. He himself had 1,000 sheep on 12,000 acres, but since the trees had been ring-barked he was able to keep 3,000 sheep on the same area. In the Southern districts, unless a man ring-barked the trees, there was no chance of his growing anything at all. If the hon. member referred to the jarrah country only, he would support the motion; but if he intended the jam and gum country as well, he would oppose it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. S. BURT): Will the hon. member tell us where these great results have taken place?

MR. A. FORREST: At Cubine?

MR. PARKER: On the York route to the goldfields?

MR. A. FORREST: Yes.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that some question on this subject had been asked the other evening, and his hon. colleague the Commissioner of Crown Lands had replied that the matter would receive the consideration of the Government. They had not, however, considered it yet in the way that perhaps the hon. member would like. The Government would have to give the matter a considerable amount of attention, and they would probably have to make a law on the subject. At present the only method of dealing with our timber was under the Land Regulations, which did not provide a sufficient means of carrying out what the hon. member desired. He thought, perhaps, something might be done to encourage the growth of soft woods; but even this would mean a considerable amount of expense. They would require to have a considerable department to attend to the preservation and the arrangement of the forest reserves; they would have to get a scientific man at the head of it, and a reliable and capable staff under him, to ensure that his suggestions were properly carried out. All this would cost a large amount of money. On the forest departments of Victoria and India if he said millions were spent he felt he would be quite within the mark. The sandalwood tree had been mentioned by some hon. member. Now a great deal of this wood had come from the Eastern districts, and was taken from land in the hands of private individuals. There was no doubt that the country was highly suitable for the growth of this timber, and therefore the owners had an opportunity of carrying out a scheme of their own. He did not think the Government could make any great promises on the subject, because undoubtedly it was one surrounded with much difficulty, and was not very pressing. At the present time jarrah was very plentiful; in fact they hardly knew the limits of the forests containing it, and besides this they had karri in vast quantities along the coast. There was, therefore, no fear for some little time of the timber being exhausted by the destruction that was going on. At the same time it was always wise to be prepared.

He would not make any promises, except to undertake that the Government would consider the matter during recess.

MR. TRAYLEN said he had only brought the motion before the House so as to obtain an expression of opinion from hon. members and to show the Ministry how far they might be likely to be supported in anything that they might suggest. The hon. the Premier stated that jarrah was plentiful to-day. So it might be; but he would ask what was the significance of building the zig-zag railway on the Canning to obtain sleepers for the Midland Railway when there was already a railway right into the heart of the jarrah country? Was it not because all the good timber suitable for sleepers had already been cut, and that it paid a gentleman to construct another and somewhat expensive line to tap another area. This was one of the strongest possible arguments why they should look after their timber. Anyone who knew anything about the construction of the Great Southern Railway must also know that thousands of sleepers were thrown aside because they were unfit for use, and therefore it behoved the Government to at once take efficient steps to preserve our forest areas.

Question—put and passed.

CHALLENGER PASSAGE: REPORTS AS TO OPENING OF.

MR. COOKWORTHY moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is advisable that all reports, charts, &c., in the possession of the Government, referring to the opening of the Challenger Passage, together with any available evidence relating thereto, be submitted to the Engineer-in-Chief for him to report thereon, and for that Report to be laid on the table of the House for the information of honorable members." He said that in bringing this matter before the House he did not in any way wish to provoke a discussion on the question of the harbor works. He only required to obtain information, and the motion would neither commit the Government nor the House to any particular line of action. For many years the matter of harbor works for Fremantle had been before the country, and it was generally admitted that such were very necessary. It was

often difficult, even in moderate weather, for vessels to come in to load, and they were often delayed through want of wharfage accommodation. Several engineers had reported on different schemes, but they all seemed to be beyond the means of the colony. But no report, as far as he was aware, had been made on the practicability of clearing away the obstructions to the Challenger Passage. Sir John Coode alluded to Cockburn Sound as the natural harbor of this part of the colony, but said that owing to its great distance from Fremantle it was not to be considered. Captain Archdeacon, in one of his later reports, said that Jervoise Bay was the natural harbor, but no attention seemed to have been paid to it. A gentleman of large experience, who frequently went through this passage, and who was well acquainted with the coast, had told him that the obstacles in the Challenger Passage might easily be removed, and another gentleman intimately acquainted with marine surveying had authorised him to state that the obstacles in this passage could be removed at a moderate cost. It was said that outside this passage was the five-fathom bank; but, even so, vessels in bad weather could pass under the lee of Rottnest, where there was a passage of over a mile in width and from 10 to 11 fathoms deep, and which would give vessels an opportunity of coming in if the passage were clear. The Government proposed a scheme for opening a passage 2 miles in length and about 300 feet in width to enable ocean steamers to get into Owen Anchorage; but in his opinion if this Challenger Passage could be cleared it would be far preferable, and would lead to the making of one of the most splendid harbors in the world—a harbor which would hold the navies of the world, one where there would be 40ft. of water almost close in to the beach. Now that the Government had a new Engineer-in-Chief—a gentleman who had the confidence of the people and who had had a large experience in marine works—he thought it would be satisfactory to the country if he were asked to give an opinion on this question. It was the prevailing opinion that if Cockburn Sound were opened up it would interfere with the vested rights at Fre-

mantle. He would be sorry to interfere with any vested interests; but he was afraid that in this instance there was nothing in the contention. The Custom House and public officers would still remain at Fremantle, and besides this he thought the people should not allow their private interests to interfere with what was best for the country at large. He did not say that the obstacles could be removed, but only that the opinion prevailed that they could, and therefore it was that he would like to have the report.

MR. R. F. SHOLL seconded the motion.

The motion, without further discussion, was declared negatived on the voices.

MR. COOKWORTHY called for a division, with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	7
Majority for			7

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burt	Mr. Darlôt
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. Loton
Sir John Forrest	Mr. Parker
Mr. A. Forrest	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Harper	Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Hassell	Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Marmion	Mr. Randell (Teller).
Mr. Phillips	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Simpson	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Traylen	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Cookworthy (Teller).	

Question—put and passed.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS TITLES BILL.

This bill was read a third time and passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

THIRD JUDGE BILL.

This bill was read a third time and passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council.

POLICE BILL.

Read a first time.

THE SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I rise, sir, to move the second reading of this Bill. The object of it is to empower the Judges to make regulations as to the payment of fees of the

Supreme Court. Since the passing of the Act of 1880 fees have been collected; but a doubt has arisen as to whether the Judges have any authority to enforce or regulate the payment of them. This bill will remove that doubt. The bill also contains a provision for the enforcement of an execution of an instrument. If, for instance, the Court has ordered some person to execute an instrument, and that party refuses to do it, this Bill gives the Court the power to give effect to its order.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

AFFIRMATIONS BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I now move the second reading of this Bill, which I may say at once is a somewhat important measure. Hon. members will see the scope of it from the preamble, which reads: "Whereas the taking of oaths in Courts of Justice by people of Asiatic and other races often tends to disturb the solemnity of the proceedings and to offend against the religious convictions of Christians, and it is expedient to empower all persons having by law authority to administer an oath to order in all cases the making of a solemn affirmation and declaration instead of the taking of an oath: Be it therefore enacted, &c." As the law now stands a Chinese witness, in the case of murder for instance, gets into the box and elects, as his method of taking the oath, to "kill 'em cock," and the Judges are powerless to prevent this ludicrous procedure, as any other kind of oath would not be binding upon the witness' conscience. It is now proposed to allow the Judges or Justices of the Peace, not only in the case of a Chinaman, but in any case, to substitute an affirmation whenever they think it desirable. That is the whole scope of the bill, and under an affirmation perjury can be assigned in the usual way.

MR. RANDELL: I should have preferred to have seen this bill go much further, and, instead of making an affirmation permissive only, to have abolished the practice of swearing altogether. The taking of an oath certainly does not accomplish the object that was originally intended, and so long as an affirmation car-

ried with it the consequences and penalty of taking a false oath, its complete adoption would remove that which is very offensive and repugnant to some of our best-minded Christian men, who have strong objections to the taking of an oath by reason of the undue familiarity that is taken with the name of the Divine Being. And besides this, there is no peculiar sanctity in the taking of an oath. I should be glad to see the taking of oaths abolished altogether. Some are required under the Real Property Act which to my mind seem ridiculous; and I would go so far as to say that the taking of oaths of office is unnecessary. I know that some are taken with the knowledge that they will be broken as soon as opportunity arises. History and experience both show that this state of things not only applies to people in the lower walks of life, but also to those in higher spheres. Still, if the Government is not prepared to go further, I shall have much pleasure in supporting this bill, which is a step in the right direction. I would like to ask, however, if under this bill any person objects to take an oath, the Judges are authorised to release him from so doing?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Certainly.

MR. TRAYLEN: I endorse all that has fallen from the hon. member for the Moore on this subject.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8:45 p.m.