

ready to go on with. If they adjourned till to-morrow, he thought they could make some progress; and when the House met on the following Tuesday, there would be plenty of work, including the annual Estimates, the Loan Bill (second reading), and other Bills.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Better adjourn till Tuesday.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER moved that the House do now adjourn till to-morrow.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 7:56 o'clock, p.m., until next day.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 24th September, 1896.

Exportation of Guano: prohibition of—Perth Water Works: purchase of—Perth-Fremantle Road: completion of—Hansard Debates: publication of—Judges' Pensions Bill: returned to Legislative Assembly—Customs Duties Repeat Bill: second reading; committee—Bankruptcy Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Western Australian Bank Bill: first reading—Tobacco (unmanufactured) Duty Bill: second reading; committee—Meat Supply: report of Joint Select Committee—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill: returned to Legislative Assembly—Adjournment.

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

EXPORTATION OF GUANO—PROHIBITION OF.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS, by leave, without notice, moved, That the Resolution adopted by the Council on the 23rd instant, relating to the prohibition of the exportation of guano be transmitted by Message to the Legislative Assembly, and its concurrence desired therein.

Question put and passed.

PERTH WATERWORKS—PURCHASE OF.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER asked the Minister of Mines—

1. If the Government had completed the purchase of the Perth Water Works. If so, how was it that would-be consumers of water, who are compelled to pay the water rate, were unable to have their premises connected with the mains.

2. If the Government had entered into any contract for the supply of pipes to duplicate the present main connecting the main reservoir with Perth. If so, when would they arrive and be placed in position. If not, what steps had the Government taken to prevent a water famine during the coming summer.

3. Being aware that, with the existing appliances, the water supply for Perth for the coming hot season would be totally inadequate for private consumption, had the Government notified the City Council that they will not be allowed to use the reservoir water for street watering. If not, did they intend doing so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied as follows:—

1. The Government have not yet taken possession, but the Company hope to be able to give over the title to-morrow. Until possession is taken, the Government have no power to act.

2. No contract has yet been entered into. As soon as possession is obtained, active steps will be taken.

3. The Government, not having possession, have not taken any action.

PERTH-FREMANTLE ROAD—COMPLETION OF.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER asked the Minister of Mines:—

1. When the contracts for re-making the Perth-Fremantle road expired, and what penalty, if any, were the contractors liable to for non-fulfilment of same.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied as follows:—

The dates fixed for the completion of the various contracts in connection with the Perth-Fremantle road are as follows:

Rocky Bay Contract, 2nd June, 1896.

Cottesloe Contract, 19th June, 1896.

North Fremantle Contract, 21st September, 1896.

Perth Contract, 21st September, 1896.

In each case the penal sum for non-fulfilment of contract is £5 per day.

Additions to contracts and other circumstances may, in some cases, warrant extension of time.

HANSARD REPORTS—PUBLICATION OF.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: I have to move, "That, in the opinion of this House, steps should be taken to secure greater publicity being given to the debates of this House, if such can be done at a reasonable expense." I do not think it necessary for me to take up the time of the House by speaking at length to this motion. It is within the memory of hon. members that up to a short time ago the debates of this House were published daily in a newspaper, and printed in book form weekly. I think hon. members will agree that it is for the benefit of the community that what takes place in this House should be made as public as possible. If an hon. member is compelled through sickness to absent himself from the House for a few sittings, when he comes back he is not in touch with what has taken place, nor can he find out what has been done until the publication of the debates some nine or ten months later. I myself was compelled to be away from the House for two or three meetings through sickness, and when I came back I could not get a reliable report of the proceedings. In one newspaper I saw two or three lines to the effect that the Hon. Mr. Haynes had held a brief for the Government, and had pulled my speech to pieces. As to how he did it I am at a loss to know, and this is a state of affairs I do not think it is desirable should exist. It is not asking the Government too much to have a daily "Hansard" published containing the proceedings of this House. At present the constituents of hon. members have no means of gaining information as to whether their representatives are voting according to their promises or not. I believe as far as expense is concerned the matter is a small one, and I do not see why this House should be bound by what has been done in another place. I shall not say more, except to ask hon. members to vote for the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I quite sympathise with the remarks of the hon. member with regard to the reporting of the debates in this House. At present it is a little unsatisfactory that they are not reported at greater length; but, unfortunately, it seems that the arrangements fell through—I do not exactly know why—at an early part of the session, and there was no time for the Government to make fresh ones. I can only say that the matter came so suddenly on the Government that it was impossible for them to make definite arrangements at once, but next year it is hoped that the Government Printer will be able to carry out the work more promptly.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I am in complete accord with the motion of the hon. member. I think it is desirable that this House should have a little more attention paid to it in the matter of reporting the debates. What takes place here is of importance to the country, and it is somewhat difficult to recollect what has been said by hon. members in the course of a debate. If we had a daily "Hansard" it would be a great help to us, and I think it highly desirable, if it can be done at a moderate expense, that we should have it even for the rest of the session. I hope the Government will see their way, late as the time is, to comply with the wish of the House.

Motion put and passed.

JUDGES' PENSIONS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I move that the request of the Legislative Assembly, as contained in their Message No. 27 (*vide* p. 733 *ante*), be agreed to. It appears that the Judges' Pensions Bill was introduced in the Lower House without the proper form having been gone through. The Bill is what is known as a Money Bill, and its introduction should have been preceded by a message from the Governor. This was overlooked, and the Legislative Assembly now wishes to have the Bill returned so that the proper form may be gone through.

Motion put and passed.

Bill returned accordingly.

CUSTOMS DUTIES REPEAL BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Hon. members, I feel sure, are so familiar with the contents of this Bill that very few words will be required for me to commend it to their favourable consideration. It has been part of the policy of the Government hitherto to reduce duties wherever they could, and especially in cases where there seemed to be any hardship. As, however, the colony is developing so rapidly, and such large sums are required to keep pace with the demands which are made upon the Government in order to enable them to give the people the necessary facilities, the Government feel they are hardly justified in reducing the revenue to any great extent. At the same time there are some duties which press heavily on some sections of the community; and the Government, after having considered the matter very carefully, have decided to ask the House not to reduce them, but to repeal them altogether. It will be seen that the chief article in the schedule is mining machinery, and the amount of revenue that will be lost consequent upon this Bill is estimated at from £20,000 to £25,000. This will not be a serious item to the colony, and the remission may have the effect of doing much good. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: I do not intend to oppose this Bill, but I cannot but think that the time has almost arrived when the Government should have a definite policy in reference to duties. We should either adopt the policy of free trade or protection. The hon. gentleman who introduced this Bill states that the Government wish to encourage the mining industry by taking the duty off machinery. It strikes me that if the Government desire to encourage the mining industry a policy of free trade is the proper one to adopt. There is no doubt that the mining industry is maintaining the colony at the present time.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Not altogether.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: If we desire to maintain the mining industry and enable it to be carried on properly and as cheaply as possible, we should reduce the cost of living as much as we

can, and the first step, I think, the Government should take to accomplish this is to strike off all the duties on articles necessary to life and articles of consumption. My hon. friend says that the mining industry is not altogether maintaining the colony. I agree with him, but the mining industry is the great factor in the progress of the colony. It is the mining industry that has caused the vast increase in the revenue, and has enabled the Government to borrow large sums of money for the construction of railways and other works. It is the mining industry that the people of the country and the people of the towns mainly depend upon for their prosperity and success. Take the tariff as it will stand when this Bill is passed. The agriculturalists are apparently to have some slight concession in the shape of the remission of the duties on their machinery. Would not the agriculturalists benefit to a greater extent if the duties were removed from articles which they consume. It seems to me they would benefit infinitely more by a policy of free trade than they could possibly hope to in the present circumstances. We know that very little flour is produced in the colony. Our agriculturists find it more profitable to produce hay; they have almost ceased to produce wheat. Why then should all the mining population and all the people of the towns pay duty on flour? Why should the northern settlers, who cannot produce wheat or cereal crops, pay duty on an article which is absolutely necessary for consumption? As the agriculturists do not produce wheat the duty upon flour is obviously not maintained for their benefit, because, as I have said, they find it more profitable to produce hay, and almost the whole of our flour has to be imported from the neighbouring colonies. Then again, even if the duty were removed from hay it would not affect the farmer very much, for the reason that the cost of carriage on hay from the neighbouring colonies is so considerable, and the deterioration in quality so great, that the local farmer must command a better price than the importer.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is not the case.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: I consider myself somewhat a judge of hay, and I

always take care never to buy the imported article because I have found it so much inferior to the local article. Then, again, the price which can be obtained for hay is so very high that there is no necessity for any duty. Why then should all those who use hay on our goldfields pay a large duty upon it? Then, even if the farmer obtained a lower price for his produce, it seems to me he would benefit by a policy of free trade, because he would be enabled to put against the lower price he obtains for his own produce the reduction which he would get on other articles he himself has to purchase. Take another instance—that of butter. This is an article used all over the colony, but here it is produced in very small quantities. We have in the past done everything we could to encourage dairy farming and the production of butter, but with all we do not produce one-twentieth of the quantity we require. Why then, in these circumstances, should the whole community pay a duty on butter. Again, take milk. We know that milk is not produced in quantities sufficient for the towns, much less for the goldfields. Why should those who have to use tinned milk be compelled to pay a duty upon it when the fresh article is not to be obtained in the colony. These are crude ideas of mine; I do not pretend that I have considered the subject fully. When, however, I see a Tariff Bill introduced which places a number of articles on the free list, it strikes me, bearing in mind that our main object is to protect the gold mining industry, that nothing can so conduce to the prosperity of it as absolute free trade in connection with articles necessary for consumption. If we adopted that policy it would enable the miner to live more cheaply and the gold could be produced at a lesser cost. When we bear in mind also that the Government are spending large sums of money not only from loan funds, but out of current revenue on public works, it seems to me that under a system of free trade these works can be constructed at a lesser cost, seeing that the present high price of living would be reduced. We desire to see those who are successful in mining settling in our midst, and not going abroad or to the neighbouring colonies to live, and nothing would so conduce to this as a reduction in the cost

of living. We must bear in mind also that at the present time the great proportion of our mining population keep their wives and families abroad. Why is it so? Chiefly because the cost of living there is so much less than it is here. From the Post Office reports we find that £10,000 or £12,000 go away from this colony every week or so to maintain the families of those who are working here, simply because they cannot be kept in this colony owing to the abnormal cost of everything. Taking this view of the position, I would urge on the Government to consider before next session whether they cannot bring forward some scheme which will reduce the cost of living and enable those of our mining population who are now maintaining their families abroad to shift their encumbrances here. I do not propose to offer the slightest opposition to this Bill, because it seems to me that although it does not go far enough it is nevertheless a step in the right direction.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Bill was then considered in committee, agreed to without amendment, reported, and the report adopted.

BANKRUPTCY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BANK INCORPORATION BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

TOBACCO (UNMANUFACTURED) DUTY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Hon. members are no doubt aware that at the flourishing seaport of Fremantle there is a tobacco factory. Questions have arisen in connection with it as to the amount of duty which should be charged on unmanufactured tobacco. It has been pointed out that the fact of such a factory existing in the colony, means employment to a large number of persons; but that the

difference in the duty on the manufactured and unmanufactured article is so small as not to allow those interested in the trade to make a profit. The question arose whether the Government should reduce the duty, or whether the factory should be closed. It was decided that it would be better to keep the factory open, and in these circumstances the Government have brought forward this Bill. At present the duty on the manufactured article is 3s. per lb. and on the unmanufactured article 2s. per lb. It is now proposed that the amount shall be 3s. per lb. on the manufactured article, and 1s. 10½d. on the unmanufactured article, making a difference of 1s. 1½d. In South Australia the duty charged on manufactured tobacco is 2s. 9d., and on unmanufactured tobacco 1s. 7½d. Thus the difference is the same. This small reduction will make a difference as far as can be calculated of from £500 to £700 a year. It is not a large amount as far as the revenue is concerned, but, to the people concerned, I understand it will mean the difference between a profit and a loss. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Bill was then considered in committee, agreed to without amendment, reported, and the report adopted.

MEAT SUPPLY—REPORT OF JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I beg to move, "that the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into the high price of meat be adopted." I may say that the report has been laid before the Government, but that nothing has as yet been done to carry out any of the recommendations it contains. With regard to obtaining a more adequate meat supply, nothing can be done until the Government afford better facilities at our Northern ports for the shipment of stock. As far as the evidence goes it is shown that the high price of meat is consequent upon the great distances which stock have to be brought to market.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: If I may be permitted to say so it is not usual to

move the adoption of such a report as that is. The correct practice is, I believe, to lay the report on the table and then leave it to any hon. member who chooses to move a resolution upon it. Whatever is done, the report is here, and it must stand.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I think the hon. member is correct. If any action is desired to be taken on the report, it is open for any hon. member to move such a resolution as he thinks fit.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I was advised by the Hon. the Minister for Mines to take this course as I signed the report. If, therefore, I am wrong, it is no fault of mine. However, I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Hon. members are aware that when this Bill was before the House there was a difference of opinion as to whether the settlement of disputes in regard to applications for land should be decided by lot or otherwise. The committee determined that applications which were made simultaneously should be decided by lot as to which applicant should have the land. It was pointed out at the time that there were many objections to this course, and one of them was that it would enable lands to get into the hands of speculators to the disadvantage of the *bona fide* settlers. It was contended that a speculator might put in half a dozen applications and thereby almost make a certainty of getting the land, and then sell it to the farmer at an advanced price, as has been done elsewhere. It seems to me that such would prove a most pernicious system—

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I rise to order. Is the hon. member in order in addressing the House on the main question at the present time? Should he not move that you do leave the chair for the purpose of considering the message in committee?

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I think it is customary to consider these messages in committee.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Then I move that you do now leave the chair for the purpose of considering this Bill in committee.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I beg to move, as an amendment, "That all the words after 'That' be struck out, and that the following words be inserted in lieu thereof: 'A Message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly, requesting them to state the reasons for their disagreement with the Council's suggested amendment, No. 2.'" I would draw your attention, Sir, to Standing Order 295, which reads: "If the Legislative Assembly shall return such Bill with 'any of the amendments made by the Council disagreed with, or further amendments made thereon, together with written reasons for its disagreeing with any such amendments proposed by the Council, &c., &c., &c. You will see, Sir, that there are no reasons given in the Legislative Assembly's message for not agreeing to this amendment. This point was decided by you when the Loan Bill of 1894 was before this House. On that occasion the present Minister for Mines strongly supported your ruling on the grounds that this House should be treated in a proper manner by the Assembly, and that the Standing Orders should not be flouted, as is attempted by this message. Our amendment is thrown back in our faces, without any reasons being given as to why the Assembly has not seen fit to agree to it, and I hope, therefore, hon. members will sink any personal views they may have on the main question in order to maintain the privileges and dignity of this House.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: I beg to second the amendment. At the same time I am prepared to give the Legislative Assembly the credit of having only made an omission. I do not think there was the slightest intention to flout this House, and if we send a courteously worded message requesting them to supply reasons, I feel sure they will do so.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I do not think there was any idea on the part of the Legislative Assembly to treat this House discourteously, because, in connection with

another Bill in which we made an amendment, they might have returned it and have contended that we had exceeded our powers. They did not do so, but agreed to make the amendment. I feel sure this is merely an omission, and if we call attention to Standing Order 295, the defect will be remedied.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I may say that I was present at another place when this Bill was returned, and in consequence of what occurred, I was induced to make the remarks I have.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I have not the slightest objection to fall in with the views of the Hon. Mr. Stone, although I feel sure there was no intention whatever on the part of the Legislative Assembly to flout this House. At the same time I wish to uphold our rights and privileges, and therefore I shall support the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House at 5:45 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 29th September, 1896, at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.
