

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 14th September, 1893.

Precautions against the introduction of Cholera—Message from the Governor: Assent to Bills—Leave of absence for Mr. Burt—Imported Labour Registry Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Vesting of Sinking Funds in Local Trustees—Extension of Beverley-Broomehill Telegraph Line to Mount Barker—Estimates, 1893-4: further considered in committee—Message from Legislative Council: Increased Representation in the Federal Council—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 p.m.

## PRAYERS.

### PRECAUTIONS AGAINST INTRODUCTION OF CHOLERA.

MR. TRAYLEN: May I be allowed to ask the Premier, without notice, whether steps are being taken at Albany, and elsewhere, to prevent the introduction of cholera from Europe?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes; instructions have been issued to the authorities at Albany and other places in regard to the outbreak of cholera on the continent, and, I believe, all necessary precautions have been taken. We are taking the same precautions as are being taken in South Australia.

### MESSAGE: ASSENT TO BILLS.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

"The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has this day assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the undermentioned Bills:—

"An Act to amend 'The Grand Jury Abolition Act Amendment Act, 1883.'

"An Act to authorise the Colonial Treasurer of the Colony to make advances in respect of Deposits of a Public Nature, in Banks that have Suspended Payment, and for other purposes connected therewith.

"An Act to amend the Law relating to Appeals in Criminal Cases.

"Government House, Perth, 17th September, 1893."

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion of Sir JOHN FORREST, leave of absence for three weeks was granted to the hon. member for Ashburton (Mr. Burt).

## IMPORTED LABOUR REGISTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.

### VESTING LOAN SINKING FUNDS IN LOCAL TRUSTEES.

MR. HARPER: Sir, I notice in the papers laid on the table that there was invested, as sinking funds, in the hands of trustees in England, on the 31st December last, £114,294 3s. 3d., which, at a rough estimate, is returning interest at the rate of a fraction over  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to the colony. It must be very evident to all members that it is not to the best advantage of this country that we should have money invested earning only that amount of interest, when there are so many undeveloped resources in the colony which, if this money were invested in them, would easily yield a return three times that amount, probably, if the money were judiciously invested. It seems to me that it would tend very much to the development of the country if trustees were appointed in this colony to invest these moneys in works of a nature that would return good interest, and, at the same time, tend to the advancement and progress of the country. I might mention one or two undertakings which, to my mind, would be very legitimate investments for these funds. There are two kinds of works which, all the world over, appear to pay very large dividends indeed upon their prosecution, namely, drainage works and irrigation works, both eminently wrapped up in the development of a country. In India, where irrigation works have been carried on very largely, they return a high rate of interest on the money invested in them, in some instances 10 per cent., and in some as high as 25 per cent. With regard to drainage works, there are many places in this colony where a few thousand pounds invested in such works would enhance enormously the value of the land, and yield a good interest upon the investment. I am sure if this could be accomplished, it would not only be a good thing for the country, but also retain these funds in the colony, and benefit ourselves instead of the outside world. I hope that the Government will not think that the form in which I have framed my resolution will in any way

hamper them, but I trust it may be the means of drawing attention to the matter, and cause them to look into it, and see whether, in the future, steps could not be taken to make a move in this direction. We have the authority of the Attorney General for saying that English capitalists do not care a fig for sinking funds, and that the fact of our having a sinking fund has no effect whatever upon them in purchasing our bonds. Coming from such a high authority as the Attorney General, there is no reason to doubt the statement. Probably, if what I propose could be adopted, and this system of investing our sinking fund in the colony were once instituted, the day may come when the Government in office might see the wisdom of carrying into effect that which a majority of this House recommended, in principle, a few evenings ago : that is, the vesting of the proceeds of our land sales in trust to meet the payment of the colony's debt. I hope the Government will not offer any opposition to the resolution, which I now beg to move : "That, in the opinion of this House, this colony would derive great and important advantages if the sinking funds in connection with its public loans were vested in trustees within the colony, instead of in England, as at present."

MR. SIMPSON : I beg to second the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I fear that the proposal of the hon. member would not be acceptable to those who invest in our stock. I would prefer, myself, not to have any sinking fund at all than to have a sinking fund that would not be negotiable or convertible when you required it. Supposing these funds were invested in this colony, in city property or any other freehold property throughout the colony, and, at the end of twenty years, or any given time, when our loans fell due, and the money was required to meet them, there might be a considerable amount of difficulty in realising upon those properties at that particular time. If the hon. member's proposition were adopted, we would not have what is called a reducible security, which can be bought and sold always at market price, and be converted into money. There is an objection, I think—although I would much prefer it to the hon. member's idea, and I see it has been done to a little extent—

there is an objection, I think, to investing our own funds in that way. To my mind, the best way to assist the colony would be to invest these sinking funds in our own stocks and securities. But even then there would be this difficulty : we might rush the market, in order to meet our requirements, which might have a very bad effect upon our stock. It seems to me if we want to have a sinking fund in order to give greater security to those who borrow from us, and also to form a fund for the redemption of our loans, we cannot do better than invest it in negotiable securities. The interest may be small, but there is the great advantage that the money is not only safe but invested in securities which could be realised at any moment at the market price. I quite agree it would be better to have these funds invested in the colony, but I do not think it would carry out the object we have in view, in the same way as at present. For instance, these stocks that are purchased can be converted into money at any day the trustees think fit, which would not be the case if we invested these funds in lands and properties in the colony. We might have a great deal of trouble in calling up the money so invested, and do a great deal of mischief. We know that when you lend money on mortgage, and want to call it up in a hurry, or even if not in a hurry, you cause a great deal of inconvenience. The only thing I can promise the hon. member, and promise this House, is to consult with our financial advisers in London upon the subject. But I am afraid they would advise that it would be far better not to have a sinking fund at all than to have one that would not be easily convertible. I should like some members of the House, who are connected with financial operations, to give us their opinion on the subject. I confess my own opinion on such a subject is not worth very much, certainly not more than any other member's opinion in the House. But that is how it strikes me ; and, after the matter is discussed, I would advise the hon. member not to press his resolution to a division, but to leave the matter in my hands, and I will promise him I will make inquiry into the subject ; and, when the House meets again, communicate the result of my investigations. I am afraid, however, that so far as our advisers in

London are concerned, they would not be very much in favour of the investment of these trust funds in land and property in the same colony as where the money was borrowed.

**MR. CANNING:** With regard to the opinion expressed by the Premier, I may say that the view he suggests as likely to be taken by the financial advisers of the Government in London is precisely the view I have myself heard expressed there with regard to the investment of the reserves of the Banks. In some cases these reserves are invested in consols, yielding a very low rate of interest indeed, and no doubt the money could be employed much more advantageously and profitably by the Banks themselves in their ordinary operations, or in securities which they have special facilities for selecting for that purpose. But it has been considered that that would not completely answer the purpose; that is, to provide a reserve fund that should be absolutely placed beyond the reach of any vicissitudes, or any crises, or any accidents that may occur, and that would at the same time be available in the event of any sudden demand being made upon the Banks' funds. When we find that Banks hold this to be the best course that can be taken under such circumstances, I think we shall be perfectly safe in following the same course with regard to our sinking fund, which, though not precisely the same as a Bank reserve, may be regarded very much in the same way. I know of other financial institutions, not Banks, that have taken precisely the same course—invested their £100,000 in consols, as a reserve to fall back upon in the event of any sudden and unexpected demand being made upon their resources. I think, upon inquiry, it will be found that however desirable it might be to secure a better rate of interest for the colony's money, the employment of the money in the way the hon. member suggests would really be defeating the object in view in forming this reserve fund. I may remind him that, to the best of my recollection, when the Attorney General made some allusion to the opinion expressed in London about sinking funds, what he said was that they did not seem to attach much importance to it; I do not think he said they did not care a fig for it. I can quite understand their taking up the

attitude which the Attorney General said they did. When dealing with financiers, you generally find them very much inclined to disparage any advantages that you are anxious to show them in connection with the matter under consideration, while at the same time they dwell with great earnestness upon the omission to do anything that would have tended to fortify your position. Therefore, when the Attorney General told them, by way of impressing them in our favour, that we had a sinking fund, I can quite understand that they should have taken it very easily, and rather pooh-poohed it. I think that the suggestion of the Premier, that some time might be given for the consideration of the subject, and that the matter be left in the hands of the Government, is really the best course to follow.

**MR. HARPER:** I rise because the Premier, and also the hon. member for East Perth, appear to have missed the point altogether. The Premier suggests there would be a difficulty in realising, and that that would be one of the objections to investing these funds in the colony. But, surely, the object of a sinking fund is not to realise before the expiration of the term.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** When that time comes, I meant.

**MR. HARPER:** It would not be necessary to realise at all upon our own debentures. As to the difficulty of realising, I should like to point out that some of the stocks in which our sinking funds are at present invested are liable to fluctuations—Ceylon, for instance. Supposing there was an outbreak in India, the price of Ceylon stock would soon go down. The same with the Cape of Good Hope stock and Canadian stock; they are liable to fluctuations. I see that some of these funds are invested in Australian stocks, which we know are constantly fluctuating. With regard to what fell from the hon. member for East Perth as to Bank reserves, it must be remembered that a Bank's reserve fund is part of a statutory contract, but this would only be an arrangement among ourselves. Both the Premier and the hon. member seem to me to have missed the point.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** I can quite see there would be some difficulty in investing this sinking fund, by way of advanc-

ing the money upon works in the colony, but I can also see there would be some saving, and I think wisdom, in investing it in our own stock, instead of the stocks of other countries. If that could be done it would be far better than investing it in property which could not be realised when required. We should save ourselves the annual interest, and in course of time would extinguish the debt itself.

MR. LOTON: I think the object which the hon. member for Beverley has in view is a very commendable one, but the question is whether it could be carried out. It must be admitted at once that if this amount of money—£114,000, I think, he said—were invested at five or six per cent. it would be better for the colony than to have it invested, as it now is, at from three to four per cent. From the remarks of the mover I gather that his idea is that trustees should be appointed, with the view of investing this money in certain paying industries or reproductive works in this colony. The hon. member instanced such works as irrigation works, which he said paid a very high rate of interest in other countries. It appears to me that if trustees were appointed to invest the money in irrigation works, or works of such a nature as he instanced, such trustees would be taking a very serious responsibility upon themselves, and incurring considerable risk indeed, because the result would depend entirely upon whether such irrigation works or drainage works turned out a financial success or otherwise. Then it has been suggested that the money might be invested in purchasing a certain amount of our own stock.

MR. HARPER: When it is below par.

MR. LOTON: No doubt these trustees would purchase this particular stock, if they thought it would be a judicious investment; but the question is, would they be able to purchase it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No.

MR. LOTON: I understand that the net amount which our 4 per cent. loans realised was about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and, in order to invest in our own 4 per cent. stocks we should have to purchase at a higher rate than par; therefore we should get something less than 4 per cent. How

much more would that be than we are now getting? I do not see that the colony would gain much by that. Unless this money were invested in some ventures such as irrigation works—and no one who has the investment of trust money, whether for companies or private individuals, is likely to take that risk—I do not see how we are likely to gain by exchanging the present system for some experimental system, which might end in disaster. These are the views that occur to me, and I think that occurred to the Premier when he spoke in reply to the proposal. Although the object of the mover is very commendable and desirable, I do not think myself that we should or could do anything practical in the direction he indicates. The matter might be brought under the attention of the present trustees. It appears to me to be an absolute condition with regard to trust funds that their investment must be a safe investment, to start with, and also an investment that can be realised at any moment; whereas, we know that if invested in landed property or in drainage or irrigation works, there would be a difficulty in realising, and there would be a great risk,—a risk which no prudent trustee would care to incur. It is not desirable that such funds as these, set apart for a specific purpose—which is the case with our sinking funds—should be diverted into speculative channels. I look upon this sinking fund as a reserve for the payment in due course of a principal sum, or a liability to be met, and in my opinion no portion of that principal sum should be invested in public undertakings or works belonging to the people who borrowed that principal in the first instance, and who are responsible for its repayment. It would be better and wiser, in my opinion, to have the money invested in a safer way, although bringing in less interest.

MR. SIMPSON: So far as I understand this motion, it is brought forward with the idea that as this sinking fund accumulates—and it is accumulating every year—it should be vested in trustees who can appreciate the value of securities, and who, when an opportune time offers, shall avail themselves of it, and invest this money in the purchase of our own stock, so as practically to reduce the public debt of the colony. It cer-

tainly has been suggested—it was a mere suggestion—that these funds should be invested in certain works, and the Premier thinks it would be invested in land or property in the colony; but I do not understand the motion in any way in that sense. I apprehend the idea to be this: that local trustees be appointed, possessed of an exact knowledge of our circumstances, and of our resources,—men of sound, practical common-sense and business abilities; and that these trustees should be empowered to invest these sinking funds in such a way as shall most effectually extinguish our national debt. In looking through the list of securities in which our sinking funds are now invested, we find such stock as that of the Cape of Good Hope, Canada, Ceylon, New South Wales, South Australian, and Victorian inscribed stock. I would ask members to review the history of the past twelve months, and I would ask them: have not many favourable opportunities occurred for local trustees, on the alert for safe and profitable investments, to buy in and sell out these stocks or securities? Take Victorian securities, for instance; surely they were not of the same value during the last twelve months as they were at the time they were first issued; and there has been every opportunity for profitably investing our sinking fund in these securities. The same may be said with regard to other securities, and I take it that the duty of these local trustees would be to keep their eyes open to such investments. As to putting the money in irrigation works, or houses and lands, I do not know that that would be a wise proceeding. So far as Australian irrigation works are concerned, up to the present it has not yet been demonstrated that they are large dividend-paying undertakings. I believe that in Victoria the funds invested by the Government in irrigation works have not yielded more than one per cent. But I think it would be wise to adopt the spirit, or the principle, of this motion, which practically has nothing to do with irrigation works, or any other works. I think it would be wise to appoint local trustees, with a knowledge of our circumstances, and give them an opportunity of buying up our own bonds—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is done now.

MR. SIMPSON: Or buy up other countries' bonds, as favourable opportunities for doing so occurred—buy in times of depreciation, and sell in times of appreciation. I fail to see the wisdom of sinking the country's money in a sinking fund, when we have been told by the financial advisers of the Government, in London, and the great money lenders, that they do not care twopence whether we have a sinking fund or not, and that our loans would realise just as good a price without a sinking fund as with one. With regard to reserve funds—and these sinking funds should be looked upon as reserve funds—the Royal Banking Commission that sat in Victoria, in 1880, or 1881, reported that banking institutions did not distinguish to any large extent between their reserve funds and their ordinary subscribed capital. I can only repeat that I am entirely in accord with the spirit of the resolution, that this sinking fund should be vested in local trustees, with power to invest the money in stocks and securities, whether they be of our own colony or other countries' stocks, so long as they afforded a profitable and safe investment. I distinctly say there has been ample opportunity of making money out of these securities during the last few years; and I think the idea, if carried out, would be a distinct advantage to the financial position of the colony.

MR. A. FORREST: I should like to say a few words on this important subject. I do not certainly agree with the hon. member for Geraldton as to what should be done with the sinking funds of the colony. I do not think that any of those who lend us money, if told of it, would agree that these funds should be invested in the colony's own stock. I am sure if a man came to me to borrow a large sum of money, and agreed to put by so much a year for a sinking fund, I should like to see that money placed in the funds of some other country. As to buying and selling our own stock, we would be entirely in the hands of these trustees, who would be simply brokers; and I think it would behove Parliament to keep a sharp eye on them. They might land the country in a serious disaster. We want these trust funds so invested that they can be realised at a moment's notice, and in some other

country's stock. The hon. member's object in bringing the matter forward is a good one, no doubt; but I do not think it would be workable. Under the circumstances, I shall vote against the motion.

MR. DEHAMEL: I also must oppose this motion. I cannot conceive anything stronger than the argument put forward by the hon. member for Geraldton, that the trustees of these funds should turn themselves really into stockbrokers, "bearing" and "bulling" the market, with the trust funds of the colony at their command. People would lose all confidence in us and our sinking funds. True these trustees might occasionally make a big profit by buying at the proper time and selling at the proper time; but they might also make serious losses, and they might play ducks and drakes with a large portion of our sinking funds. Again, you would never get trustees to undertake such duties unless you gave them a very large remuneration or commission; so that I do not see that, in the end, we would gain anything by adopting such a course.

Motion put, and negatived on the voices.

#### EXTENSION OF TELEGRAPH LINE TO MOUNT BARKER.

MR. PIESSE, in accordance with notice, moved, "That, owing to the frequent and lengthened interruptions occurring upon the Perth-Albany telegraph line, and consequent cessation of telegraphic communication with the Eastern colonies, occasioning serious loss and inconvenience generally, in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the telegraph line—Beverley to Broomehill—should be extended to Mount Barker, a distance of 64 miles, thereby providing an alternative route." He said it would be in the recollection of members that only a few days ago an interruption took place on the Perth-Albany line, which interruption caused serious inconvenience to all persons connected with business. These interruptions were of frequent occurrence, and the probability was that they would be more frequent in the future than in the past, and for this reason: the Albany telegraph line passed through country which was very heavily timbered, and the old road passing alongside the line, which was formerly used as the mail

coach road, was now comparatively deserted. In former days, when a break took place, it was immediately repaired by somebody or other passing along the road, and consequently there was no long delay. But they could not expect that now, as there was very little traffic along this road. The alternative line which he proposed would be extended as far as Mount Barker, connecting with the present line, and providing another route by which telegrams could be forwarded. This alternative line would also be a great boon to the residents of the neighbourhood of the Great Southern line, affording them a reliable means of communication with Albany. At present they often had to send their messages *via* Perth, in consequence of the pressure of traffic. There were five new stations on this railway, and it was a great inconvenience to the settlers and business people to have their messages delayed for hours before they could be transmitted to Albany, with which place they principally did business. He had learned from the department that when the recent break took place, which caused great delay, many of the telegrams were actually sent by rail to Broomehill, and then transmitted to Perth, otherwise they would have been shut out from all communication. The distance of the alternative route he proposed would only be 64 miles, and the cost would not be more than £1,500 or £1,600. A telegraph station and operators already existed at Broomehill, and at Mount Barker also. The expense, therefore, would only be in connection with the erection of the wire, and the timber for the posts could be obtained alongside the line, which would reduce the expense considerably. He hoped members would agree with him that it was necessary to have this work carried out, as much in the interest of the people of Perth and Fremantle, and this portion of the colony generally, as in the interests of the people he represented. The present stoppages and interruptions caused a considerable loss to people engaged in business, and were a source of great inconvenience and annoyance, especially any interruption in communication with the other colonies, with whom we were becoming more closely connected every year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he quite agreed with the hon. mem-

ber that this was a desirable work, and that it would be a very good thing to have this third line—for he might call it, at any rate, the third wire to Albany. It would, no doubt, prevent the stoppages that occur at the present time; but as to its absolute necessity, at the present time, he must say he could not agree with the hon. member. So far as the interests of Perth were concerned, and the central parts of the colony, there had been no great complaint made as to the working of the double line between Perth and Albany. As to the hon. member's argument about the delays caused to people along the line owing to the pressure of the through traffic, the same argument might be used by the people of Beverley, York, or Northam, because all the business from those places to Albany and Perth went over the same line as the business from Broomehill, or any of these other places along the Great Southern line. While, then, he should be glad, indeed, if they could complete this work which the hon. member advocated—because it would have to be completed some day, this line to Mount Barker—still he thought the hon. member should not press his motion at the present time. We must wait a little while. The country had gone to considerable expense already with the double line, and he did not know that there was any very urgent necessity for a third wire. Then there was the difficulty of funds. The fact of the matter was there was only a very small margin—in fact, no margin at all—on the Loan Estimates this year, and they had not the funds to undertake this work out of current revenue, unless, of course, it were absolutely necessary. He did not think it was absolutely necessary, at the present moment. He thought it could wait, at any rate, until next year, and if anything should happen by which our prospects were very much improved, of course there would be no difficulty in finding the couple of thousand pounds necessary to do this work. But he did not think the hon. member should insist upon it at the present time. The present Government had done all they could for all parts of the country, and certainly they had not neglected the hon. member's own part of the country. They had built post offices in connection with the railway line, and given other facilities, and he

looked forward to the time when he should have the pleasure also of finishing this work. At the same time, he could not promise it this year; the money was not available. There were so many demands upon the public purse that they could not find the money for any purpose unless it was absolutely necessary.

Mr. LEFROY said he certainly could not agree with this proposal. He thought the hon. member's constituents must owe him very great thanks for the admirable way in which he represented them on all occasions; but he really thought that the people on the Albany line might put up with a little inconvenience, just the same as other people in the other parts of the colony. He certainly thought this was not a time when they should venture upon what he might call a luxury of this sort, for he could call it nothing else. In a community such as ours, not overwhelmed with wealth, we must be content to put up with inconveniences sometimes. He could assure the hon. member his was not the only district in the colony that suffered from the want of improved telegraphic facilities. He knew a district between here and Champion Bay that had for years wanted telegraphic communication established, and it still wanted it. All parts of the colony might ask for the same facilities as the hon. member wanted for his district, if they only had to complain about occasional interruptions.

Mr. A. FORREST thought it was very important that this line from Broomehill should be connected with Mount Barker. For two days, last week, the Albany line was interrupted, and business entirely stopped. In these days, nearly the whole business of the country was carried on by telegraph and not by letters. This line, he should say, would not cost more than £1,200, and it would give a double means of communication at all times. Some years ago the South Australian Government built a telegraph line from Adelaide to Port Darwin to establish communication with England; and, not satisfied with that, they got a second line to a point on our own coast, so that in the event of one line being interrupted the other would be open for communication. He thought we should adopt the same principle with regard to this Albany line. He regretted the Premier had no funds to build this line this year, but he hoped the hon.

member for the Williams would not rest until he got it, and would bring it forward again next year.

MR. CONNOR said he did not intend to oppose the motion, but he must say he was rather astonished to hear the hon. member for West Kimberley supporting it so strongly, when the fact remained that postal communication with the Northern parts of the colony, which the hon. member was supposed to represent, was so defective. No doubt this telegraph line might be necessary, and that it would come some day. But he thought it might wait until the Government were in a position to undertake other and much more pressing work than this. At some future time he should be glad to support a motion for the completion of this work, but, at the present time, he agreed with the Premier, it was premature, taking into consideration the daily means for postal and telegraphic communication which already existed between here and Albany, and bearing in mind the wants of the North in that way.

MR. DEHAMEL said he had been under the impression that the new line from Beverley was to have gone to Mount Barker. He could not see the advantage of letting it stop at its present terminus. Of course if the Premier said there was no money available for the work, it could not be done; but he certainly did hope the matter would receive the attention of the Government another year, when, no doubt, the money might be found to carry it out.

MR. SOLOMON said, much as he would have liked to support the motion, he must say he fully agreed with the Premier that the colony at the present time was not in a position to undertake other than absolutely necessary works. Under the circumstances, he thought the hon. member might for the present withdraw his motion. He fully concurred as to the advisability of having the line completed, and no one in the House, he thought, would oppose it, if the means were available for carrying it out. He was sure the hon. member would receive every support if he brought the matter forward on another occasion.

MR. PIESSE said that after the expression of opinion on the part of the Premier with regard to ways and means, and that there was no money available

for the work, it was useless for him to press it. If he had been in the House the other day, when the item £40,000 was included in the Loan Bill for the gold-fields, he would have endeavoured to have reduced it, and got £2,000 out of it for this work, which, he thought, would have been a very much better way of spending it. He thought that out of the £540,000 included in that Loan Bill, they might have found a little corner that might have been cut off, sufficient to build this line, which was admitted on all hands to be a necessity. He certainly had felt some diffidence in bringing the motion forward at all, because he was to a certain extent interested in having the line pass through his own district; but he was not advocating it in his own interests, but in the interest of the colony generally, and particularly the business portion of the colony, to whom the present interruptions were a source of great loss and inconvenience. He might point out that they might fairly expect a very large increase of traffic over this line when they had the Coolgardie line opened, and he thought it would be found that the present staff would not be adequate to get the business through, nor would the present lines. As the Premier, however, had promised to make a note of it, and said that he hoped to be able to find the money for the work next year, he would withdraw his motion for the present; but he hoped there would be no further postponement of a work which everyone admitted was necessary.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### ESTIMATES, 1893-4.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Estimates.

#### *Ecclesiastical Grant, £3,543:*

Debate continued under MR. A. FORREST'S motion to reduce the vote by £543.

MR. A. FORREST said that in moving this reduction he was only following out the steps he had taken session after session. He believed that the Government this time would support the reduction—[THE PREMIER: No, no.]—because they must see that in a very short time the Parliament of this country would cease to support the Churches by a grant of this kind. In no other colony in Aus-



tralia did this item appear on their Estimates; and he was sure that the Churches themselves would be far better off if they could only induce their flocks to take greater interest in them, and contribute more liberally out of their own pockets. There was one denomination that refused to accept this State aid; and what was the position of that Church? Was it less flourishing than those who received this Government subsidy? No. It seemed to flourish better than those who depended on this grant. The Congregational body in Perth was then building a beautiful edifice as a place of worship, in the city, and was showing signs of vitality in other ways. If one denomination, and that not the most numerous or wealthy, could afford to get on without this grant, why could not the other denominations do the same? He maintained that the small amount given was of no benefit to the Churches at all; the only thing it did was to prevent their own people from giving who would otherwise give towards the support of their Church. There was no reason at all that he could see why this grant should go on for ever, and the sooner the Churches realised the fact that it was going to be withdrawn, the better. If we had a superior class of clergymen coming here, he might be inclined to support this vote, but when they looked at the indifferent kind of gentlemen who were sent out to this colony to represent the different denominations, he thought the time had arrived when that House should put its foot down, and say that this grant must cease. He did not want to reflect in any way upon the honour or the character of the clergymen sent out here, but they were not first-class preachers, at any rate; they were not men that you could sit down for an hour or two to listen to with pleasure. That was one great reason why people did not attend and support the Churches. In Melbourne and Sydney, and Adelaide, they found the Churches there represented by great and eloquent preachers, and they were always full, and the State did not provide one penny out of the public funds at all in support of religion. He thought the Churches here should be given to understand that this grant would be withdrawn gradually, so that they might be prepared for what was going to happen. The people would then know that they

must support their own Churches; and the rising generation should be brought up with that idea. He did not see why people who did not belong to any of these denominations that were receiving this grant should be called upon to support Churches which they did not believe in. Why should they ask those who did not believe in our religion to support it? Why should they ask a Mahomedan, or a heathen, to contribute to a fund from which they derived nothing at all? The same with the Independents; why should they be asked to put their hands in their pockets to provide a grant from which they derived no benefit at all? It was for these and many other reasons which he did not feel called upon to refer to in that House, that he had moved that the item be reduced, with the intention that it be withdrawn from the Estimates altogether in the course of a few years.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he sympathised with the hon. member for West Kimberley in his action in this matter, because he did think that this grant was a grant that had no right to appear on the Estimates. At the same time, he liked to be consistent, and as they had already passed a vote in support of the Assisted schools—which was only State aid to religion in another form, and to one particular religion—he thought they also ought to allow this vote to pass. He could not see the difference, really, from his point of view, between the one grant and the other. With one they subsidised the teaching of religion in Churches, and with the other they subsidised the teaching of religion in schools. If one went, the other must go; and, sooner or later, both must go, and that before very long. No doubt, as soon as one went, the other would very soon follow. Very few sound arguments, to his mind, could be used in favour of either of them. There was no State aid to religion in any of the other colonies; neither was there State aid for Assisted schools. It should be the same here; and, until that House was prepared to do away with State aid to Assisted schools he would not be prepared to support the doing away of State aid to religion.

MR. SIMPSON thought the amendment of the hon. member for West Kimberley, while just, equitable, and statesmanlike, was, under the circumstances, a

little extreme, considering the condition of our Churches. So far as he was informed, none of the Churches participating in this grant had made any provision for the loss to their respective establishments during the ensuing twelve months if this vote were now reduced by £543. It appeared to him that it would be an act of grave injustice to curtail this grant without giving the various denominations a distinct warning, so as to afford them an opportunity of preparing for any reduction that might take place. Not that he was opposed to its abolition; far from it. He did not think it was necessary in this year of grace to argue that the day for State aid to religion, or State aid for the teaching of sectarianism, was doomed. He thought that the history of religious progress and religious development for a very considerable part had proved to demonstrate that those denominations which depended upon their support upon the voluntary contributions of their adherents alone showed the soundest vitality. So far as he could read ecclesiastical history, State aid meant Church decay. At the same time he thought that to strike out any portion of this grant, without a word of definite warning, would, at any rate, bear the colour of injustice, not as regards the principle, but as regards the usage that had been established in this colony for many years past. He thought, however, the Churches should be distinctly informed that this vote must disappear from the Estimates. He thought the Government should intimate to them that it would disappear, by a gradual process of reduction, extending over a certain number of years. This would enable the various denominations to make the necessary financial arrangements to enable them to carry on their work without this State assistance. After all, it only meant State aid to denominational education, and the day for State aid to denominational education was over. It was over in other countries, and the day was at hand when it would be over in Western Australia. If this vote could be devoted to improving the roads of the colony, instead of the road to Heaven, it would be attended with more satisfactory results to the people of the colony. He did not undervalue what the Churches of the colony were supplying to the people. He had no doubt they were saving the

State a considerable expenditure in police administration, and that they did some good work in other directions. But religion, to his mind, was a voluntary matter, and if people's hearts were in their work you would generally find that their hands would be in their pockets. But to encourage the Churches to look to the revenues of the colony for their support, and to go and dab down a certain amount for one denomination, and a certain amount for another denomination, on a mere *per capita* principle, was, to his mind, an unwise policy, and behind the spirit of the age. He was aware that the Churches here suffered from conditions that did not rule in the other colonies; but it was a historical fact that this principle of State aid to religion had been abandoned by each succeeding colony as it secured for itself the right of self-government. Each and all of them found it inexpedient to continue this principle of endowing religious denominations. They saw it was unsound in principle that the money drawn from the taxpayers of the colony should, whether the people wished it or not, be devoted to the teaching of religion. Western Australia must inevitably follow in the wake of her sisters in this respect, now that she also had been granted the privilege of self-government. For the reason, however, which he had already mentioned, he should be sorry to see such a large slice of this grant, as proposed by the hon. member for West Kimberley, cut off without due warning to the parties concerned. He, therefore, begged to move, as an amendment, that the amount be reduced by £43 instead of £543, and that this ecclesiastical grant be gradually reduced at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum; so that at the end of ten years this vote would disappear. This would give the various religious organisations an opportunity of using all the resources at their disposal to place themselves in what he really believed would be a sounder position than they were in at the present time. He did not know whether he would be in order in adding those words to his amendment—"and that the vote be gradually reduced at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum."

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member cannot do that.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Then I will content myself by simply moving, as an amend-

ment, that the vote be reduced by £43.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE thought that a great deal of misapprehension existed in the minds of members inside the House, and many persons outside the House, as to the fact of all State aid having been withdrawn from the religious bodies immediately upon Responsible Government being established in the other colonies. So far as Victoria, at any rate, was concerned that was not the case, nor did he think it was the case in any of the other colonies. He had just looked at the Constitution Act of Victoria, and it distinctly provided that for the advancement of the Christian religion the sum of £50,000 should be reserved out of the Consolidated Revenue. The amount which the Churches had been receiving annually was capitalised, and this £50,000 was set apart for that purpose, being divided amongst the various denominations in proportion to their numbers. He thought we should do the same here—capitalise the amount now annually voted, so that the vote would no longer appear upon their annual Estimates. It appeared to him that would be the fairest plan we could adopt in this matter, if we were in a position to do it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not intend to speak again, beyond repeating that he was of opinion that the time had not arrived when they need interfere with this small vote. Rather than propose this trifling reduction in the grant—which really would mean scarcely nothing—he would advise the hon. member to vote for the sum on the Estimates, and test the question in the House by a substantive motion, whether the grant should be continued as it is or be gradually reduced. If the hon. member should be fortunate enough to have a majority in favour of its gradual reduction, no doubt the Government would take notice of it, and take steps to advise the religious bodies that they would have to expect a reduction on a certain scale. He did not, himself, think the feeling of the House was in favour of the vote being reduced, and he thought the hon. member would find it so upon a division—although it was a very thin House—and that he would not be able to carry his motion. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Geraldton, with regard to a vote which had been on the

Estimates for so many years, that it would not be fair or equitable to strike it off, or to interfere with it, until you gave those who had been in the habit of receiving it due notice; and the proper way to do that was by the House passing a definite resolution. The Government would then take steps to carry out the wishes of the House. He was not in favour of reducing it, himself; but it appeared to him, if there was a general wish to reduce it, that would be the proper course to follow.

MR. A. FORREST said he would withdraw his amendment, and accept the amendment of the hon. member for Geraldton. He had no wish to put the Churches to any inconvenience whatever; his only object was to test the feeling of the House, and see whether this vote could not be reduced on next year's Estimates. He might remind the committee that, besides this grant, if they looked a little further they would find that some of the clergy of one particular church were receiving pensions from the State to the amount of £216 per annum.

MR. THEROSSELL said that if assured that this money was properly spent—that it was spent in the country districts, and not in the populous centres—he would not be opposed to the vote. What he should like to see was some provision made for the appointment of itinerating clergymen to make periodical visits and to provide religious ministrations for the scattered population of the bush. He had always thought that the House should be furnished with some information as to how this money was expended, because there was a general impression that it was the towns, and not the country, that got the benefit of it. If that was the case, he would be in favour of reducing it, or even wiping it out altogether. He thought the suggestion of His Honour the Speaker was a good one, and that the time had come when this vote should be capitalised, and that the Churches should make some arrangement with the Government to that effect. For the first time, he thought, in the history of the colony, every Church in the land was waking up to its responsibilities, and showing greater activity and greater vitality. He thought with the Premier, that, morally speaking, this vote might be regarded as a reproductive one. If

the money were judiciously spent, it must have the effect of making people more law-abiding, and, on that ground, the expenditure was one which might well be continued, in some form or the other. At the same time, he looked forward to the time when all our Churches will be self-supporting.

MR. CLARKSON said there must always be differences of opinion with regard to this question, but he certainly did not think the present was an opportune time for abolishing State aid to the Churches in this colony. We were peculiarly situated in some respects, being a widely scattered community, and by no means a wealthy community. For this reason, perhaps, we had no great show of religion in the colony at present, and, he thought, if this trifling assistance given to the Churches were abolished, we should have less. He should certainly oppose any reduction of the vote at the present time.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he had listened attentively to the arguments of some members, who were opposed to this vote, and particularly those of the hon. members for West Kimberley and Geraldton. This was not the first time that the hon. member for West Kimberley had distinguished himself by bringing forward this question. Why the hon. member should consider it particularly incumbent upon himself to bring it forward, or why he should regard himself as the most fitting instrument for doing so, he did not know, or whether it was wise policy on the hon. member's part to bring it forward, and stir up strife, year after year. There were many members in that House, and the hon. member for West Kimberley among them, who thought nothing of voting away thousands of pounds in sinking tanks at Coolgardie, or in sinking wells in other parts, or in providing stock routes for cattle, and works of that character. They had no qualms of conscience in voting thousands of pounds out of the public funds for such purposes as these, but they drew the line at the expenditure of this small amount for assisting the various religious denominations of the colony to carry the doctrines of Christianity throughout the length and breadth of the colony. They objected to this, and, if they could, would

sweep it away at one swoop. They were quite prepared to spend thousands and thousands in endeavouring to provide a supply of water on our goldfields, but they objected to the expenditure of any money out of the public funds to provide religious ministrations to the scattered population of the colony. However liberal in other respects with the public funds, they were not prepared to grant £2,000 or £3,000 a year to the various Churches of the colony for the teaching of morality, and for making us better men—a difficult matter, he was afraid. He thought if there was one vote above all others on these Estimates that should remain there, it was this, because it was a record that the Government of the colony were anxious that every Christian Church in the colony should be assisted in its efforts to improve the morals of the people and to disseminate the truths of Christianity. On many a former occasion it had been his lot to take up the position which he was now taking up, of speaking against this vote being wiped out; and he would repeat that evening what he had said on many previous occasions, that this particular vote had not been like other votes on the Estimates,—it had not increased year by year. It remained to-day the same as it was when the population of the colony was not more than about 25,000—now it was over 60,000—so that the rate per head of the population had actually decreased by about one-third, compared to what it was some years ago. He did not think it would be very wrong, and he did not think that members, when they came to meditate upon their actions, would regret it if they were to leave this small vote on the Estimates. It certainly could do no harm, and it might probably do a great deal of good. An attempt had been made to draw a red herring across the path in this discussion. The hon. member for Geraldton had tried to make it appear that the ecclesiastical grant and the educational grant (so far as a certain class of schools are concerned) are identical.

MR. SIMPSON: I did no such thing.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) begged the hon. member's pardon. It was the hon. member for the Gascoyne who tried to mix up the two grants. Possibly the

hon. member did not give much consideration to the question he was talking about, or he would have known that he was altogether astray. He (Mr. Marmion) knew something about this education question, or ought to, having been intimately connected with the administration of the Act ever since it became law. He had the Act before him, and he found it was all nonsense to say that State aid to so-called Assisted Schools meant State aid to religion. If the hon. member would refer to Clause 26 of the Act he would find that —

MR. SIMPSON: Is the hon. member in order in referring to the Elementary Education Act when the question before the committee is the Ecclesiastical Grant?

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is out of order; it has a bearing upon the question before the committee.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion), continuing, said that in the Elementary Education Act of 1881 —

MR. A. FORREST: What has that to do with the ecclesiastical vote?

MR. SIMPSON: Why don't you bring in the North Pole at once?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion), proceeding, said that in the Act referred to, Clause 26 distinctly provided that it shall not be required that any school receiving Government aid should be "in connection with a religious denomination, or "that religious instruction shall be given "in the school, and no preference or advantage shall be given to any such "school on the ground that it is or is not "provided by a school board, or by a "religious denomination, or by an individual patron or promoter." He asked, in the face of that, what proof was there, or what foundation was there, for the statement that State aid to schools meant State aid to religion? Was it fair, in the face of that, to urge against one section of the community, who perhaps were more active than others in providing education for their children, that they were receiving State aid to their own particular religion in a twofold form? He said it was not fair, and the hon. member knew it was not fair. Why, then, introduce it into this debate? He resented the statement as not only unfair, but

entirely unwarrantable. As to this Ecclesiastical Grant, he did not think the proper course to deal with it was to come there, year after year, when the Estimates were under consideration, and ask for its reduction. The proper and statesman-like course to adopt would be to submit a substantive resolution to the House affirming that the time had arrived when the grant should be reduced, or capitalised (as the case might be). The question would then go to a division upon its merits, and, if affirmed, the various Churches would then be prepared for the inevitable. So far as he was concerned, he would never see it wiped off; he would rather see it doubled and trebled. Those were his views. Of course he did not expect every member to have the same views, nor did he expect that anything he might say would influence them. Something had been said about the spirit of the age. He knew the spirit of the age was against religion being taught, not only in schools, but in any other place.

MR. DEHAMEL said he would support the retention of the vote, for he doubted if any one of them, when returned to that House, had in any way ascertained what the wishes of his constituents were with regard to this question. It never had been before the country, and he did not think they were authorised to deal in any way with a matter of this sort, involving an important principle, without consulting the country. The amount at issue certainly was a small one, but the principle was an important one, and he thought that members ought to go before their constituents before they sought to make any alteration in regard to this vote. It had been suggested that it should be swept away by degrees, and it had been suggested that it should be capitalised. He thought that the proper course for an expiring Parliament to adopt was to let the vote go through on this occasion; and, the elections being within measurable distance, let members ascertain from their constituents what their views were; and let another Parliament take the opinion of the House upon a definite resolution, and deal with the matter straight away. He did not think the present moribund Parliament had any right to deal with the question of the abolition of this vote. So far as he was aware, it was never referred to in

any electioneering speech on the hustings at the last election; and for these reasons he should support the retention of the vote on the Estimates.

MR. LEFROY said he believed some members of the House had spoken twenty or thirty times on this subject, on different occasions. Personally, he had not yet had an opportunity of expressing his own opinion, and therefore, perhaps, he might be pardoned if he made a few remarks on this occasion. He felt himself very much of the same mind as the Commissioner of Crown Lands on this subject, and he should always like to see something on our Estimates for assisting the religious denominations of the colony. Of course he knew there were some members who felt very strongly in an opposite direction, and he had every respect for their opinions; but in a community like ours, which was decidedly a Christian community, he really could not see why we should not have something on our Estimates for the support of the different religious denominations in our midst. Although, so far as he was personally concerned, he considered a good Mahomedan was better than a bad Christian, at the same time we were a professedly Christian community, and, that being the case, he could not see any objection in having a vote such as this on the Estimates, when the majority of the people desired it. Many people in this way contributed towards the support of religion who did not do so in any other way, voluntarily. It had been said that there was one denomination who declined to participate in this grant purely on conscientious grounds. That was very admirable when viewed from that standpoint. Still that was no reason why those who did not entertain the same conscientious objections, but whose aims were equally good, should be deprived of it. It appeared to him that those who declined to accept this assistance from the public funds had only themselves to blame.

Motion (Mr. A. Forrest's)—That the vote be reduced by £543:

Withdrawn.

Motion (Mr. Simpson's)—That the vote be reduced by £43:

Put and negatived, on the voices.

At 25 minutes past 6 o'clock the Chairman left the chair.

At 7:30 p.m. the Chairman resumed the chair.

*Literary, Scientific, and Agricultural Grants, £3,050:*

MR. DEHAMEL, referring to Item 1, "Secretary to Agricultural Bureau, £250," asked who was to be appointed to this position. It was rumoured that the position was to be given to a gentleman who had written some articles on agriculture for a Perth newspaper, and whose skill seemed to consist in the use of scissors and paste, rather than in practical experience of agriculture. This gentleman was a comparative stranger in the colony, coming from America or Canada; he had not been a success as a journalist in Albany; and, when afterwards entrusted with the management of Mr. Powell's farm in the South, he was not found to have the necessary knowledge or experience. Yet this was the person who was said to be designated by the Government as the secretary and manager of this Agricultural Bureau. To make such an appointment would be worse than useless. It would be better to offer a higher salary and obtain a thoroughly practical man from one of the other colonies. He suggested that the salary be increased to £300, by transferring £50 from the amount set down as expenses in connection with the Bureau.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government were not prepared to increase the sum on the Estimates. The Government had not yet considered the question of the appointment, but when they obtained the vote they would appoint the most suitable man they could obtain.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked what the duties of this secretary would be.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the duties would be to promote a knowledge of agriculture throughout the country, in every way possible, and generally to manage the business of the department under the direction of the Ministerial head. The member for Albany had gone out of his way to attack a gentleman against whom he seemed to have a personal grievance. [MR. DEHAMEL: None whatever.] Having read some of the articles written by that gentleman, his own opinion was that the writer would be

very suitable for the position of secretary. The articles he had seen were clever and practical, but he hardly thought a salary of £250 a year would induce that gentleman to apply for this position. No doubt the salary could be afterwards increased. This bureau would prepare the way for starting an experimental farm, and he regarded the starting of this department as one of the best proposals ever made by this Government.

MR. PIESSE said the similar means taken in other colonies to promote agriculture, especially by circulating useful practical reports among all interested in farming, had been of the greatest benefit. He hoped such reports would be made available in this colony.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he would prefer that a scientific agriculturist be engaged, at a sufficient salary, to deliver lectures to farmers, and show them how to do things in the best way. A secretary sitting in an office, to do something a Minister told him to do, would be only another extravagance. The Director of Public Works, who had not been much of a success as an agriculturist, might perhaps be the Minister in charge of this department.

MR. CLARKSON said the sons of settlers preferred, now-a-days, to enter a commercial office or an easy billet under the Government, rather than undertake the practical work of agriculture.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there might be too much hard work.

MR. A. FORREST said the salary offered would attract hundreds of applicants. The secretary should be an able man, who would drive about the country and give practical information on farming matters.

MR. PATERSON said the secretary of the bureau should be a practical hard-worker rather than a scientific agriculturist. The secretary of the bureau in South Australia had not been successful as a farmer, but proved a great success as a secretary. In writing to him recently, the secretary informed him (Mr. Paterson) that he found no difficulty in obtaining copies of agricultural reports from other sources outside of that colony, and circulating them in the colony among the farmers. The secretary also expressed a wish to come to Western Australia, as a

visitor, and give a good start to the new bureau here, by showing what was required.

MR. HARPER said the advice offered by different members was conflicting. The kind of secretary wanted for working this bureau was a hard-working enthusiast, who would not knock off work at the stroke of the clock; and his duties should be to distribute useful information among farmers, by obtaining it from all parts of the world and circulating it in a useful form. The new settler's battle was a hard one, and he needed this kind of help for showing him what to do and what to avoid.

MR. TRAYLEN said the bureau would be of great use in disseminating practical information among farmers; but was this to be done in the form of an official gazette, or how?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn), replying to Mr. Sholl's remarks that he himself had not been much of a success as an agriculturist, said he had devoted the last fourteen years, or the greater part of that time, to studying agriculture scientifically and trying it practically—not to the benefit of his pocket, he must admit, but to his great satisfaction in other respects. When travelling round as Chairman of the Agricultural Commission, he found to his surprise that he and his tenants were carrying on agriculture to a larger extent than was the case on any other estate in the colony. The bureau would be under the direction of the Premier, and would distribute information in the way that was found to be most useful.

MR. TRAYLEN, referring to Item 4, "Mechanics' Institutes and Working Men's Associations, £500," said the Government and the House did right in contributing something towards the support of these institutions, which had an elevating tendency; but he thought sufficient care was not taken with the funds voted. This fact was brought under his notice recently: that the effects of a deceased person were sold in an auction room, and amongst them were 30 books bearing marks to show that they belonged to one of these institutions. There must have been carelessness.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked why this item was increased in amount.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was an increase in the number of societies receiving the grant, and it was desirable to give more encouragement, especially to the agricultural societies. He believed there was a new farmers' club at Northam, one at Katanning, and one at Broomehill. The amounts were distributed carefully, and rarely exceeded £25 in any case. He hoped that a little more might be given in future.

Vote put and passed.

*Pensions, £4,577 17s.:*

MR. DEHAMEL expressed a hope that the widow of the late Mr. T. M. Palmer, who had been schoolmaster at Albany, should receive some allowance, as she was left in poor circumstances.

MR. PIESSE supported the suggestion of the hon. member for Albany.

MR. PATERSON said he might mention that among the pensions was one to the retired postmistress at Pinjarrah, Mrs. Sutcliffe, who had been in the service 25 years, without one complaint being made against her in the department; and the good esteem in which she was held had been shown by the recent presentation made to her, by himself, on behalf of the people of Pinjarrah. This was a case in which a pension had been well earned.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was becoming a practice that when a Civil servant died, there was always an addition made to the list of pensions, for the widow and family. The remarks of the hon. member for Albany would lead to a dangerous system, if acted upon.

Vote put and passed.

*Refunds, £600:*

Agreed to.

*Miscellaneous Services, £14,501 13s. 2d.:*

MR. SIMPSON, referring to Item 1, "Queen's Plates, Perth and Roebourne, £200," said this item had been objected to in each session, and the opinion had been almost unanimous that this was an idle waste of money. As to the argument that these plates encouraged the breeding of superior horses, the necessity for any such inducement had gone by. In Victoria, the three-mile race must be run within a certain time, or no prize was given, but no such condition was enforced here. His opinion of the three-mile race at the Perth races was that it was the least interesting race in the programme.

He moved, as an amendment, that Item 1 be struck out.

MR. A. FORREST opposed the amendment, saying the hon. member who had just spoken knew nothing about horse-racing. Perhaps when the hon. member spoke of a three-mile race he meant a three-furlong race. It might not be a hardship for the Perth Club to lose the annual grant, but in Roebourne district the annual races were the event of the year. He hoped the good sense of the House would reject the amendment. He would not object to a condition that the race for which a Queen's plate was given should be run within a certain time.

MR. SIMPSON suggested that the time limit be 5 minutes 25 seconds.

MR. DEHAMEL said the Queen's plates had nothing to do with encouraging the breed of horses, and he would vote for the amendment. The most useful horses in this colony were cart horses.

MR. CONNOR said Queen's plates were given in England, and he hoped they would continue to be given in this colony. It was desirable to encourage the breeding of superior horses, and there was a prospect of an export trade by sending well-bred horses to India.

MR. CLARKSON said it was ridiculous to suppose a plate of £100 value would induce men to import or breed a superior class of horses, when there was such a prize as the Perth Cup, worth four or five hundred pounds.

MR. HARPER said the English precedent did not apply, and he supported the amendment.

MR. R. F. SHOLL suggested that the item should be passed, on the understanding that it be omitted from the next annual Estimates. These plates had been beneficial in the past, but were no longer necessary.

MR. PATERSON said the item might be reduced so as to apply only to the North.

MR. SOLOMON regarded the item as an extravagance.

MR. QUINLAN agreed with the suggestion of Mr. Sholl, and said the clubs could take it as a notice for next year. The money might be given to the agricultural societies, which would make better use of it.

MR. DEHAMEL also approved of Mr. Sholl's suggestion.



MR. MOLLOY would heartily support the item.

MR. LEFROY supported the item because it encouraged the national sport of Englishmen and their colonial descendants. As to encouraging the breed of horses, the colony required a class different from the thoroughbreds.

The committee divided on the amendment for striking out the item, with the following result:—

Ayes ...	...	...	5
Noes ...	...	...	15

Majority against ... 10

AYES.  
Mr. Clarkson  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Throssell  
Mr. Simpson (Teller).

NOES.  
Mr. Connor  
Mr. Cookworthy  
Mr. DeHamel  
Sir John Forrest  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Loton  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. Molloy  
Mr. Pearse  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. R. F. Sholl  
Mr. Venn  
Mr. Paterson (Teller).

Amendment negatived, and item agreed to.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to Item 10, "Representation of W.A. jarrah timber at the Chicago Exhibition, £500," moved, as an amendment, to strike out the item. He said that if this money were for making a general representation of this colony's timbers at the Chicago Exhibition, he would not object; but to pick out jarrah only was not fair to the persons interested in karri and other timbers.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said jarrah was the best wood the colony produced, and the only one the colony was renowned for.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it might be the best for some purposes, but other useful timbers should have been included.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) reminded hon. members that this item came up to be re-voted because the amount was not claimed in the last half-year, and the Exhibition expenses, towards which the Government had undertaken to contribute to the extent of £500, or one-half of any less sum expended, had not yet been ascertained. The karri timber exporters did not choose to take advantage of the grant-in-aid for this purpose, and therefore only those interested

in jarrah joined in sending samples to the Exhibition. The main object was to introduce jarrah as a wood paving suitable for cities in America, which had only soft native woods; and it was arranged that a specimen pavement should be laid down in the city of Chicago, besides showing samples of jarrah in the Exhibition.

MR. R. F. SHOLL still contended that an unfair preference had been shown to those persons who were interested in jarrah, and that in arranging for this exhibition of the colony's timbers the Government had given an unfair preference to jarrah and those interested in it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member was always fair.

MR. R. F. SHOLL affirmed that he was fair, but that the Premier, after giving a promise to assist in exhibiting both kinds of hardwood, took advantage of his position by using public funds for the benefit of his friends.

MR. PATERSON said karri was sometimes put up in conspicuous places, in other parts of the world, and labelled as jarrah; but jarrah was never found labelled as karri. That fact was significant.

MR. SIMPSON said he was surprised to find this item on the Estimates; for when he had moved, in January last, that all the colony's raw products, including timber, gold, wool, &c., should be exhibited at Chicago, the Premier opposed the motion, saying the sending of these things would do no good. Yet here was an item of £500 for exhibiting wood alone, and only one kind of wood; a sum sufficient to have exhibited all the raw products, as he had proposed to do.

MR. PIESSE regretted that much injury had been done, in the past, by remarks made in that House, depreciating karri in comparison with jarrah, whereas each timber had qualities which made it useful—jarrah for outdoor exposure, karri for indoor fittings—and both serving their respective uses in the highest degree. Mr. Millar had closed his karri mill at Torbay mainly as a result of depreciatory remarks on karri, made in that House.

MR. DEHAMEL quoted from *Hansard* to show that the Premier had informed the House, on the 10th January last, that he had told the representatives of karri, when they waited on him again, that as they previously agreed to co-operate with

the companies representing jarrah, in sending a joint exhibit of timbers to Chicago, the Government would help them to the same extent as they were helping the jarrah companies, if the karri companies would send an exhibit of their timber to Chicago. But the karri companies did not accept that fair offer; therefore, he (Mr. DeHamel) said they could have no just cause of complaint now.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thanked the hon. member for reminding him of the explanation he had previously made to the House, and which was made when the facts were fresh in his mind. The quotation from *Hansard* showed that the Government had acted with equal fairness to both sets of timber representatives. The remarks of the hon. member for the Gascoyne (Mr. R. F. Sholl), charging him with using his position to favour his friends, were not only untrue, as the hon. member knew them to be, but were derogatory to the position of a member of that House. It was not worth while to get warm about these statements of the hon. member; but such remarks should be beneath the dignity of the House.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was all very well to appear indignant, but the House knew that if any hon. member wanted a school or anything for his district, and could not get it from the Government, he had only to threaten to sit on the other side of the House, and then he got what he wanted.

MR. A. FORREST, who said he would throw oil on the troubled water, defended the grant of £500. The two jarrah timber companies were employing over 500 workmen, who represented a population of about 2,000 persons dependent on the jarrah industry. As to the Government favouring those who sat on the Ministerial side of the House, the charge was untrue. For himself, he would cross over to the Opposition side any day if he found the Government doing what he considered was wrong.

MR. DEHAMEL said the hon. member was forgetting to pour on the oil.

MR. SIMPSON said the hon. member was pouring on kerosene.

MR. COOKWORTHY said Mr. Davies, as a karri mill owner, had expressed much dissatisfaction concerning this mat-

ter; but, as the Premier had explained, the fault, if any, was Mr. Davies's own for not accepting the offer of the Government.

MR. CLARKSON approved of the item, and said it was right to assist in making an exhibition of the colony's export timbers. It was known that jarrah was an excellent timber for certain purposes, and that karri was worthless for those purposes.

MR. PATERSON repeated what he had said, in a previous discussion, on the colony's timbers, that karri was suitable for superstructures, while jarrah was suitable for piles in water and for exposed work. He did not disparage karri as a timber, but wished to distinguish the purposes for which the two timbers were most suitable. So long as he remained in the House, he would try to get the two timbers branded for distinction when exported.

MR. LOTON said the vote originally passed was for a grant of £500 in aid of the exhibition of the colony's jarrah timber, no other kind being specified. The mistake, if any, was made when the amount was passed in the Estimates of the last session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that what the Government promised to the deputation representing the timber companies was that a sum of £500 would be placed on the Estimates for exhibiting the colony's timbers at Chicago. The money was not promised to any particular parties or companies.

Amendment for striking out the item put and negatived, and the item agreed to.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to Item 13, "Gratuity to Mrs. Bailey, widow of late Inspector of Telegraphs, &c., £200," asked whether these grants to widows of deceased Civil servants were to be a regular system. If so, a scale should be fixed for such gratuities.

MR. A. FORREST said each case should be viewed on its merits. In this case, the officer had risen from the lowest step, the widow was left unprovided for, and this gratuity was well deserved.

MR. PIESSE said the late officer was a most deserving officer, and one of the best in the Service. He had done good service to the colony during many years, at a low rate of pay, and the widow was now left unprovided for.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that, personally, he was pleased to see this item on the Estimates, but a dangerous system was growing up.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said if this officer had retired from duty, on a medical certificate that he was physically unfit, he would have been entitled to a pension of about £100 a year; but because he went on working, and died in harness, it would be hard to deny some gratuity to the widow and family when left unprovided for. Each of these cases should be considered on its merits.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to Item 14, "Albany School site, £1,250," asked for an explanation of this expenditure, of which he had already some knowledge. He knew, for instance, that the hon. member for Plantagenet (Mr. Hassell) had intended to take a seat on the Opposition side of the House; but this sop of £1,250 for a school site induced him to stay on the Government side.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member knew a terrible lot. But, on the contrary, the imputation was unfounded, for not a word had passed between him and the member for Plantagenet, on this subject, since the session began, nor since last session; and he believed that hon. member was not even aware that this item appeared on the Estimates. The Albany people had pressed the Government to purchase a fresh school site, in addition to the £2,000 which was available for building a new school. The end of the negotiation was that the Government consented to take over the old school building and site, and use the building—a good one—for a court-house, thus enabling the present court-house buildings to be used entirely for the Post and Telegraph and Customs business. On this account the Government agreed to allow £1,250, which was the sum required for purchasing a school site in a more suitable position. The bargain suited both parties, and was a good one for the Government, as a new site for a court-house was wanted, and this one was well suited to the purpose, the building on it being also a good one. He believed the hon. member for Plantagenet, if present, would tell the hon. member (Mr. Sholl) that sops would not purchase his support. That hon. member, he believed, sat on the Government

side because he approved generally of their policy.

MR. DEHAMEL said the Premier's version of the matter was correct.

Vote put and passed.

Commissioner of Crown Lands—*Lands and Surveys*, £20,101 :

Vote passed.

*Mining*, £5,310 :

MR. SIMPSON asked why the Registrar at Greenbushes had refused to receive applications for mining leases on the tinfields.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the tinfields were alluvial, and no leases were granted for an alluvial field. Mr. J. S. Reid had applied for a lease for a supposed tin lode, but no lode had been yet shown to exist. That application would be dealt with on its merits.

MR. SIMPSON said the Registrar told him, only a few days ago, that he had definite instructions not to receive any applications for leases of tinfield areas. He asked why such instruction was given, when the Act and the Regulations provided for leases.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said no such instructions had been given. He had searched the office records, and could not find that any such instructions had been given.

MR. SIMPSON said the Commissioner evidently did not know what was in his office, else he would know there was a report from the Government Geologist, of the existence of a lode on the tinfield.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it was rude of the hon. member to flatly contradict him. Where did the hon. member get his information from? Surely he, as head of the department, was in a position to know. The Registrar had been acting under the impression that there was no lode in existence on the tinfield; and he (the Commissioner), acting under the same impression, had refused to grant any leases for mining areas up to the present. Nor could the hon. member prove that any tin lode was known to exist at Greenbushes. The field was treated by the department as an alluvial one.

MR. SIMPSON said he was little inclined to take a lecture on manners from

the Commissioner of Crown Lands. He affirmed that the Commissioner had a report in his office, from the Government Geologist, stating that a tin lode existed on that field. The Commissioner did not know what he had got in his office. For himself, he did not impugn the Commissioner's statement of facts, according to the Commissioner's knowledge, but did impugn his capacity of grasping the circumstances and coming to a discreet conclusion.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said again that no lode had been proved to exist at Greenbushes. One of the points which the Minister had to decide was whether the ground was alluvial or was not.

**MR. SIMPSON** said the Commissioner had instructed the Registrar not to receive any application for a lease.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion) again said this was not so. He would, however, look up the matter again the next day. He hoped he was always found ready to give any information within his power to give, either in the office or out of it.

**MR. A. FORREST**, referring to Item 1, "Secretary for Mines and Water Supply, £350," asked the name of this officer, and why, at this early stage, this officer required a clerk and draftsman.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the intention was to appoint an Under-Secretary for Mines, who would relieve the Under-Secretary for Lands of work in connection with mining matters, so that the work might be carried out more systematically than in the past.

Vote put and passed.

*Geological, £1,443:*

Agreed to.

Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works—*Railways and Tramways, £103,241:*

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. W. Venn) said: As usual when this vote is before the committee, I wish to make a few remarks on the progress and position of the Railway Department; and, before referring to these Estimates in detail, I will briefly allude to the results of the working of the Government railways and tramways, during

the last four and a half years. In the year 1889, the total revenue amounted to £40,493; whereas the revenue for the six months of 1893 just passed, with practically the same number of miles of open lines, has amounted to £53,696, or—averaging the figures for twelve months—an increase in four and a half years of no less than 165 per cent. and a fraction over. In 1889, the railways made a loss (exclusive of interest on capital cost) of £27,537; and in the following year they showed a somewhat similar loss. In 1891, which was the first year's working since the present Government came into power, the railways paid their working expenses and something more, for the first time in the history of the colony; although the credit balance was a small one, namely, £498. In 1892 the credit balance increased to £3,547; and in 1893, for six months only, the credit balance amounted to the satisfactory sum of £6,580, or at the rate of £13,160 for twelve months. That is to say, for the two years prior to Responsible Government, the working of the railways resulted in a loss (exclusive of interest on capital) of £14,064 altogether; whereas the working for the last two and a half years has resulted in a profit (exclusive of interest) of £10,675 altogether. This change from loss to profit, however, is not the result merely of an increase of revenue, but may, I hope, be traced distinctly to more careful and expert management, and to the keeping down of expenditure. For instance, in 1889, to earn £100 of revenue the department had to expend about £118; whereas to earn £100 of revenue in 1892 the department spent only £87, being a difference of no less than 31 points in favour of the latter period. Referring now to the Railway Estimates which were passed by this House last session, the actual revenue for the six months ended June last fell short of the estimate by £3,000; but, on the other hand, the expenditure was less than the estimate by £6,500; and the actual percentage of expenditure, as compared with revenue, amounted to 87·65, being better by 6·78 per cent. than was anticipated. In 1892 the working expenses amounted to 53·52 pence per train mile, while in six months of 1893 they were only 44·64 pence per train mile. Such are the practical results, which

speak for themselves. As regards the Estimates now before the committee, they are based on a still more economical scale than those submitted at the beginning of 1893. We estimate to earn £120,000, exclusive of any earnings from the Yilgarn Railway when completed; and we expect to expend £101,581, thereby showing a credit balance of £18,000. These Estimates provide for an expenditure of 84·65 of the assumed earnings, as compared with 87·65 per cent. expended in the six months ended June last. This percentage is even better than it would at first appear, owing to the South-Western Railway being included, and which is anticipated, for this year at any rate, to have a slightly prejudicial effect on the results from the established lines. As I stated last session—and which facts and results have justified—if the estimated revenue is not reached in the present twelve months, the expenditure also will, I anticipate, be proportionately decreased. As regards details, the estimated expenditure in all branches compares favourably with the result of the last half-year's working. For instance, the Traffic Department is estimated to expend 21·87 per cent. of the gross earnings, as compared with 23·18 per cent. for the past half year. The Locomotive Department is estimated to expend 40·80 per cent. of the gross earnings, as compared with 44·94 per cent. for the past half year. The Maintenance Department is estimated to expend 17·28 per cent. of the gross earnings, as compared with 14·59 per cent. for the past half year. The general expenses are estimated to amount to 4·70 per cent. of the gross earnings, as compared with 4·94 per cent. for the past half year. The reason why the estimate for maintenance shows a comparatively slight increase in its percentage is that the first year or so in the maintenance of new lines is found in practice to be relatively high, and the traffic receipts relatively low. Last year the actual average cost for maintaining one mile of open line came to £83; this year it is estimated to cost £73. I will here give a few figures to show that the cost of maintenance compares favourably with the cost in other parts of the world, making due allowance for our grades. For the last six months the cost of maintenance on the Eastern Railway was at the rate of £104 per mile

annually, on the Northern line £37, on the Bunbury local line £66, the total average cost being at the rate of £83 per annum. Now, the cost on railways in other colonies, having practically the same gauge as ours, is as follows:—Queensland, £131 per mile annually; South Australia, £102; Tasmania, £130; and New Zealand, £135. Therefore, when I tell hon. members that we hope this year to bring down our maintenance cost to £83, it will be seen that we are running our maintenance at a lower rate than in any of the other colonies; and when we get the grades on the Eastern Railway reduced, the rate will be very low indeed. The £800 of estimated receipts from the Yilgarn Railway, now under construction, have been left out of the foregoing calculations, as this revenue is recognised to be a very uncertain quantity. The Treasury has now placed on the Railway Estimates the incidental and travelling expenses, postage, and telephone rent, telegrams, and stationery expenses, which were not previously included under this head; but this transfer of items to the railway accounts will not interfere with the general percentage of results. The estimates for the twelve months, now before the committee, have been prepared, at the request of the Treasury, on different lines from those previously laid before Parliament, and in future years the comparison of items may be made more readily by hon. members, though I shall be happy to give now any information that may be required upon the different items.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he believed that receipts from wharves and jetties were not included in the return of railway receipts in other colonies. The jetties, when leased elsewhere, had always yielded good returns; therefore, if these jetty receipts were included among the railway receipts in this colony, they would affect the railway receipts advantageously.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that might be so elsewhere, but his experience of the first year's working of the jetties in the colony showed an absolute loss of about £5,000, and this result capsized his estimates for that year. In framing his estimates for that year he had no idea that the working of the Fremantle jetty would require the large expenditure which

it did for labour, but having now got larger storing sheds and more facility for working the jetty traffic, there was a credit balance for the last half year, and he hoped that balance would increase in the future.

MR. A. FORREST asked whether the Railway Department was still carrying firewood from Chidlow's Well to stations on the South-Western Railway.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that this was a small incident which happened at the opening of the first section of the new line. The Railway Storekeeper had not entered into contracts for supplying firewood to stations along the new line, and when a demand was made for firewood he supplied it from Chidlow's Well, as it was then impossible to obtain firewood for stations along the first section of the new line, without expensive cartage. That was a small oversight which would not be repeated.

MR. MOLLOY asked whether there was any increase under the head of "Salaries, provisional and temporary, £1,616 13s. 4d.," as no corresponding items were shown for the previous six months.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that there was no increase under this head, but that the items referred to had been re-arranged in accordance with the new form of Treasury accounts. The same items were formerly included in a lump sum, under the head of "Salaries."

MR. MOLLOY, referring to items Nos. 45 and 46, "Traffic Inspector, £180; ditto, £120," said the appointment of these inspectors had caused dissatisfaction in the Service. He knew of one instance of a person formerly employed in a printing office being suddenly appointed as a traffic inspector. He was told there was a petition sent by the railway workmen to the Commissioner, setting forth grave complaints against one or other of these inspectors. The men had been waiting to have the complaints investigated, but this had not been done, and the men obtained no satisfaction through their petition. Several of the workmen had suddenly left the service, for this or other cause; and if these traffic inspectors were inexperienced in the work, or if they harassed the men in consequence of their

want of knowledge, the head of the department ought to have given proper consideration to the representations made to him, and redressed the grievances. If the men had reasonable cause of complaint it was better that the attention of the official head should be directed to it, so that the cause might be removed. He was told these traffic inspectors had absolute control, and that they treated their superior officer with indifference, and in some cases with insolence. This insubordination was seemingly encouraged by one of the heads of the department.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the hon. member was entirely misled in this case. Certainly a petition came to him directly, against all regulations, and he returned it, saying it should be sent to the head of the department concerned, so that his explanation might be given. That complaint had been thoroughly investigated. The grievance complained of was one that the workmen might always have, the moment they discovered that the heads of the department were alive to their duties, and had put some one over them to see that the work was properly done. He might remark that when he first took charge of the department there was no system; everything was done by rule of thumb; there was none of the careful supervision which should be exercised. It had been a series of troubles to himself and subordinate heads of the department to get a proper system adopted. He had no doubt that a good many of the workmen did not like inspectors, and that some of them would prefer to do as they liked, as they had done previously. Directly they got a capable officer to look after them, they began to growl. The traffic inspectors were put on to see that proper attention was given to the public by the guards and others. This irritation was fast disappearing, and the men were beginning to recognise that so long as they did their duty—the inspectors placed over them being good and reliable men—the workmen had nothing to fear. But so far as friction between officers in the department was concerned, he intended to put down friction. He was going to put it down, and his action would be swift and sure as to those who had caused it. There had been this friction in the department

for some time, but he hoped that before the next session he would be in a position to say the friction had disappeared. As to inspectors being unfitted for their position, one of them had been in the railway service a considerable time, and was a careful man. Indeed, it was against his wish that he was appointed, for he had asked him (the Commissioner) to give him something else to do, because as an inspector he would come into collision with the men, and might get into hot water. On being assured that he had only to do his duty, and need not fear anyone, he accepted the position, and he was now carrying out his duties in a creditable manner. The other inspector was one who had not been in the colony a long time, but had been engaged in the traffic department on railways in other colonies. [Mr. MOLLOY: In New Zealand?] It might have been in New Zealand, but he could not remember where. That man had the very best record as an intelligent, industrious, and well-conducted young man, and he had displayed an admirable suitability for the duties he was now carrying out.

MR. A. FORREST said that in the last session he had spoken severely on the traffic arrangements of the railways, having had cause to do so. But since that time—whether through the good work of these traffic inspectors or not—he knew there had been a great improvement in the arrangements for carrying goods on the Eastern Railway, and he could now congratulate the Commissioner on the way in which the public were now served—quite a different way from that of this time last year. Not only were the goods carried, but the customers received civility, and when customers required trucks for loading their goods at a particular time, they got them—he could not say the same last year. The working of the traffic department was now good, and as one who paid a large amount yearly for the carriage of goods, he was perfectly satisfied. Few or no complaints were now made; but in the last session he had to be particularly severe on the department, and with good reasons. As public carriers, the department should try to avoid unnecessary expense to those customers who had the loading of goods at the different sidings; and he thought that credit was now due to the department for

the manner in which the service was carried out. It was an expensive service—more so than he thought was necessary; but it was now carried out well, and until there came a “Black Wednesday,” or some other day of sweeping reductions, the country would have to put up with the expense. The friction between officers in the department was entirely a matter for the Government to deal with, and they should make such changes as were necessary, in the public interest. He knew the traffic inspectors, and he thought it was through them that this beneficial change had become manifest.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) thanked the hon. member (Mr. A. Forrest) for his generous remarks as compared with his criticisms in the last session. When the hon. member spoke so strongly as he did, in the last session, he (the Commissioner) felt sure that a few months would show a change for the better. He was glad to find the hon. member had altered his opinion entirely. As to the railway service being an expensive one, he believed the hon. member would in a short time alter his opinion on that point also. The working of the railways for the current twelve months was estimated to cost only 83 per cent. of the revenue, with grades of 1 in 25 or 26 on the Eastern Railway; but if the grades here were equal to those in South Australia, the percentage of working cost on these railways would be lower than on any railway in the other colonies of Australia. When the traffic could be worked with more powerful engines, running on 60lb. rails, the percentage of working cost would be reduced considerably. The working cost had been brought down from 118 to 83 per cent. of the revenue; and hon. members must recognise that some radical change must have been in operation to bring about so large a reduction in the working cost. The railways would, for the current twelve months, yield probably £20,000 over and above the working expenses, and this amount would go towards paying the interest on the capital cost.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he was pleased to hear that the friction between officers was to be put down, as nothing was more likely to interfere with the proper working of the department, and he was sur-

prised the Commissioner had not grappled with the question before.

MR. CLARKSON said there was much dissatisfaction with the working of the railways, the method being so expensive that he was surprised at any profit being shown in the balance-sheet. The duties of the General Traffic Manager and of the Traffic Manager must clash. He knew that the Traffic Manager was not allowed to carry out any act without first consulting the General Traffic Manager; and he knew that the station master at Newcastle could not order a truck to be brought from any part of the line to his station, without consulting the Traffic Manager in Perth. His own experience of the working of the railways was quite opposed to that stated by the hon. member for West Kimberley. He recently gave a written request in Perth, for a cattle truck to be ready to receive sheep at Newcastle on a Friday morning, and was told, twice over, that the truck would be ready. He accordingly sent his sheep to the station on the Friday morning, when a note was handed to the drover stating that no truck was available. Another instance, more recent, was that a man wished to send to Perth some cattle which were advertised to be sold on a certain day, but he could not obtain the use of a truck. The traffic inspectors must be in one another's way. Too many men were employed in the Railway Department. It was ridiculous that a country stationmaster could not order a truck without consulting the Traffic Manager in Perth. He knew men who were not worth 4s. a day as labourers, but who had got employment on the railway at 7s. or 8s. a day. The charges for conveying trucks from the Eastern districts had been increased lately 50 per cent.

MR. MOLLOY said he saw a letter which had been sent to a man employed at the Greenmount quarries, asking him to give evidence as to a charge of drunkenness which occurred in connection with a train in which he had been a passenger. In reply he gave the evidence. A charge had been made by certain passengers that the guard of the train was drunk; and this man gave his evidence to the effect that the guard was perfectly sober, that the occupants of a certain carriage were drunk, and that the guard had difficulty

in keeping them under control during the journey. This man was written to again, saying that there was evidence given by respectable witnesses showing that the guard was drunk. The man sent a further reply that his first evidence was correct. It appeared that this complaint had originated from one of the inspectors, at the instigation of some influential persons in Perth, who had been passengers in the train. The outcome was that the guard was subjected to annoyance in having to answer the charge, and to bring witnesses for refuting it. He was still in the service, and the presumption from that fact was that the evidence as to his innocence was overwhelming.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that if the hon. member could see the whole of the papers relating to that case, he would not speak as he had done. His own determination was to put down drinking in the railway service, and he would deal promptly with any such offence that was proved. In the case referred to, evidence was given by respectable witnesses, whose names, if mentioned to the House, would obtain respect, stating that on a certain journey the guard of the train was drunk. Upon all the evidence, he (the Commissioner) came to the conclusion that some one had lied in the case. The grievance of the hon. member for the Toodyay was that he once had a man in his employ who was not worth the 7s. a day which the man afterwards received in the railway service. The hon. member also expected to get a truck for half a load of sheep at the same rate as for a full load.

MR. LOTON said it might not always be practicable to send one or more trucks to several stations at the same time, but, in such cases, the persons should be informed promptly, so as to prevent disappointment. The particular grievance mentioned ought to be answered. Referring to the new freight tariff, he said that in some instances the charges had been increased considerably, though he was not prepared to say the new rates were excessive, because the railways must be made to pay the working expenses and something more. As to friction between officers, there should be one head of the working railways, in charge of the traffic and the maintenance.



THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that if the hon. member for Toodyay would call at his office on the next day, the grievance as to the truck not being supplied when promised should be fully inquired into, and he could only express regret at the incident. As to the new classification of rates according to distance, the longer distances were charged much less than previously, and for short distances the rates were increased, as a necessity of the new mileage system.

MR. LEFROY asked whether the exorbitant charge for trucking stock over the short distance from the Midland Junction to Perth, after travelling a long distance over the Midland Railway, could be reduced. As much was charged for this short run from the Junction to Perth as would be charged for a run of 20 or 30 miles.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that if the hon. member would write him a note on the subject of the over-charge, or any other grievance, he would deal with it as quickly as possible.

MR. LOTON, referring to item 73, "Locomotive Foreman, salary £350," asked whether the appointment had been made.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the Government had not been able to obtain a suitable person to fill the position of foreman of the locomotive workshops, the salary not being sufficient, and he had told the House in the previous session that it would not be sufficient to induce any suitable person to apply. The amount previously set down in the Estimates was at the rate of £400 a year, but the committee reduced it to £350. The present superintendent was considerably underpaid for his abilities and position, and could not well be replaced. The locomotive foreman, when obtained, would relieve him of a good deal of the detail business. He hoped that a suitable foreman might be obtained for the amount set down.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

# MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL—CONCURRENCE IN ADDRESS TO HER MAJESTY.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

"Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to the address to Her Majesty the Queen, forwarded in its Message No. 22, praying for an increase in the number of representatives in the Federal Council of Australasia; and has filled up the blanks with the words 'the Legislative Council and.'

"The Address is returned herewith.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber, Perth, 14th September, 1893."

Ordered—That an Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, requesting him to forward the Address to Her Majesty.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:19 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Monday, 18th September, 1893.

Greenbushes Tinfield: proposed lease by Mr. Reid: adjourned debate—Kensington Lane Closure Bill: third reading—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment Bill: committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 8 o'clock p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## GREENBUSHES TINFIELD—PROPOSED LEASE TO MR. REID:

Adjourned debate on the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, "That the resolution of the Legislative Assembly, that the Government be empowered to enter into an agreement with Mr. J. S. Reid upon the basis of his proposals with reference