

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 6th December, 1888.

Newspaper Libel and Registration Bill: third reading—
 Railways Act, 1878, Amendment (Closure of Streets)
 Bill: third reading—General Loan and Inscribed
 Stock Amendment Bill: third reading—Land Regu-
 lations Arbitration Bill: third reading—Loan Esti-
 mates, 1889: further considered—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

NEWSPAPER LIBEL AND REGISTRA-
 TION AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

RAILWAYS ACT, 1878, AMENDMENT
 (CLOSURE OF STREETS) BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

GENERAL LOAN AND INSCRIBED
 STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

LAND REGULATIONS ARBITRATION
 BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1889 (SUPPLEMEN-
 TARY LOAN, £100,000.)

These Estimates were further con-
 sidered, in committee.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC
 WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he
 had investigated the error in the return
 relating to the expenditure upon the
 wharf at Wyndham (*vide p. 457, ante*),
 and it appeared that a sum of £1,378 had
 been paid for timber for that work, some of
 which was not used at Wyndham at all,
 as the work was not proceeded with, and
 the timber was used for the jetties at
 Dongarra and at Fremantle. It was
 simply a mistake in keeping the accounts;
 the amount should have been credited
 to Wyndham and charged to those
 other works.

Mr. SHENTON thought the explana-
 tion was not at all satisfactory. They
 paid two accountants specially for the
 Works and Railways Department, and
 he certainly could not understand how
 such an error as this should arise; and

that, when a member called for a return
 to be laid on the table, a return was
 furnished which to say the very least
 was both wrong and misleading, for,
 according to this return, it appeared that
 all this money had been expended at
 Wyndham. That was the reason he had
 asked for an explanation of the item, as
 he had been informed that such was not
 the case, and it appeared he had been
 rightly informed. He could not under-
 stand how these accounts had been passed
 by the Audit Department. The regula-
 tions laid down by the Audit Act were
 very explicit, that the Auditor General
 must satisfy himself that all moneys
 voted by that House were expended for
 the purpose they were voted for. Here
 they found a sum of £1,378 charged
 against the Kimberley district, which
 ought to have been charged against Don-
 garra and Fremantle. All he could say
 was such a way of keeping books was be-
 yond his comprehension, and he was not
 sure that he would not move a resolution
 on the subject. All he could say was, if
 such a mistake had been made in a mer-
 cantile house of business, the services of
 the book-keeper who made it would be
 very soon dispensed with. No business
 could be carried on with a loose system of
 accounts such as that.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN
 LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said the error
 was not so glaring as the hon. member
 would make it. This timber was origin-
 ally purchased for Wyndham, and the
 whole transaction was completed as if for
 Wyndham, and the Audit Office would
 naturally pass it for Wyndham. But in
 the meantime events transpired, as mem-
 bers were aware, which led the Govern-
 ment to decide not to proceed with these
 works at Wyndham, and the order for the
 timber for that place was countermanded,
 and it was used in other places. The only
 error that he could see was that the
 amount had not been transferred from
 the original vote to these other votes.

Mr. SHENTON said it would have
 been easy enough surely to have explained
 that in a footnote to the return, instead
 of furnishing a return misleading the
 House. It was gross carelessness on the
 part of somebody in the Works Depart-
 ment. As there appeared now that there
 was a balance of £1,378 on hand, which
 had not been expended on the wharf

at Wyndham, he moved that this item "Wharf and Water Supply, Wyndham, £3,000" be reduced by £1,000.

MR. MARMION asked what portion of this £3,000 was required for the wharf and what portion for the water supply, and whether the Government considered that the steps which they proposed taking with regard to the water supply would give what was required, and whether the supply could be had with the amount now asked for?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the amount asked for by the hon. member for the district was £2,000 for wharfage accommodation, and £1,000 for boring for water. Hon. members were aware that there was no fresh water at present on the townsite, and it was absolutely necessary that water should be found, if the settlement was going to be at this spot. He was not at all sanguine himself that water would be found on the present townsite—although that opinion was not shared by his hon. colleague the Surveyor General; but it was very necessary they should try, in order to keep faith with those who had bought town lots there. If water could not be obtained by boring or sinking there was a means of conserving water by damming a gully at a place locally known as the Botanical Gardens, and this would probably cost about £1,000. With regard to the wharfage accommodation, it was proposed to build it of stone, which was already there; and there was an opportunity of having the work done very economically at the present moment because the telegraph contractors, Messrs. Wright & Co., had been obliged to stop their telegraph work, owing to the flooded state of the country, and the men were all coming in to Wyndham; and no doubt the Government would be able to come to very satisfactory terms with Mr. Wright for doing this wharf, and be assured that the work would be done economically and properly.

MR. KEANE thought they wanted as much money as they could possibly scrape out of this loan, for the goldfields, and, looking at the amount of money already wasted at Wyndham, and looking also at the fact that there was about £1,400 unexpended on this wharf, he moved as a further amendment that the item be reduced by £1,500.

MR. SHENTON said he would accept that amendment, instead of his own.

MR. SHOLL said the state of affairs disclosed by the return laid on the table the other day showed that there must be great incompetency on the part of the accountant in the Works Department. It was hardly fair to blame the head of the department; he could not be expected to carry all these items in his head, and he must depend upon his accountant to keep the accounts straight, otherwise what was the good of his having an accountant? He really thought there ought to be some inquiry as to the competency of these book-keepers, who made such mistakes as these. This was not the only return that had been placed before the House, that was misleading and inaccurate.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said he had nothing to say against the book-keepers, as head of the department, and the only way he could account for it was in consequence of the frequent changes of book-keepers—there had been three changes within a comparatively short time. It was impossible with the multiplicity of accounts in a department like his for a new book-keeper to immediately seize upon every detail.

MR. SHENTON said it was no good making such an excuse as that to the mercantile members of the House, for it would not hold water for one moment. In banks they often changed their accountants, but if a glaring mistake like this arose, the change of officers would not be considered a satisfactory answer for it.

MR. SHOLL thought anyone could grasp a mistake like this, who had ordinary intelligence. As to changes, surely the head of the department must be satisfied as to the competency of an officer before putting him in charge of his accounts. If these appointments were made without the concurrence of the head of the department, all he could say was it disclosed a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

MR. BURT pointed out that in 1886 the House voted £29,615 for public works at Wyndham, all of which—with the exception of this £1,300 for timber—had been expended there, and he should very much like to know what there was to

show for it. The same with regard to the sum of £38,868, which the hon. member for Gascoyne told them had been expended in the two Kimberleys since 1886.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said, as to what they had to show for the £9,615 at Wyndham, they had a Residency, of which the walls were up; they had a Residency which was occupied; they had a bonded store; they had a Government Resident's office; they had police quarters, and they had a hospital; besides which they had a good many roads made, besides wells and other improvements—in short they had the nucleus of a settlement formed there. As to the expenditure at Derby, they had a Residency to show for it; and a jetty, and a tramway about three miles in length, part of which was exceedingly expensive work, being over a marsh; they had police quarters, and a gaol; they had wells sunk, roads made, and other expenditure which it had been necessary to incur, in the whole of this extensive district.

MR. SHOLL said there had been special votes for roads, so that it could hardly be said that the money spent in road making was a legitimate charge to be included in the vote for other public works. As he said before, the amount of money wasted in this Kimberley district was something dreadful, and he looked upon the district as a regular "white elephant," a gigantic failure, and he wished for his part it had never been discovered. He believed that the longer we kept it, the greater drain would it be upon the revenue of the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) was sorry to hear the hon. member say that. No doubt a good deal of money had been expended in the Kimberleys, but, a few days ago he took the trouble to ascertain what the Government received in land revenue alone from that district. He had not gone very closely into the matter, but it appeared that from Derby we had received £14,243 from the sale of town lands, and £3,440 from the same source at Wyndham; and we had received, in rents, up to the end of 1887, no less than £96,000. So that our territorial revenue from the district up to the present amounted to £113,000.

MR. SHENTON: How much have we spent there?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest): I don't know. I am only speaking of what the department over which I have the honor to preside has received from the district, in connection with land.

MR. SHOLL: A great deal of that is out of the pockets of people living in this part of the colony, who would be only too glad to get their money back, and let the district rip.

Question put: that the vote be reduced by £1,500.

Agreed to.

MR. KEANE moved that the item "Jetty head, Vasse, £1,000," be struck out.

MR. SHENTON: Is there any estimate prepared for this work?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): Yes, I have the plans here.

MR. SHOLL: Will this bring the jetty into deep water?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): No.

MR. KEANE thought there were other works of much more pressing importance than this. This jetty was of no use except to a few ketches that ran up and down the coast, once or twice a month, with a few tons of cargo; and possibly the *Bob Roy* might occasionally come alongside if this £1,000 were spent upon it. He could mention a far more desirable work than this, and one which would be of much greater benefit to the colony. He referred to the necessity of dredging the ground alongside the Geraldton jetty, where it was impossible for the coastal steamers to come alongside at present. Out of the 1884 loan there was a balance of something like £1,385 remaining unexpended out of the £2,000 voted for Geraldton; and last session it was decided to leave it to the Geraldton people to decide how they wished this unexpended balance spent, and it was generally agreed that it ought to be spent in connection with the jetty. Now if this £1,000 which it was proposed to spend on this Vasse jetty, which was of no service except to a coaster or two, were to be added to the unexpended balance at Geraldton, a very useful and necessary work could be carried out with it, not only at Geraldton

but at other ports on our northern coast, where dredging was necessary in the vicinity of the jetties. What he would recommend was this: that (say) £2,000—which would be ample—should be spent in the purchase of two iron barges and the necessary dredging appliances, and a small tug to take them out to sea to discharge the silt. The colony could not at present afford to go in for an expensive sea-going steam dredge, and the plan he proposed would answer our present requirements very well, and he hoped the House would agree with him to strike out this item.

MR. SHOLL said the member for the district last year (Mr. Layman) was much more modest than the present member, for he only asked for £400 for the completion of this Vasse jetty. The Director of Public Works gave the hon. member no encouragement then, and said it would be useless doing anything with this jetty unless they were prepared to spend some £5,000 on it, and carry it out into deep water. He could not do better than read what the hon. gentleman said (*Hansard*, vol. xiii, p. 200). If that was true last year, it must be equally true now, that unless this jetty was carried out to 19 ft. of water it would be of no use for steamers and timber vessels.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): Quite so.

MR. SHOLL: Then what is the use of wasting this £1,000 in putting a head upon the present jetty? Would it not be better to wait until we can afford to extend the jetty into deep water, and then put a head upon it? I am not opposed to this jetty being extended, for it is utterly useless as it appears at present; but, according to the Director of Public Works, this proposed expenditure will not make the jetty available for any larger craft than it is now.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said what he stated last year, as quoted by the hon. member, was perfectly correct, and he said precisely the same thing now. This £1,000 would not take the jetty into any greater depth of water, nor would it admit of timber vessels coming alongside; but it would take the jetty out some 150 ft. farther, and would enable some of our steamers and our coasters to get alongside, if there was a head where they could

fasten to—which was all he understood the member for the district wished.

MR. MARMION: Will this sum be enough to have a crane erected on the jetty, and to have the rails carried to the end of the jetty?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): No.

MR. PARKER: What would be the probable cost of extending the present rails to the end of the jetty?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): The cost of the material would not be very much; it would require about 4 tons of fresh rails.

MR. PARKER suggested that this might perhaps come out of the vote for moorings, etc., passed the other day for the jetty.

MR. SHENTON said he would support the amendment, to strike out this item. He agreed with the hon. member for Geraldton that the money could be spent to much greater advantage elsewhere. He supposed there was as much cargo to and from Champion Bay in one week as there was to and from the Vasse in a year; and, if something could be done to enable steamers to get alongside the jetty at Geraldton, by dredging and deepening the water in the vicinity of the jetty, it would be excellent work; and until the trade at the Vasse increased, he thought this additional expenditure might well be saved, especially as it would not take the jetty into deeper water.

MR. VENN said it was all very well for hon. members to talk about the claims of other districts. He submitted that the Southern parts of the colony were as much entitled to have their requirements looked after as any other districts were. The Government must be credited with knowing the wants of the various districts, and with being able to differentiate between the urgency of these requirements; and, when they found the Government making provision out of this loan for a small work like this for one district, he did not see why representatives of other districts should want to get the money diverted to their own districts. This jetty at the Vasse, although some thousands had been spent on it, was at present perfectly useless for all practical purposes, and if this £1,000, and the moorings provided for already,

would enable the steamers calling there to come alongside, the money would be well spent.

MR. PARKER hoped the committee would not strike out this vote. Hon. members were aware that the Government had just entered into a fresh agreement with the Adelaide Steamship Company for a term of five years, and that under that agreement Vasse was the terminus of the new coastal service, between the Southern ports and Geraldton; and, surely it would be only just to the people of the district, just to the trade of the district, and just to passengers, that these steamers should be able to go alongside this jetty, instead of lying out in the harbor. These Southern districts really had a strong claim upon that House. They were a long-suffering, law-abiding, peaceably disposed people, these Southern districts people. They put up with almost anything. There was that Bunbury railway for instance, which the Government built for them, and, after building it, never opened it, to this day. Now if that railway had been at Geraldton, or at Albany, we should have had indignation meetings, separation meetings, and all sorts of agitation going on about that line being kept locked up. But these Southern districts people were a law-abiding people, and they really deserved some consideration on that account; and he thought they would be very much encouraged if they found that the Legislature had not quite forgotten them.

MR. KEANE did not say nor wish that the South should not have what it required and was entitled to, but what he did say was this: with the small amount available out of this loan for the whole colony he thought that only works of the most urgent necessity should be undertaken, and, with the present small trade of the Vasse, he did not think it would make much difference whether they had a head on their jetty or not.

MR. MARMION could not see, after what was stated by the Director of Public Works, that it would be of much use putting a head on this jetty unless they extended it into deeper water. When they took it further out, they would want another head, and in course of time we should have a regular hydra-headed monster at this little Southern port.

MR. BURT asked the hon. and learned member for the district whether, if this jetty were extended any further, it would not be outside the 3-mile limit?

THE HON. SIR J. G. LEE STEERE thought that as a matter of economy it would really be advisable to agree to this vote, and have a head put on this jetty, for he was quite sure they should then have no further requests for extending the jetty. Nor did he think it would require it. The only object of extending it into deeper water would be to enable timber ships to come alongside, but he did not think there was much chance of any timber vessels coming alongside this jetty to load, as the local timber company had a jetty of its own, and it was there that these ships would come. Therefore it would be of no practical use to extend this Vasse jetty into deeper water. He understood it would be available for the steamers engaged in the coastal trade, if the necessary mooring accommodation were provided; and he could not help thinking that even as a matter of economy it would be a good thing for the House to vote this money, have a head put on the jetty, and so save any further requests for its extension.

MR. SHOLL said, looking at the matter in that light, perhaps it would be as well to vote this money, but they had no assurance that such would be the case, and, after what had fallen from the Director of Public Works, last year, it appeared to him this money would simply be wasted.

Question put: That the vote be struck out.

Committee divided.

Ayes	5
Noes	13
Majority against			8

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. H. Brockman	Mr. E. K. Brockman
Mr. Marmion	Hon. J. Forrest
Mr. Morrison	Hon. Sir M. Fraser, &c. &c.
Mr. Shenton	Mr. Horgan
Mr. Keane (Teller.)	Mr. Parker
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Randall
	Mr. Scott
	Mr. Sholl
	Hon. Sir J. G. Lee Steere, Kt.
	Mr. Venn
	Hon. C. N. Warton
	Hon. J. A. Wright (Teller)

MR. SHENTON, referring to the item "Bushing Gascoyne river, £1,500" asked how it was proposed to spend this money?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the work would be of a similar character to that done at North Fremantle, to protect the river bank. He had sent down a surveyor, who had made a study of the matter, and had furnished a report and estimates, which he would read for the information of the House. (Report read.)

MR. MARMION said he really could not see that this was a work of such urgent necessity as to require that the money for it should be provided out of a loan. Nor was it a work of that permanent character which loan money should be spent on. It appeared that this loan was going to be something like the last loan—the principle of distribution being that every district should have a portion of it whether it was wanted or not. Though personally interested in this Gascoyne district, he should object to this item.

MR. SHOLL said the House passed a resolution only last year in favor of this very work being undertaken. It was acknowledged then that it was a necessary work, for the protection of the town of Carnarvon itself. The only question at the time was the difficulty of finding the money. He had since received a letter from the chairman of the Roads Board pointing out the necessity of proceeding with the work; and the sooner it was taken in hand the better. It was absurd for members who knew nothing about the matter to say that the work was not necessary when they had the assurance of the Director of Public Works last year that it was, and that it was only want of funds that had prevented its being carried out.

The item was agreed to.

MR. MARMION referred to the vote "River Improvements and Steam Dredge, £2,000," and said they had already voted or diverted several thousand pounds out of loan funds for this work, and—he did not care what might be said to the contrary—there was undoubtedly a strong wave of opinion against the continuation of the experiments at the mouth of the river, unless the whole thing was carried out in a systematic way. He thought it would be better to wait until they saw the result of what had already been done. They had been told that the last vote obtained for this pur-

pose would be sufficient, but now they were asked for a further vote, and there was no assurance given that this would be the last. He thought it was premature to vote any more until they saw the result of the experiments already attempted. For himself, he had no faith in any permanent improvement resulting from them.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the total amount voted hitherto had been £3,000, out of which they had expended between £1,200 and £1,300, but that was chiefly upon the Dredge itself. What was now required was the construction of a train wall, in order to concentrate the scour in its proper channel. He was thoroughly satisfied himself with the work done so far, and with the probable results. He believed they would be able to make a passage through the bar, and to keep it open afterwards. There had been an impression that there was no scour, but they had found there was considerable scour—so much so that with the experiments made it had increased the depth some 3ft. or 4ft. He thought it was a great pity that this Swan river should be left blocked up as it was by this bar, and that they should do all in their power to utilise this river, connecting their chief seaport with the capital. He had every confidence himself that a passage could be made through this bar, at any rate for small craft.

MR. MARMION said the hon. gentleman might call it a "scour"; he himself called it a current, and a current that changed its direction with the tide. He had been reliably informed that the increased depth referred to had already silted up one half; and nothing would convince him that anything satisfactory would ever be done to permanently deepen this channel, so as to make it of any practical use.

MR. SHOLL said if the Director of Public Works succeeded in making a passage for small craft through this bar, this money would be well expended. He thought it was a disgrace to the community that this river of ours was not made available for small vessels to go in and out of the harbor. He was afraid that this strong opposition on the part of the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) to a passage being made

through this bar was owing to a fear on his part that vessels should some day come up to Perth, and harbor there.

MR. MARMION: Not at all.

MR. PEARSE said that from inquiries he had made with regard to this work, it was very satisfactory, so far, and he thought it was only fair to the Director of Public Works that he should have an opportunity of carrying on his experiments.

MR. RANDELL believed it was the first time in the history of attempted improvements to this river that the attempt had been made on anything like a systematic plan, and he thought it was extremely desirable that the Director of Public Works should have at his disposal a sufficient sum of money to carry out his plan. It would be a misfortune if the work had to be left off, when it was in an unfinished state, and that for the want of a little additional expenditure all previous expenditure should be rendered to a great extent worthless. He had every reason to believe from what he had seen of the work already done, that the work when completed would do away with the present source of mischief, and that the bar channel would be kept open, for the smaller class of crafts—a consummation devoutly to be desired.

The item was agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser), referring to the item "Contingencies, £5,038," thought the committee would agree with him as to the wisdom of providing for contingent expenditure. The sum here set down was the exact balance left after the other appropriations had been made, as originally proposed by the Government. The committee, however, had struck out some of these votes, while, on the other hand, there were other proposals on the notice paper. With regard to the unappropriated balance, the committee would determine how it should be allotted, but with regard to the vote for "Contingencies" the Government must ask the committee not to trespass upon that vote. It would be in the recollection of hon. members the difficulties in which the Government were placed in past years, when dealing with loans antecedent to the last loan of half a million, by reason of the whole sum being appropriated without any provision being made for contingent ex-

penses. With regard to the charges in connection with the raising of our loans there was evidently a considerable amount of misconception abroad. Hon. members would see exactly what these charges were, on reference to the official returns of the Treasury, published in the Blue Book. According to these returns it was evident that the charges in connection with the last loan, including the Crown Agents' commission, amounted only to a little over one per cent. The Government hoped that when the present loan was put on the market it would be floated at par—he himself hoped it might be over par; at the same time it was not possible at that moment to say what it would realise, therefore there was every reason why we should adopt a prudent course, and put aside this 5 per cent. for contingencies. With regard to the unappropriated balance, consequent upon the items that were reduced or expunged from the schedule, provision would have to be made for the duplication of the telegraph wire between Perth and Fremantle, if the House agreed to the Postmaster General's suggestion and the report of the select committee. There was also a motion standing in the name of the hon. member for the North (Mr. Richardson), with regard to a vote of £2,000 for a stock route between Northampton and the Ashburton. The hon. member, he believed, had gone home, but he informed him (the Colonial Secretary) before leaving, that he would be satisfied with £1,200 for this work; and, acting as the hon. member's friend, in his absence, he now moved that the following item be added to the schedule: "Stock route, Ashburton to Northampton, £1,200."

MR. SHOLL hoped the Government would see that this money was spent in some systematic way and not in dribs and drabs by the various roads boards. If these boards were left to their own devices to fix upon a stock route, he was afraid that instead of having one continuous route we should have several routes, each district selecting the route that would best suit itself. He hoped the Government would send someone to explore this route, and fix upon one that would be of general benefit, and not only meet the requirements of the Ashburton and other northern districts, but also the

Gascoyne and the Murchison districts, if possible.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the hon. member might rest assured—although this was not a Government motion—that every care would be exercised in appropriating this money, and the roads boards and the municipalities of the districts concerned would be consulted in the matter; and the hon. member who had put forward the proposal would have every opportunity of advising in the matter. He regarded this question as one of general interest—it was in the interest of the North to have a market for its stock, and it was in the interest of the South to be able to have its meat supply at a reasonable rate. Hon. members might fearlessly leave the matter in the hands of the Government, as they were all in accord as to the necessity of providing this stock route, and it would be the duty of the Government to see that the object in view was attained.

MR. MARMION hoped that before any portion of this vote was expended the Government would have some definite scheme organised, and see that the object in view was really attained. It seemed to him there was an element of danger in placing it in the hands of the various local boards, who would probably take care that the wants of their own particular districts were supplied in the matter of this route, irrespective of the wants of other districts. He hoped this sum would be made to go the whole distance, and that they should not have the Government coming there again for supplementary votes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said it was not a very easy matter to settle how this money should be expended, and give universal satisfaction. He had a knowledge of the country which this route would have to traverse, and he thought the most necessary portion of the country for which to provide a water supply for stock travelling would be that portion from Geraldton to where the road led to the Murchison. The other portions of the route were pretty well watered, but on the portion he had referred to there were very few reserves or permanent water supplies. He was afraid that £1,200 would not go very far, but he would make it go as far as he could.

MR. VENN said he knew something of this route, having gone over it some years ago. No doubt that portion of the country referred to by the Commissioner of Crown Lands would require attention, but there were intervening sections of country besides that, which would have to be looked after. He thought it was very desirable the Government should have a rough survey made of the route, and go to work in a systematic manner, with some well-defined object in view.

MR. BURT said members must not run away with the idea that this £1,200 was going to provide a route all the way from Roebourne to Perth—nothing of the sort. Nor was that the intention of his hon. colleague when he moved in the matter. The amount he asked for was £2,000, not £1,200, and that was for a stock route between Ashburton and Northampton only. Therefore he hoped the Government would not be led away by the idea that they were expected, with this £1,200, to open up a route all the way from Roebourne to Perth. It would be nonsense to attempt it; the money would not go a quarter of the way. The Government, he thought, would require to obtain a great deal of information from experienced stock-drivers before determining what way this route should take, if they wished to spend it to the best advantage.

MR. SHOLL thought it would be ridiculous for the Government to seek this information from drovers and shepherds who had been following the same route ever since Mr. Hooley first went up there twenty years ago. They ought to have a proper route explored.

MR. PEARSE thought it was very necessary that the route should be extended from the Irwin down to Perth. There were quite as many difficulties on this side as on the other side; and, if the route were brought along the sea coast he thought there would not be much difficulty in discovering water, and that it would not be a very costly undertaking.

MR. KEANE thought it should be clearly understood that the money was to be expended by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and not by the roads boards, for in no other way could they expect this work to be satisfactorily and systematically carried out.

MR. BURT hoped it would not be considered necessary to send a survey party to

explore this route, otherwise the whole vote would be swallowed up in surveys. The Commissioner of Crown Lands, with what knowledge he already possessed, could get all the information he required from drovers and others, and then declare a route. It was nonsense to talk about an exploring party and a survey party, when they had only £1,200 to spend.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) was much in accord with what had just fallen from the hon. member for the North. He thought that, having obtained what information he could, he should send a party of men in charge of a trustworthy officer to sink for wells.

Mr. MARMION asked why the Ashburton should be selected as the starting point? He hoped the Government would not be forgetful of the necessities and importance of other Northern districts, when providing this stock route. There was a decidedly weak link in the chain between Ashburton and Robe River, and he was informed that an expenditure of about £300 would render the chain of communication complete, from Rosebourn to Geraldton, and he thought this ought to be done.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he had no objection to alter the item, as proposed, extending the route to Robe River.

This was done, and the item agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he had now to move that a sum of £2,000 be added to carry out the recommendation of the Postmaster General *re* duplicating the telegraph line between Perth and Geraldton.

Mr. SHENTON asked whether in arriving at this amount the question of running a line from Gingin *via* Dundaragan had been taken into consideration?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) read a memorandum on the subject from the Postmaster General, from which it appeared that the proposed line from Gingin was not likely to be a financial success, and the select committee considered that the duplication of the present line was of much greater importance than the construction of a strictly local line.

Mr. SHENTON said that after the explanation of the Colonial Secretary, and

seeing the imperative necessity of duplicating the line from Perth to Geraldton, which would absorb all the available funds, he would not at present press his motion for the extension of the line from Gingin. (Motion withdrawn.) At the same time he hoped the Government would not lose sight of the requirements of the districts he had referred to, and which he had been advocating in that House for some years.

Mr. SHOLL thought it was premature to vote this money until they discussed the report of the select committee on the Postmaster General's memorandum, with regard to increasing the telegraph rates, and the cable proposals. For his part he was entirely opposed to providing any facilities for the working of this cable, looking at the way the Secretary of State had quietly snuffed out the proposals of another company, which would have been far more advantageous for this colony.

Mr. MARMION said the hon. member would be able presently to give expression to his views on that point, when his (Mr. Marmion's) motion came on. With regard to the vote now proposed, he would suggest that as the available balance not yet appropriated out of the proposed loan was £2,988, this vote should be made £1,988 (instead of £2,000), so as to leave a round balance of £1,000 to be further dealt with.

This was assented to, and the vote altered accordingly.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said he had another item to add—"Grant to Municipal Council of Perth, to purchase an engine for pumping water from the river Swan, £500." He did this at the suggestion of the hon. member the Mayor-elect of Perth. He believed it was considered very necessary to have an engine for this purpose. It would devolve entirely upon the Municipality to deal with the matter. This was simply a Government grant towards procuring the engine.

Mr. VENN would like some little information about this pumping engine before voting £500 towards it. It was rather a new departure that they should be asked to vote a novel item like this without any information at all. For his own part he knew nothing about it, except that it was to pump water. What were the facts?

MR. SCOTT said the facts were these: the municipality of Perth had borrowed to the full extent of its powers under the Act, and it was highly desirable that there should be a powerful engine obtained for pumping water in cases of fire, and for other purposes, but the Municipal Council had not the means of obtaining one without some assistance. They had placed some £200 or £300—which was all they could afford—on the municipal estimates for the purpose, and they asked the Government to assist them. It was estimated that about £700 would be required. The engine itself was expected to cost £300 or £400, and it was proposed to have a number of large tanks at the Town Hall, and tanks in other parts of the town connecting with the Town Hall tanks, so as to provide an ample supply, for all emergencies.

MR. SHENTON said this matter had engaged the serious attention of the City Council during his term of office as Mayor, and, at a recent meeting of rate-payers, it was agreed that the Government should be asked to assist the municipality in the matter. It was estimated that the whole scheme, when completed, would entail an expenditure of about £1,000, and the municipality thought they might fairly ask the Government to provide a moiety of this, seeing the value and extent of Government property in the city which was exempted from taxation, and had never contributed anything to the rates.

MR. SHOLL said it seemed to him they had now commenced with the "slaughter of the innocents." The Council was about to be prorogued, and there were a few pounds left of this loan unappropriated, and there was simply a scramble for the balance. This might be a desirable way of spending the money, providing pumping engines, but he warned the House it would be a very dangerous precedent. Every other municipality would now want a pumping engine. Next year they would have applications for assistance from Fremantle, from Geraldton, from Albany, and possibly from Carnarvon. He was not going to oppose the vote, but he thought it was very irregular and improper to put votes like this on the Loan Estimates at a moment's notice, and have them passed in a thin House. He noticed there would still be

£500 left, and as he badly wanted a boiler in his back yard he hoped the committee would let him have it.

Item put and passed.

Item: Contingencies, £5,038:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said as there was £500 unappropriated they could not adopt a more prudent course than increase this item to £5,500, to meet any contingent demands. He had already said he did not think they would require much of this vote to meet the expense of floating the loan: still it was better to be provided for all contingencies. Of course the money would not be spent, unless it was found necessary.

MR. MARMION thought it was only reasonable that the Government should make provision for meeting contingent expenses, but he did not himself anticipate that anything would be required in connection with the floating of this loan, which he believed could be floated above par.

Item agreed to.

Loan Estimates reported.

ADJOURNMENT FOR WANT OF QUORUM.

At twenty minutes to five o'clock, p.m., the SPEAKER's attention was drawn to the fact that a quorum was not present, and, at a quarter to five o'clock, p.m.—the only members present being the Hon. Sir M. Fraser, the Hon. J. A. Wright, Mr. Randell, Mr. Pearce, Mr. Marmion, the Hon. J. Forrest, and Sir T. C. Campbell,—the SPEAKER adjourned the Council for want of a quorum.