

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 15th September, 1885.

Mr. Potter's offer to purchase of Inland Mail Service—Message (No. 11): Schedule to Loan Act ordered to be considered with Message (No. 23): Public Works, Immigration, Surveys, and Roads and Bridges—Consideration of the two Messages—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

MR. POTTER'S OFFER TO TAKE OVER INLAND MAIL SERVICE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said that at the last sitting of the House he laid on the table a paper containing proposals from Mr. Potter, of New South Wales, to take over from the Government the Perth, Bunbury, and Vasse inland mail service for the sum of £1,000 a year, and to purchase the plant which now belonged to the Government. In the event of this offer being accepted, there would be a saving on that line, according to the Postmaster General, of £200 or £300 a year, besides which there would be the saving in wear and tear as regards rolling stock and live stock. It was a question which it would be well for the House to consider whether these Royal Mail services, which now extended from Perth to Albany, and from Perth to Bunbury and the Vasse, should be conducted, as they had been for the last six years, by the Government. The return furnished by the Postmaster General also showed that the Albany service was now being carried out at a very considerable charge indeed, and there could be no doubt that it was a very expensive service, and that if it were taken over it would result in a considerable saving to the country. The matter at any rate was well worthy of the consideration of the House. Nearly all hon. members were familiar with the discussions that had taken place from time to time with reference to this Royal Mail service. No doubt the circumstances of the colony had altered since the present service was established, and they had now an offer made by a man who was well accredited from New South Wales, and who had been in the coaching trade, he believed, all his life. Mr.

Potter was prepared not only to take over the Perth, Bunbury, and Vasse line, but also—when he came to know a little more about the colony—probably the Perth and Albany line. At present, however, he confined his proposal to the former line. He had satisfied himself that this line might be worked for £1,000 a year subsidy, and at the same time he was prepared to take over the whole of the Government plant on such conditions as may be agreed upon. This was the question which the House was now asked to express an opinion on. He did not himself propose to move any resolution on the subject; he wished the matter considered at this time solely so that the Government might be in possession generally of the views of the House on the subject. [The hon. gentleman then read the correspondence that had passed between Mr. Potter and the Government, and the Postmaster General's report, as also the statistical return furnished by the Superintendent of Police.] Mr. Potter, he said, would take over the Perth-Bunbury and Perth-Vasse services for a term of five years, and find two responsible men to go as sureties for the due performance of the service. He would be prepared to take it over on the 1st January, 1886, and to run the mails, as they were run now, twice a week, receiving for the same a subsidy of £1,000 per annum. The Government had made some inquiries, by telegraph, as to Mr. Potter's experience in postal contracts in the colony of New South Wales, and the reply they received from the chief secretary of the General Post Office was to the effect that Mr. Potter had had several contracts with the New South Wales Government and that he always performed his work well. The Postmaster General here (Mr. Helmich) stated in his report that he believed the saving to the department would be no less than £500 per annum, basing the estimate upon the expenditure and receipts for the past eight months; and he did not see why a private contractor could not do the work as efficiently as the Police Department now performed it. The Postmaster General, it would be seen, recommended the proposal for favorable consideration, for economical reasons. The House being now in possession of every information

on the subject, it only remained for him, in order to put himself in order, to move, *pro formâ*, "That it is desirable that the mail service between Perth, Bunbury, and Vasse should be let by contract."

MR. VENN said it appeared to him that people from "the other side" had only to make a proposal to this Government and it was jumped at, at once. He hoped the House would pause before accepting this proposal. Some years ago these mail services were conducted tolerably well, according to the Postmaster General's report, but the public were not satisfied with them; and the Government of the day considered it advisable to take over the inland mail services into their own hands, and, at the present moment, this Bunbury and Vasse service was one of the most efficient services that we had. It was of immense convenience to the public, both on account of its regularity and of its comfort; and he should be very sorry indeed to see it altered. It might be some slight charge on our revenue, at the same time he should regret to see it pass into the hands of a contractor, unless there were some very stringent conditions attached to the contract to ensure for the public the same efficiency, regularity, and comfort as the present service gave them. The Colonial Secretary, in his opening remarks, said the saving effected would be about £300 a year, and the Postmaster General said it would be something like £500 a year. For his own part he considered that the way in which the service was at present performed was well worth that money to the residents of the districts concerned, and he thought it would be better to sacrifice that amount than to fall back upon the old contract system. He wished to cast no reflections on the old contract, for in his opinion the amount at which the contract was taken was too low to ensure an efficient service. Again, he would remark, if it was considered desirable to let the work be done by contract, why give it to strangers from "the other side"? We had men in the colony perhaps who would be able to do it equally as well if not better than strangers, who had had no experience in Western Australia, and who would very likely be able to do it at much less cost, and possibly more efficiently.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser): The question before the House is merely that the service be let by contract.

MR. VENN said he was altogether in favor of conducting it as at present, unless he could see his way clear to an equally efficient service by a contractor. He only saw Mr. Potter's proposals a few minutes ago, and he hoped the House would pause before committing itself to them.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he had always himself been opposed to the Government carrying these mail services, and therefore he should certainly support the resolution that the mails be carried under contract with some person or persons. He should do so on the full understanding that the Government did not confine its negotiations to Mr. Potter, but advertise for tenders, giving due notice, and making it a condition of the contract that the contractor shall take over the Government plant at a certain valuation. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Wellington that there was not the slightest reason for us to jump at every offer made to us by persons coming here from the other colonies. It seemed to him to cast a slur upon the whole community to let it go forth that there was nobody in the colony capable of carrying out this mail service. Let everybody who chose to do so have an opportunity of tendering, and let them all have fair play—under such restrictions as the Postmaster General may choose to impose, and with every safeguard as to the efficient performance of the service. He saw no reason himself why the service should not be performed as efficiently and as much to the satisfaction of the public by a hired contractor as by the Government; and looking at the fact that according to the Postmaster General's report there would be a saving of at least £500 a year, he thought the House was bound to adopt this resolution.

MR. BROWN did not think the resolution went far enough. He did think himself that it was desirable that they should make a change from the present system to that of private contract, merely as a matter of principle. For instance, if the proposal were that the Government should first sell this plant and then enter into a contract with some individual or company to carry

this mail for one year, he himself would be strongly opposed to it, for he should consider that the Government, having got rid of their plant, would be very much at the mercy of the contractor, who, at the end of the year, would be master of the situation, and be able to secure a very much larger sum for the second year's contract. Therefore, he submitted that this resolution did not go far enough. It left the matter entirely in the hands of the Government, with this declaration on the part of the House that the present system should be put an end to, and the contract system resorted to. He therefore had an amendment to propose, which he thought would meet the views of all parties. The Colonial Secretary, he understood, had simply placed his resolution before the House *pro forma*, and perhaps the hon. gentleman would have no objection to withdraw it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he had simply placed it before the House so that there should be something for the House to go upon. He had no objection to withdraw it in favor of the amendment.

Resolution, with leave, withdrawn.

MR. BROWN then moved the following resolution:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that arrangements should be made to conduct by contract the Perth, Bunbury, and Vasse Mail Service, for a term of five years, provided that the fair value of the horses and plant at present in use by the Government in connection with the said service can be procured, and that a considerable saving over present cost can thereby be effected, and that an efficient service can be secured. Tenders to be publicly called for the performance of the service."

MR. VENN said they were introducing this principle in adopting the resolution,—that the Government could not carry out the mail service, that the Government of the colony could not undertake the conveyance of its inland mails, as cheaply as a private individual could. If so, why not extend the same principle to our railways and to our telegraphs?

MR. WITTENOOM said he quite agreed in the principle of public competition. The present Royal Mail ser-

vice was instituted merely as a hobby, by a former Governor; and experience had taught them that it was a most expensive way to do anything, to have it done by the Government. He really thought the better way would be to have these mail services carried out by contract and public competition. He had no doubt himself but that they could get the service performed as efficiently in that way, and at very much less expense to the colony.

MR. LAYMAN said he did not rise to oppose the resolution, for he thought perhaps it was a very wise one, although he should like to say a few words as to the excellent way in which the Government now carried on the service. He could fully endorse what the hon. member for Wellington had said on that point; and he hoped the Government in their new arrangements would make a hard and fast agreement that the service shall be carried out in the same efficient manner as at present.

MR. MARMION said it was his intention to support the resolution. He had never viewed the present arrangement a satisfactory one, of carrying the mails under what he might term the supervision of the Police Department. He found that so far back as 1879, when this alteration was first proposed, he spoke as follows: "He felt disposed to oppose the motion on more than one ground. In the first place, he did not like divided responsibility between two departments, such as the Postal and the Police Departments, because of the difficulty which this division of responsibility and of control would place in the way of ascertaining the actual cost of the service. He was opposed to the scheme, in the next place, because the day was not far distant when the colony would have to reduce its expenditure in connection with the police force, and the fact of the mails being conveyed by the police would furnish an argument against any reduction in that direction." That was what he said six years ago, and he thought a good deal of it might be said now. Of course they knew that instead of their police expenditure having been curtailed, they had, owing to the extension of settlement, which at that time was not contemplated, had to increase the expenditure

in connection with police protection; but, beyond this fact, the arguments which he made use of in 1879 applied with equal force in 1885, as regards this dual system of control. He found from the papers before the House that the net cost of the Southern mail service last year was about £1,300, and it appeared from the memorandum of the Postmaster General that the expenses of the current year would be greater than they were last year. He also found that, taking the two services together—the Southern mail and the Albany overland mail—the gross cost of the services last year, without deducting receipts, was £4,898, and the estimated gross cost for the present year was £5,763. Therefore he thought the saving that would be effected would be even greater than the Postmaster General anticipated. He thought there were many reasons why the Police force should be relieved from carrying the mails. He thought it was quite possible, if they examined the question carefully, that—he did not say that such was actually the case—but that it was quite possible there might be some of the stations on the Albany road that might be done away with, if the mail service were performed by contract. There was also a gratuity of £50 a year paid to the Superintendent of Police which might be saved. So that, on a review of the whole circumstances, he thought there would be a considerable actual saving to the colony, and there was no reason why at the same time the efficiency of the service could not be maintained. He thought everybody was in favor of the proposal. With regard to public competition, he thought possibly it would be as well that our own people, the residents of Western Australia, should have an opportunity of tendering for this work, though he was quite willing to allow that by refusing to entertain the application of one who had had considerable experience in the other colonies we might lose an advantageous offer, in consequence of the delay that must ensue in calling for tenders. He would like, himself, to see the Albany mail service included in this resolution. He believed it would be advantageous to the colony, and save the country a great deal of money in the course of the next five years.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon.

M. Fraser) said it was quite competent for the hon. member to move to add the Albany overland service to the resolution.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he should strongly advise the hon. member to pause before doing that, for the Albany service was a totally different one from the Bunbury service. It was absolutely necessary that the mails should be carried with great regularity between Perth and Albany, and the line was a very difficult line for a coach to travel over; in fact, he did not believe there were two other drivers in the colony who could manage the carriage of these mails as they were carried now along this Albany line. As to being able to do away with any of the police stations on the line, he knew that just as many would be required as at present; and he fully believed himself if they insisted upon the mails being carried with the same regularity as at present, and with the same efficiency, it would cost the colony rather more than less, if the service were let by contract. He would ask the hon. member to pause, and to look into the matter more fully than he had done yet, before including the Albany service in the resolution.

MR. STEERE said he did not mean to oppose the proposal, for he thought they should endeavor to accede to any proposal that would save expense, so long as the efficiency of the service was maintained; and he hoped that in any arrangements which the Government may make, they will insist that the work shall be performed as efficiently at any rate as at present; for those who, like himself, knew how it was conducted formerly, when let by contract, were aware how vastly superior the present service was. The contract price, he believed, when this Southern mail service was formerly performed by contract, was £800, but the mails were only carried on horseback then between Bunbury and the Vasse; so that the sum now mentioned for the through service—£1,000 a year—was certainly very reasonable compared with what was formerly paid. If it was intended to invite tenders for the performance of the work, he thought it would be very unfair to the person whose proposals were now under discussion that the price for which he offered to do the work should be made public.

MR. MARMION said his principal desire in wishing to have the Albany service let by contract was the fact that we should have the same amount of police supervision and contingent expenses to provide for, as if the two services were conducted as at present. He thought if we adopted the contract system in the one case, it was highly desirable we should do so in the other case, provided the service did not suffer by it.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL: It would suffer, without doubt.

The resolution was then put and passed.

SCHEDULE TO LOAN ACT 1884 (MESSAGE No. 11); AND PUBLIC WORKS, IMMIGRATION, SURVEYS, AND ROADS AND BRIDGES (MESSAGE No. 23).

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) moved that Message No. 23 (*vide* p. 104 *ante*) be taken into consideration in conjunction with the report of the select committee on His Excellency's other message (No. 11), relating to public works, immigration, surveys, and roads and bridges.

Agreed to.

MR. STEERE moved that the recommendations of the select committee be considered *seriatim*.

Agreed to.

Harbor Works at Fremantle, £105,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that with reference to these works the committee had been guided by the paragraph in His Excellency's Message, in which it was stated that Sir John Coode was of opinion that £30,000 would be a sufficient sum to set aside under this head for expenditure next year; and that, until the report of Sir John Coode has been received and examined, it was manifestly impossible to go beyond this mere expression of opinion. The works could not possibly be commenced until at all events the latter end of next year; and this £30,000 would go towards the necessary surveys and soundings, the payment of Sir John Coode's fees, and other incidental expenditure.

MR. MARMION asked the Director of Public Works if he had any idea how long it would be before Sir John Coode's report reached the Government?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): Certainly not before the month of March. I do not suppose that the surveys and soundings we are engaged on will be completed before the end of this year, and these will have to be sent to England to enable Sir John Coode to prepare his designs.

MR. MARMION: Then there is no intention of having a special session of the Council to consider Sir John Coode's report?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): No, Sir; I should imagine not.

The recommendation of the select committee was then adopted.

Geraldton Jetty Extension and Goods Shed, £2,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee had come to the same conclusion with regard to the question of jetty extension at Geraldton as it had with reference to the harbor works at Fremantle, namely, that, until Sir John Coode had sent in his report respecting the improvement of the Geraldton harbor, it would be manifestly inadvisable to proceed with the jetty extension. The committee therefore recommended that this work should stand over for the present, pending the receipt of Sir John Coode's report.

This was agreed to, without comment.

Derby Tramway and Jetty, £3,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that, owing to the urgent necessity for proceeding with these works, they had been put in hand in advance of the approval of the Legislature, and the select committee was of opinion that the action of the Government in the matter was, under the circumstances, justifiable.

The House, without comment, endorsed this opinion.

Dongarra Jetty Extension, £2,000; Bussellon Jetty Extension, £2,000; Bunbury Jetty Extension and Goods Shed, £2,500; Albany Jetty Extension, £1,500; Eucla Jetty, £2,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the select committee was of opinion that these works should be commenced at as early a date as possible, and that tenders be called for them as soon as the neces-

sary plans and specifications could be prepared.

This was agreed to, without discussion.

Increased Harbor Accommodation, etc., Carnarvon, £12,000 :

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said this was an undertaking that could not be put in hand until he had himself visited the locality, and studied the requirements of the place, which he intended doing by the next steamer.

Completion of South Jetty, Fremantle, £800; Rails for Jetties throughout the colony, £1,750 :

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the work on the south jetty at Fremantle was being proceeded with, and would be completed shortly; and that the rails had already been indented for through the Crown Agents, so that no time should be lost.

Railway from York to Beverley and from Spencer's Brook northwards, £160,000 :

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said hon. members were aware that the York-Beverley line had already been commenced, with a view to its completion forthwith, as arranged with Mr. Hordern in his contract, Mr. Hordern's line joining ours at Beverley. The works were well forward, and would probably be finished early next year. The total estimated cost of this line amounted to £106,000, leaving only £54,000 available for any branch lines. The committee, under the circumstances, having very carefully considered the question of the route that would eventually most benefit the district concerned, and having heard the evidence of the settlers and the different arguments brought forward in support of the rival routes, came to the conclusion that the best solution of the difficulty would be this: that a narrow gauge (2ft.) line be constructed from the Clackline station to Newcastle—which line may hereafter, if at any time required and the necessary funds be forthcoming, be extended up the Toodyay valley; and that the balance of the money now available, whatever that may be, be laid out in a branch railway, of the ordinary gauge (3ft. 6in.), from Spencer's Brook to Northam, with the intention eventually

of continuing this line in a north-easterly direction, when funds are available. The committee, guided by the preponderance of the evidence laid before them, came to the conclusion that this would be the most desirable plan to adopt. In the event, however, of the balance in hand, after constructing the Newcastle line, not being sufficient for undertaking this line from Spencer's Brook to Northam, the committee, as an alternative proposal, recommended that a sum of (say) £1,000 be expended in metalling and improving the present road from Northam to Spencer's Brook station, so as to make it serviceable at all seasons of the year.

MR. SHENTON said the House and the country had been most grievously disappointed upon finding that so large an amount out of the £160,000 apportioned for these railway undertakings would be absorbed in the completion of the York-Beverley line, which they were now told would cost no less than £106,000. He was one of the committee to whom this question of apportioning the loan money was referred, last session; and every hon. member would bear him out when he said that they were informed at the time by the then Director of Public Works (Mr. Mason) that £80,000 would be amply sufficient for the Beverley line, which, it was said, presented no engineering difficulties whatever, beyond a bridge across the Dale river. The committee were led to believe that, if they appropriated £160,000 for the two lines, there would be a balance of about £80,000 available for any branch lines northwards; and this was the reason, and the only reason, why the original estimate was altered and the whole sum lumped together. But now it appeared that the Beverley line would swallow up no less than £106,000 before it was completed and equipped, which, he must say again, was most disappointing. Mr. Keane's tender for constructing the line was £59,878 9s. 4d., and it certainly was a remarkable thing that the cost of construction was over £6,000 more than the tender of Messrs. Wright & Co. for the second section from Guildford to Chidlow's Well (£53,043 10s. 9d.)—although the latter was a somewhat longer line and presented some enormous engineering difficulties, especially in crossing the Darling Range, whereas

the Beverley line presented no engineering difficulties at all. It was true that, owing to unforeseen difficulties on the second section, necessitating a deviation, a further sum of £5,700 was voted for that work—voted in the face of strong opposition on the part of the then Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Thomas), who considered that the contractor was bound to carry out his contract, as originally accepted; but the fact remained that the tender for the construction of the second section was over £6,000 below the tender for the construction of the shorter line from York to Beverley. It was very strange that there should be this discrepancy; and they were now told that instead of £80,000, the original estimate, the cost of completing and equipping the Beverley line would come to £106,000, and consequently the calculations of the members of that House had gone astray altogether. He thought there were two items in this sum of £160,000 which, in justice to the branch lines, ought not to be a charge against that vote. The rolling stock, which would be required for the whole length of the line, ought not to be charged against this particular section. Far too large a proportion of the cost, in his opinion, was charged against this short line. There was a supplementary vote of £15,000 asked for in connection with the Eastern Railway, in addition to this loan, and he thought that under the circumstances a considerable proportion more should be appropriated for the branch lines. It was handicapping these lines unfairly. Until the Beverley section came to be connected with Mr. Hordern's line, there would be hardly any traffic upon it: he supposed a train a day would answer every purpose, and that would not carry much freight. The permanent way, again: he noticed that the Engineer-in-Chief apportioned another £1,000 over and above the estimate of the late Commissioner for this purpose; but he (Mr. Shenton) was in hope that this amount would not be required. When the tender was accepted for the rails for this section the price in the market was as low as it could be, and the Crown Agents were able to make a most advantageous contract for the conveyance of the rails from England to Fremantle. Therefore

he thought there would be a considerable saving on this item. Then, again, a sum of £3,000 was put down for compensation. In view of the recent decision given by the Court of Appeal as regards the rights of owners of land to compensation, he hardly saw how such a large amount as this would be required for compensation on the railway line. With the exception of a short distance in the town itself the line went through country land, and the Court of Appeal had decided that the State was not necessarily bound to pay the owners of such land compensation when resumed for railway purposes. He therefore hoped there would be a saving also on this item. It would be his duty, as the member representing the districts more immediately concerned in the branch lines, to watch this expenditure most carefully, and to see that the amount voted was appropriated solely to the construction of the York-Beverley line and the branches northward, and not spread over the whole length of the line. With regard to the question of route, the committee had a large amount of evidence before them; there was a great deal of correspondence, and there were delegates sent down from each district; but the general wish, so far as he understood it, was that if there should be sufficient funds available to carry the railway from Spencer's Brook to Newcastle, *via* Northam, on the present gauge, that this would be the best way to meet the difficulty. As the Engineer-in-Chief had suggested, a light line from the Clackline would answer present purposes, and it would be available for further extension. It appeared from what the Engineer-in-Chief told them that the insurmountable difficulties which they had been told and led to believe existed between the Clackline and Newcastle did not exist at all. He thought it was much to be regretted that this information was not before them when this question came before them on a previous occasion. As to the Spencer's Brook line, he thought himself that the best plan would be to cross the Avon exactly opposite Spencer's Brook, and carry the line as near Northam as the funds available would enable them to do. This would not only bring Northam itself within two or three miles of railway com-

munication, it would also enable a large number of settlers and also a large agricultural area lying between Northam and York to take advantage of the railway. They had already voted £800 for a bridge at Wilberforce; but he thought, if it should be decided that the railway shall cross the Avon opposite Spencer's Brook, this bridge at Wilberforce would not be required, and that the money should be devoted to the bridge at Spencer's Brook, which would be of far more service and benefit to the settlers in the neighborhood. He thought that a bridge in that locality would meet the circumstances of the case for the present. Still, he must repeat that he regretted very much that, owing to the misleading information which the House had before it last session, there was not such a large amount available for this line as they were then led to believe there would be.

MR. LOTON said the mere fact of metalling the road would be of no use to the Northam people, unless they had a bridge to enable them to cross the river. This would be absolutely necessary to enable them to get to the station at all.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. M. Fraser) said he wished to make a few remarks with reference to the proposal to adopt a 2-foot gauge for the branch line to Newcastle. The present gauge upon our Government lines (3 feet 6 inches) was itself a narrow gauge, but it was the same as that adopted on the New Zealand lines, and he might almost say that he had been instrumental in introducing it here. But, when a few years ago, he had an opportunity of travelling over a great portion of the New Zealand lines and the Tasmanian lines (which were of the same gauge), he found there was a general feeling in those colonies that a mistake had been made in adopting so narrow a gauge as 3 feet 6 inches. But here he found it was proposed to adopt a 2-foot gauge—which would be a mere toy railway, a doll's line. A similar proposal was made by the committee to adopt that gauge for the Bunbury line, and, so far as he was concerned, he was not inclined to offer any opposition to that; for that line would not connect—at present at any rate—with any other Government line; and perhaps the experiment of introduc-

ing a Liliputian railway might answer the purpose there. But it was a very different thing to have a branch of our Eastern Railway constructed on a narrower gauge than the ordinary gauge, on our main central line. He thought it would be a great pity and a great mistake to construct this branch line of the paltry width of 2 feet. He was quite sure in his own mind it would be found totally inadequate for the requirements of the district, and that it would be found necessary to have the line reconstructed on a wider gauge. It had been said that the line, if it did not answer the purpose and meet the traffic requirements, might be taken up and removed to some other part of the colony. All that involved expense, twice incurred, which would be a larger expenditure than the cost of adopting a wider gauge in the first instance. He should regret exceedingly if the House decided to break the present gauge, at any point on the Eastern Railway, or upon any of its feeders. It meant a transhipment of every ton of goods brought down by the narrower gauge, different rolling stock, and other drawbacks, which would lead to great inconvenience. Though entirely in favor of the idea of adopting the narrower gauge, merely as an experiment, in any part of the colony where it would not form a branch of a wider line, he must say again he thought it would be a very great mistake, and he should be very sorry to see it adopted in connection with any of the existing Government lines.

MR. BURGESS concurred with the Colonial Secretary, as to the inexpediency of adopting a 2-foot gauge, which he considered a most absurd idea. When they got this line to Newcastle, they would be in the midst of a large agricultural area, and, should the line be extended up the Toodyay valley, and on to Victoria Plains, this narrow gauge would be totally useless. He thought the House ought to pause, and consider this matter most seriously before agreeing to a break of gauge, on any branch of our Government lines.

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the question was not the question of the superiority or inferiority of one gauge over another, or of the advisability of adopting a 2-foot

gauge instead of a wider one—the question was simply one of ways and means, and of adapting ourselves to circumstances. We had to cut our coat according to our cloth. The committee was anxious as far as possible to serve the two districts, and, if there were not sufficient funds available to carry out what they would all wish to see carried out, they must do the best they could with the money at their command; that was all. Of course he was quite free to admit that all the disadvantages pointed out by the Colonial Secretary presented themselves in the adoption of this narrow gauge; at the same time, this 2ft. line would accommodate a vast amount of traffic—quite sufficient at any rate to meet present requirements. Personally he objected very much to a break of gauge, but in this case there was nothing else for it, if they were going to accommodate the two districts.

MR. STEERE said it appeared to him that the decision which the select committee had arrived at was somewhat inconsequential. They recommended a narrow gauge for the Newcastle line, but that the other branch line should be of the ordinary gauge. He thought himself that the line to Newcastle ought not to be undertaken at all; for, in the first place, it would go through most worthless country, he believed, the whole of the way, and when it got to Newcastle it would get into country that was almost entirely in the hands of private owners, the same as about York. On the other hand, the line to Northam, as projected on the map, would tap a great deal of good land which was in the hands of small occupiers; and, for his own part, he should much prefer to see the whole of the available funds, after paying for the Beverley line, devoted to the construction of the line from Spencer's Brook to Northam.

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright) submitted that there was nothing at all inconsequential in the recommendations of the committee. The Newcastle line would probably remain for some time to come a branch line, and for that reason a narrow gauge line had, under all the circumstances, been suggested; but the other line would probably hereafter become a con-

tinuation of the main trunk line, and therefore the committee recommended it should be of the ordinary gauge.

MR. S. H. PARKER asked whether the select committee, when making these recommendations, involving the construction of two separate lines, had paid any attention to the Loan Act and the schedule? The only provision made in that Act was for "a railway from Spencer's Brook northwards," but the committee not only recommended that the line should extend in another direction, they also contemplated building two separate and distinct lines.

MR. WITTENOOM said the committee was appointed to consider how the money could be most advantageously spent for the good of the country; and the hon. member for Perth's hair-splitting would, he thought, suit the atmosphere of a court of law rather than the atmosphere of a deliberative assembly.

MR. BURT said that the Governor's message as well as the Loan Act only contemplated "a line from Spencer's Brook northwards," the route of which line His Excellency said remained for the House to determine. It appeared to him that the select committee had not so much as looked at the Loan Act, otherwise they would never have proposed to do what this report recommended.

MR. LOTON said the objection to the recommendations of the committee to have two lines was a purely technical objection. His Excellency in his message told them that, in deciding the question of routes, the House should be guided by the views of the Engineer-in-Chief, and the wishes of the inhabitants of the different districts. As for any technical difficulty, in view of the precise wording of the Loan Act,—he presumed that could be got over by legislation; and the Governor in his message told them that, when the routes had been determined, bills authorising the construction of the railways would be brought forward.

MR. BURT was strongly against the adoption of a 2ft. gauge, which seemed to him a monstrous proposal. It was evidently not the result of an unprejudiced consideration of the whole question, but a compromise brought about by the pressure brought to bear upon the committee by the various wit-

nesses who were examined before them. Happily that House was free from all such influences, and could view the matter without fear or favor, and without prejudice or embarrassment whatever. He did not mean to say that any member of the select committee was personally prejudiced; but, with the views of the Newcastle settlers dinned into their ears, the committee found that the only way out of the difficulty was to provide two lines.

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright), replying to the strictures passed upon the committee for recommending a 2ft. gauge,—one hon. member calling it “absurd” and another calling it “ridiculous”—said it might surprise some hon. members to learn that there was a flourishing line at Festiniog, in North Wales, upon which there was a very large amount of traffic, the gauge of which was only 1ft. 11½in.

MR. BURT: Does it follow a 3ft. 6in. line?

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright): It follows upon a 4ft. 8½in. line. This narrow gauge line is found to answer all the requirements of a thriving mineral district.

MR. BROWN, while admitting there was much to be said in favor of our present gauge as compared with a 2ft. gauge, said the question which the committee had to consider was how this money could be expended so as to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. In no other way than by adopting the narrow gauge could the object of the committee have been attained, and the interests of the country served. Such being the case, and seeing that they had the authority of the head of the department that a narrow gauge line would answer the purpose, that it would cost much less to construct and to equip, and to work, than a wider gauge line, he thought the committee were quite justified in the conclusions which they had arrived at.

MR. MARMION thought that those hon. members who cavilled at the conclusions of the committee were in duty bound to propose something better, if they could, and show them some other way out of the difficulty. As to the technical objection raised by the hon. member for Perth, in connection with

the Loan Act, he would point out that when His Excellency addressed the House last session on the subject of the schedule of this Loan Bill, His Excellency, referring to the question of railways, evidently contemplated a line to Newcastle and Northam, and specifically mentioned those two places, and also estimated the cost of the works at £92,000—showing that the original intention evidently was to serve both districts; but as it was impossible at that time to fix a separate amount for each line, the two were lumped together.

MR. BROWN pointed out that the two districts combined would provide more traffic than York itself. There was more land under cultivation and available for cultivation, and a much larger number of sheep, cattle, and horses in the Newcastle and Northam districts than in the York district; and he thought the committee had acted wisely in endeavoring to provide for the requirements of the two districts, so far as possible. As to the hon. member for Murray's sweeping charges against the committee, as to their not having read the Loan Act, he might tell the hon. member that not only did they read the Loan Act and the schedule of the Loan Act, they also carefully considered this very point, as to the power which they had, and which the House had, to adopt the suggestion embodied in the report; and they came to the conclusion that there was not the slightest occasion in the world to sacrifice the interests of the colony to a mere technical difficulty—and it was nothing but a technical difficulty. He would tell the hon. member something more. There were on that committee persons who were members of the Legislature last year, and of the select committee of last year that drew up the schedule of this Loan Act; so that they had a pretty good knowledge of what had been the intention of the Legislature last year when it put down the words referring to the extension of the line “Spencer's Brook northwards.” The House did its best last year to declare definitely where the line should go, but it was unable to do so, with the information then at its command. He admitted that on that occasion they were under the impression that it would be impracticable to take

the line from Clackline to Newcastle—for there was a general desire last year that it should go that way. This year the committee found, from the inquiries made, that a line in that direction was practicable, and this discovery altered the circumstances of the case; and the committee, having arrived at the conclusion that it would be best in the interests of the colony to recommend what they now did recommend, came to the determination that they would not sacrifice the interests of the colony, as he had already said, to a mere technical difficulty. The committee considered that, if an Act should be necessary to enable them to divert the money, the Government and that House would take good care to adopt that course. When the hon. member said that a 2-foot gauge was a bad one in the interests of the colony to adopt, the hon. member was of course entitled to his own opinion. It was admitted on all sides that there was a great deal of force in the statement, and, for his own part, he admitted that he preferred the present gauge, and saw considerable objections to a break of gauge. But it was impossible to serve the largest number of the inhabitants of these two districts, with the amount of money at their disposal, anything like so well in any other way than that proposed by the select committee. Such being the case, and seeing that they had the authority of the Commissioner of Railways himself that a narrow gauge line could be worked at very much less cost than a broader gauge, the committee, he thought, acted wisely in arriving at the decision which it did. Surely it was in the interests of the main line that it should have the traffic of the Newcastle district. There was already a good road to Northam at certain seasons of the year, so that, whether they constructed a branch line or not, the main line would get the Northam traffic. He begged to move: "That, in 'the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a railway of 2ft. gauge should 'be constructed from Clackline to Newcastle.'"

MR. SHENTON said that, in 1883, when the question of the extension of the Eastern Railway was before the House, he moved that an address be presented

to the Governor, praying that when tenders were called for the construction of the third section, supplementary tenders might also be called for the construction of the branch line then in course of survey from Clackline to Newcastle. That was seconded by the hon. member for Perth; and the Colonial Secretary agreed in the expediency of the proposal. By request, however, his motion was withdrawn, until the survey was completed. That was in the early session of that year. In August, the Commissioner of Railways, in reply to a question which he then put about this survey, said that from a section of the proposed route by Mr. Wilson it appeared that the line was a very bad line indeed—so bad, in fact, that the Commissioner said he would never recommend it to be carried out, as the working expenses would be enormous. The Commissioner also said that he thought it would be better if the line were carried to Northam and perhaps Irish Town, and from there along the river to Newcastle. "This," he said, "would double the distance, but he did 'not think it would cost very much 'more than the direct line from Clackline to Newcastle.'" When the select committee on the Loan Schedule sat last year they had this information before them, and also the opinion of Mr. Mason, the Commissioner, who bore out Mr. Thomas's statement as to the insurmountable difficulties of the line between Clackline and Newcastle. Such being the case, the committee at that time had no other course open to them but to fall back upon the Spencer's Brook line, and the House voted the money for the construction of a line from that point northwards. But, since then, a fresh survey had been made by the present Engineer-in-Chief, and the result had proved that the statements made by his two predecessors were without foundation, and that a practicable route had been found. He was somewhat surprised to hear the statements of the Colonial Secretary and of the hon. member for the Murray, totally condemning narrow gauge railways. He should like to know what experience the Colonial Secretary had had of narrow gauge railways, or what experience the hon. member for Murray ever had of narrow gauge lines. Surely

they must admit that the Engineer-in-Chief had had rather more experience in railway matters than they had; and the Engineer-in-Chief told them that these narrow gauge lines had been worked with success elsewhere. He thought that in a matter of this kind, when they were bound down to a certain amount of money, their object should be to afford the greatest amount of facilities they could to the country districts. In doing that, he thought the committee had acted very wisely.

MR. S. H. PARKER said that in addition to a railway, it was proposed to have a road and a bridge. What right had they to divert this line and to convert it into two lines instead of one, and also to make roads and bridges out of this money?

MR. LOTON said it was patent to the members of the select committee—the facts were undeniable—that a line from Spencer's Brook to Northam would not and could not serve the inhabitants of the Toodyay Valley, where there was a large amount of land fit for any cultivation. What they had to look to in railway matters was the greatest good of the greatest number, and therefore it was that the committee found it necessary to recommend two lines. As to the difference of gauge, the committee considered that the Northam line would be the main trunk line hereafter, and hence they recommended the ordinary gauge for that line. He would sooner vote for no line at all than for a narrow gauge line to Northam. He knew the country that was to be served by these two branch lines well, and he had no hesitation in saying that a light line to Newcastle and the proposed extension would be more advantageous and more profitable for the next half-a-dozen years than a line from Spencer's Brook alone, so far as the money available would take it.

MR. SHENTON said it was decided at a meeting held at the Katerine the other day, by the residents of the district, that the interests of the district would be best served by this light line, and a short road to Northam.

MR. HARPER said it appeared to him that a great deal of the discussion that had taken place had been as to whether they should follow the dictates of common sense or adhere to the strict

letter of the law. He thought that the principle which should guide them in this matter was, what would best serve the interests of the country; and, knowing as he did something of the country through which these lines would run, he wished to point out what had been so far overlooked. To the east and south-east of Northam there was almost as much land as to the north and north-east—a fact that had been ignored altogether so far. By constructing a short line to Newcastle, they tapped not only what little traffic Newcastle itself could offer, but also all the surrounding agricultural district, and the country behind Newcastle.

MR. BURT thought there was nothing to be gained by prolonging the discussion, and the shortest way to a solution of the question would be to go to a division. Before doing so he had an amendment to move, which was this: "That, in the opinion of this House, it would be most inadvisable to break the gauge of the present Government railways, and the proposal of the select committee that a gauge of 2ft. should be adopted from Clackline to Newcastle is not approved by this House."

The committee divided upon this amendment, with the following result:

Ayes 8

Noes 10

Majority against ... 2

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Burgess	Mr. Brockman
Mr. Crowther	Mr. Grant
Mr. Layman	Mr. Harper
Mr. McRae	Mr. Loton
Mr. Parker	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Randell	Mr. Pearce
Mr. Steere	Mr. Shenton
Mr. Burt (Teller).	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Wittenoom
	Hon. J. A. Wright (Teller).

The original resolution was then put and carried.

MR. BROWN then moved the following resolution:—"That in the opinion of this House, if after the construction of the Clackline-Newcastle Railway a sufficient sum of money is available from the vote in the schedule to the Loan Act, 1884, for 'Railway from Spencer's Brook northwards,' a branch railway upon the ordinary gauge should be made from Spencer's Brook to Northam, or, in the event of available

"funds being insufficient for this purpose, "a sum of about £1,000 should be expended in metalling and improving the present road from Northam to Spencer's Brook station, so as to make it serviceable at all seasons, and that in this case a railway bridge should, if practicable, be constructed across the Avon opposite the Spencer's Brook station." The hon. member said he had added the latter part of the resolution at the request of the hon. member for Toodyay, who had already advocated the construction of this bridge, and pointed out the convenience it would afford.

MR. SHENTON said the metalling of the road and the construction of a bridge just opposite the station would meet the requirements of the district and satisfy the Northam people, pending the extension of the line to Northam.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he was not prepared to express any opinion at present with regard to the proposed bridge.

MR. MARMION said he should only support the proposition as to the bridge on the understanding that it was to be a railway bridge. It would hardly be fair to divert railway funds for the purpose of constructing an ordinary bridge.

The resolution was then put and passed.

Tramway Road, Harbor Accommodation and Improvements, Cossack and Roebourne, £20,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee had been unable to come to any conclusion as to these works, pending his approaching visit to the North, to examine into the requirements of the district, and the probable cost of the works.

Railway from Geraldton to Greenough, £60,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he regretted the committee had been unable to decide upon the much-vexed question of the proper route for this railway, not having sufficient information before them. The committee therefore recommended that, as soon as possible after the close of the present session of Council, a Commission should be appointed by His Excellency to examine into the question,

on the spot, to take the evidence of local people acquainted with the two routes, and finally to decide upon the route to be adopted.

MR. SHENTON thought the committee were unanimous as to one point, namely, that this work should be taken in hand as soon as possible, and that there should be no delay beyond that which was absolutely necessary in determining the route that ought to be followed.

MR. S. H. PARKER presumed the Commission, after taking evidence, would report to the House, and that the final decision would rest with the Legislature.

THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (Hon. J. A. Wright): No, sir. If the House now approves of the appointment of this Commission and thus adopts the recommendation of the select committee, the Commission will decide finally which of the two routes shall be adopted. The House must either be content with that, or have a special session, or let the work wait until the House meets again next year.

The recommendation of the committee was affirmed.

Railway from Bunbury to the Timber Ranges, £40,000:

MR. VENN moved that the recommendation of the majority of the select committee as to this work be adopted. The committee had reported as follows: "Upon the question of this railway there has been considerable difference of opinion, some members of your committee opining that it would be well that this line be constructed throughout on the land grant system, others that the construction should be postponed till the next sitting of Council. The majority, however, consider that, in justice to this part of the colony, it is desirable that the work provided on the Loan Schedule be taken in hand at as early a date as possible. Further, that the route be taken along the lower line in the direction of Boyanup, as shown by the blue line on the cartoon map produced, and that the line be constructed on the narrow gauge (2' 0") so as to carry it the greatest distance possible with the funds available." This was the recommendation which he now asked the House to adopt.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) thought it

would be as well, in dealing with this question, that the House should also consider the proposals which were before it for the construction of land grant railways.

MR. STEERE thought so too. It appeared to him very desirable that they should first dispose of the land grant proposals, of which there were three before the House.

MR. BROWN considered that each of those proposals ought to be considered upon its merits, and it would not be fair to the Bunbury district to decide this question by a side issue. At present the only question before them was the construction of this line out of public funds.

MR. VENN moved that the consideration of the question be postponed until next day.

Agreed to.

Branch line, Eastern Railway, opposite Perth Racecourse, £2,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee were of opinion that it was most desirable that this branch line should be constructed at once, so as to be open for traffic at the approaching race meeting. Tenders had already been invited for the work.

MR. S. H. PARKER moved that the item be confirmed.

MR. SHENTON expressed a hope that the amount appropriated would be strictly adhered to, and that nothing would be taken out of the Eastern Railway vote for this work.

The motion was agreed to.

Telegraphs, £48,150:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee recommended that all the telegraph lines included in the Loan Schedule should be taken in hand as soon as possible. The Breaksea island telegraph had been completed, with the exception of the land lines to connect the cable laid between the island and the mainland, for which tenders had already been invited. The committee had before them the question of the advisability of employing telephonic instead of telegraphic communication on some of the projected lines—notably on that between Bridgetown and Bunbury; but, as it appeared that special legislation would

be necessary for this, the question had to be left in abeyance.

The item was agreed to, without discussion.

WORKS AND BUILDINGS:

Customs and Wharf Arrangements, Fremantle, £5,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee recommended that this item and the item "Post Office and Postmaster's Quarters, Fremantle, £3,000," be treated as a whole instead of separately as in the Schedule, thus making a sum of £8,000 disposable for the two works. By this arrangement the committee considered that any economy that could be effected in the one would be available towards perfecting the other.

MR. BROWN said that legislation would probably be required for the purpose of amalgamating the two items, otherwise the Government might say that a mere resolution of the House was not a sufficient authority for merging the two items into one.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said it was not proposed to devote any more money than had already been appropriated for the two works, and to treat them as one might prove a more economical arrangement. Hon. members were aware that no detailed estimates were prepared when the various amounts were placed on the Loan Schedule for the several works enumerated therein. Certain lump sums were set apart for this or that work, and there was nothing at the time before the House to guide it in coming to a conclusion as to what the precise cost of any of these works would be.

MR. BURT said there appeared to him to be a certain amount of injustice involved in the proposal to treat these two items as one. There were other works included in the schedule for which the money appropriated would not be anything like sufficient—the Mandurah breakwater, for instance: why should not that work be lumped with some vote which was likely to prove more than sufficient to carry out the work for which it had been appropriated? If the principle was a good one, and an economical one, in the one case, it was equally so in the other.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the two cases referred to were not at all analogous; the Fremantle buildings were part and parcel of one scheme, whereas the Mandurah breakwater was connected with none of the other works projected.

The recommendation of the committee was agreed to.

Post and Telegraph Offices, Perth, £10,000:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee had examined the plans and designs for these buildings, submitted by the Public Works Department. The designs provided for the completion of the public offices as a whole, and contemplated an expenditure of £16,825; but, unfortunately, the amount included in the Loan Act (£10,000) would only suffice to erect the Post and Telegraph Offices, which the committee approved should be done. The committee, however, considered it most desirable, on the ground of economy, that the whole scheme should be carried out as designed, if the additional funds could be procured from any other source.

MR. BROWN said he imagined that the intention of the committee was, that, if the Government found its revenues increase as the hon. member for Fremantle and himself anticipated, the Government should ask the Finance Committee for the money to complete these offices right off, without further reference to the House.

MR. VENN said that at present he was not in favor of spending such a large sum of money on these public offices; and, if the designs prepared provided sufficient accommodation, he thought £10,000 quite enough to spend upon them. He thought at any rate they should confine themselves to that expenditure for the present, leaving the question of extension for a future time.

MR. S. H. PARKER said the Government would never spend this £10,000 before next session, and he therefore saw no necessity for voting any more at present. He objected altogether to the Finance Committee being called upon to sanction such a large extra expenditure as £6,000 or £7,000: it was never intended that the Committee should have such a power.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that sooner or later, and that in a very short time, the accommodation at the public offices would have to be increased, and it would be by far the most economical way to provide for the work at once, otherwise it might entail a much greater expenditure, if a portion of it were done now and another portion some other time. It would be much better to treat the design as a whole.

MR. WITTENOOM objected altogether to the words "from any other sources," in the committee's recommendation. They said the whole scheme ought to be carried out if the necessary funds could be obtained "from any other source." If there should be any surplus funds available from any other source, there were plenty of other works far more desirable and certainly far more necessary than public offices, upon which to expend the money.

MR. BROWN said the suggestion was that the money should be taken out of general revenue, if the state of the public finances warranted it, and afterwards recoup it out of a loan to be raised on some future occasion. He thought it very desirable that these offices should be completed as a whole, especially when the head of the Works Department urged upon them the necessity of providing increased accommodation.

MR. STEERE said he was strongly opposed to the expenditure of anything more than £10,000 on these buildings, simply because we had not got the means to spend any more. He deprecated this reckless style of expenditure.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he certainly should not vote one single penny as a member of the Finance Committee for these offices, unless the money was placed on the Estimates, in the same way as had been done with the votes for immigration, surveys, and roads and bridges.

MR. BROWN said he had merely raised the discussion so that the Government might see what the intention of the House was in the matter. The Government might consider, a few months hence, that they were authorised to expend this extra £6,825; and he thought there ought to be some distinct resolution on the subject.

MR. STEERE said he should like to

know whether the Director of Public Works considered that it would be competent for him, under the present resolution, merely affirming this paragraph in the committee's report, to expend more than £10,000 upon these offices?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): No; I do not.

The question was then put—That the committee approve of the construction of Post and Telegraph Offices, at Perth, at a cost of £10,000.

Agreed to.

Railway Workshops, Fremantle, £2,000;
Court House and Magistrate's Quarters, Gascoyne, £1,500:

Agreed to, without comment.

Mandurah Breakwater, £1,300:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that nothing could be decided with reference to this work until he had visited the locality and decided upon what was best to be done. He might state that, when Sir John Coode was here, he had a conversation with him on the subject, and that Sir John considered that the amount set apart for the work was totally insufficient to do what was required, and that unless proper funds were provided any work done might possibly be more prejudicial than beneficial to the estuary. Under the circumstances, he thought this work might be allowed to stand over for the present.

MR. PARKER thought it would be very injudicious on the part of the House to agree to this expenditure at present, as it might be money simply thrown away.

MR. BURT said it would be worse than that, it might be most prejudicial to the estuary, and, for his own part, he should be prepared to wait until the Director of Works had an opportunity of visiting the locality. Meanwhile he hoped the money would be laid out at as high a rate of interest as the Government could get for it.

The recommendation of the committee was then affirmed.

Government House and Domain, £2,500:

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the committee had examined the designs for an entrance lodge to Government House,

and, while approving generally of this, they thought that the erection of a banqueting hall should be the first charge on the money set apart for Government House—as was always contemplated. So soon as this had been done, the entrance lodge might be taken in hand out of any surplus, should there be any.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he should like to ask the committee from what source they derived this information, that it had always been contemplated to have a banqueting hall erected out of this money. He thought Government House was quite large enough already for the salary which the Governor received.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he had been told by the select committee that the intention always had been to have a banqueting hall. There would be very little money left for decoration or other improvements.

MR. BURT said it certainly was never intended that the money should go to build an entrance lodge. This was the first time he had ever heard that expression used in the House.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said it would be necessary shortly to pull down old Government House, and some provision would then have to be made to accommodate the Governor's orderly and coachman. It was estimated that a lodge would cost £650.

Progress was then reported, and leave given to sit again.

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