

Legislative Assembly,*Monday, 13th November, 1899.*

Message: Consent to Private Bill—Paper presented—
 Question: Appointment of Conservator of Forests—
 Motion: Sitting Day, a change—Mining on Private
 Property Amendment Bill, first reading—Annual
 Estimates: Treasury Votes passed, Police to end;
 Railways, postponed; Lands, to end—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at
 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.**MESSAGE—CONSENT TO PRIVATE BILL.**

Message from the Governor received and read, stating that His Excellency consented, on behalf of Her Majesty, to the Assembly's dealing with a private Bill entitled the Land Act Amendment Bill, in so far as it affected the interest of the Crown.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Return showing commission on interest paid by Crown Agents and by the London and Westminster Bank, 1898-9.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS.

MR. VOSPER asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: Is it the intention of the Government to appoint a Conservator of Forests, *vice* Mr. Ednie Browne, deceased?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member will observe that the latter portion of the question does not appear as given notice of, for the reason that it is irregular to ask a question in order to obtain an expression of opinion from anyone in the House. If the hon. member wishes to obtain an expression of opinion, he must do so by a distinct motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell) replied: The whole question is now under consideration, but no decision has been arrived at.

MOTION—SITTING DAY, A CHANGE.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House do sit on Friday, 17th inst., in lieu of Wednesday.

He regretted to have to submit this motion, but he did so on somewhat personal grounds. He happened to represent a place called Bunbury, where an agricultural show was to be held on Wednesday next, and furthermore this was what was called "Bunbury week." It had been the desire in Bunbury that he should spend the whole week there; but he was of course unable to do this, owing to his duties in this House. He had thought, however, that Wednesday being the principal day of the agricultural show, it might not be inconvenient for hon. members to change the day of sitting to Friday; and, should the motion be carried, he would be glad if hon. members would accompany him to Bunbury, and, so far as he could see, they might leave Perth in the morning and get back early next day, or at any rate in time for the sitting of Parliament on Thursday. It would be an agreeable interval for hon. members to visit this pleasant port of Bunbury, where they would receive a hearty welcome, not only from himself as representative of the district, but from the people. A member of Parliament always liked to be present amongst his constituents on such an occasion as this; and though he regretted to have to submit the motion, great pressure had been brought on him to arrange to be in Bunbury during the week.

Question put and passed.

**MINING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Introduced by MR. VOSPER, and read a first time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.**IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.**

Consideration resumed from previous sitting; Treasury votes continued.

Police, £10,182 2s.:

Item, Special Constables, £200:

MR. GEORGE: What was the meaning of this item?

THE PREMIER: Special constables were those who were taken on temporarily as required. This amount would not be sufficient for the year, as many special constables had been employed recently.

MR. GEORGE: Were they not called "probationers"?

THE PREMIER: No. Special constables were employed in cases of emergency, and only temporarily.

Item passed.

Item, Lodging Allowance in lieu of quarters, £4,843 :

MR. WALLACE: Would the Premier explain this item ?

THE PREMIER: Allowances to special constables in lieu of quarters were controlled by regulation. Those who were provided with quarters received no allowance. In Fremantle and Perth there was a regulation amount paid to constables in lieu of quarters, £15 to £25 a year.

MR. WALLACE: This allowance was abused. In country places the allowance was £40 a year for lodgings in lieu of quarters, but, in many cases, in lieu of the allowance the Government provided small tents, in which constables had to live and do all their work. If the department considered constables entitled to lodging allowance, why not give the money to allow the constables to provide lodging for themselves, which they could provide much better than that given by the department. The ration allowance was also cut down in outlying places. In Peak Hill, where there was a splendid officer, for 18 months or two years the quarters provided had been two small tents.

THE PREMIER: There was a rule throughout the service that it was not intended officers should make money out of allowances, which were given to pay expenses likely to be incurred; and if an allowance was made for lodging, it was intended that the allowance should be paid for the lodging. In the towns of the colony, such as Perth and Fremantle, and other places where lodging was obtainable, the allowance was small, and it scarcely paid for the lodging; but in country districts tents were provided, and in such instances he could not see why the lodging allowances should be paid.

MR. GEORGE: Was not the lodging allowance paid to increase the salary ?

THE PREMIER: That was not intended. It was not necessary to give the lodging allowance when tents were provided.

MR. MOORHEAD: Tents were supplied to policemen in the country.

THE PREMIER: If tents were not supplied, what would the constables do ?

MR. MOORHEAD: The Government should provide the police officers with permanent quarters.

THE PREMIER: Why could not constables live in tents ? He (the Premier) had lived under canvas, and very small canvas too, for 20 years, when he was travelling about the country.

MR. MOORHEAD: Prisoners were chained to logs, in the country.

THE PREMIER: There was no reason why constables could not live under canvas: it was a comfortable mode of living too. In all the colonies this was done. In South Australia, he had known constables live under canvas for years. All through the goldfields here, people lived under canvas, not for months but years. The warden at Mount Magnet had lived under canvas for years, and it was very comfortable, too. There was no reason why people could not live under canvas in country places. He was opposed to building elaborate quarters for officers, until a place was settled, when the Government would build quarters. It would be better to pay the allowances than to build quarters in every little place. As yet the system of police barracks had not been adopted. No doubt it would be much cheaper to have barracks for the police to live in than to pay a large amount away for lodging. It was more convenient and comfortable for officers to receive the allowance and choose their own place of abode, than to go into barracks and associate closely with persons they might not wish to associate with.

MR. VOSPER: While it was right that constables should live under canvas while a place was unsettled, still at Peak Hill, which had been a settled place for two or three years, the police had to live under canvas. While the Government provided constables with proper quarters, they did not provide proper quarters for prisoners.

THE PREMIER: The Warden at Peak Hill had not quarters there, yet.

MR. VOSPER: It was time he had. In some places, prisoners were tied to logs, and on a cold night it was a wonder that some of the prisoners did not die.

MR. EWING: This was a suitable time to say something in regard to the manner in which prisoners in some parts of the colony were treated. It had been suggested that while it was satisfactory that officers of police should live in tents, as many other persons had to do in outlying districts of the colony, yet where there was a police station the probability was there would be prisoners, and the Government had not made any provision, in many places, for the accommodation of prisoners. Consequently, instead of seeing men locked up in a reasonable and proper way, prisoners were chained to logs and trees; a condition of things highly undesirable. Although all might agree with the Premier that policemen were happy and comfortable under canvas, yet while a policeman was stationed at a place for the arrest of offenders, the Government should provide a place in which to lock up prisoners. What he saw at Peak Hill, and what many hon. members had seen in different parts of the colony, was not a credit to the Government or the colony. He trusted the Government would provide some sort of quarters for the police, and for prisoners, in outlying districts.

THE PREMIER: It was all very well for hon. members, like the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) to criticise the Government in regard to providing police cells and quarters in different parts of the colony, but it must be remembered that the building of quarters and cells necessitated large expenditure.

MR. EWING: It only required a little galvanised iron.

THE PREMIER: The first thing the Government should do in outlying places, according to the hon. members, was to build a lockup. He considered it was no hardship at all for a man who had committed an offence being restrained from doing injury to himself and others.

MR. VOSPER: Put the prisoner in irons—was that it?

THE PREMIER: Do anything with him to restrain him from doing an injury to himself and others. If a man got drunk, he should be locked up. It was only when a person was very obstreperous that anything at all was done with him. The member for the Swan might go to Peak Hill on an occasion of great rejoicing, and some poor fellow, perhaps, took

more than he ought to have done, and being obstreperous the man was locked up. No member would desire to see a man inhumanly treated, but cells could not be provided in all places. At Peak Hill there was no Warden's Court, no Warden's quarters.

MR. MOORHEAD: Oh, yes.

THE PREMIER: There were no substantial quarters. The warden lived under canvas, and the police lived under canvas also. But it appeared that the first thing the Government should do was to provide quarters for the police and for prisoners, even before a Warden's Court was erected. The principle for which the hon. member (Mr. Ewing) was arguing would not stand.

MR. MOORHEAD: Peak Hill had been settled for a considerable time, and had become the centre of an increasing mining population.

THE PREMIER: How many people were there?

MR. MOORHEAD: About 560 in Peak Hill itself. The Golden Horseshoe had sprung up, and there were the Gravel leases. If one took a circuit, Peak Hill was on the high road to Lake Way and the north-east goldfields.

THE PREMIER: Not Lake Way, unless one went backward.

MR. MOORHEAD: The circuit would include Lake Way, he presumed. There was a Warden's Court in that district, and a Warden had jurisdiction to impose imprisonment for the violation of an injunction. When his friend visited Peak Hill, the case he saw was not that of a man locked up through drunkenness, but through disobedience of a Warden's order. One man was sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment, and this man, a respectable miner, was promptly chained to a log.

THE PREMIER: Was he chained to a log?

MR. EWING: Yes. A prisoner must be chained to a log, for there was no other place to put him.

THE PREMIER: That was an assertion he would not admit.

MR. MOORHEAD: The man to whom he referred lost all his money in taking the case to the Supreme Court, and the injunction was upset. If the Local Court had the power to make an order for payment of a debt, and the debtor

refused to pay every instalment, he might be chained up for disobedience of the order. If a vote for £500 had been passed for Wardens' quarters, one did not think the Premier would be making a large inroad if, in the Supplementary Estimates, he provided a sum for cells or temporary premises for those unfortunate persons who might be locked up for offences other than drunkenness.

MR. VOSPER: The Premier was right when he said this question had been raised through the experience of members.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member had not seen very much.

MR. VOSPER: A good deal had been seen by him.

THE PREMIER: Not recently.

MR. VOSPER: Not recently, he admitted. He remembered one instance particularly, at Mount Magnet, where two men were chained up. He (Mr. Vosper) was living in a hotel in the place where they were chained up, and they made such a noise—

THE PREMIER: How long ago was that?

MR. VOSPER: Three or four years ago. The Premier was always trying to get him or anyone else off the track. He could not cite a case only a week old, but cases of the kind could be cited by other members. He only said that three years ago there was a case of two men being chained to a log, and they got into such exhaustion owing to the extreme cold that it was necessary to make a fire for them. That sort of thing was going on in other parts of the colony at the present time—at Peak Hill, Lake Way, and elsewhere.

THE PREMIER: There were no police at Lake Way, he thought.

MR. VOSPER: There were at Mount Samuel, at all events.

THE PREMIER said he did not think so.

MR. VOSPER: Another instance was known to him. It did not occur recently, but was a striking example of what might happen in connection with this chaining up. In this case a constable in charge of a small township was extremely zealous in holiday time, the result being that he got about ten or a dozen prisoners, and having no tree or bush to which he could chain them, he took them to a black-

smith's shop, where he tied them to a huge wheel of a dray. By-and-by those men got comparatively sober, picked up the wheel on their shoulders, and carried it off to the public-house. The result was that when the policeman came to look for his prisoners he found them all drunk in the public-house, and he had to transport them back. Speaking seriously, wherever possible the Government should endeavour to do away with this system, which was certainly inhuman. It seemed hard that a man should, for a comparatively trivial offence, be chained up through a long cold night, in consequence of which he might suffer seriously.

THE PREMIER: Where the system could be done away with it should be, and he would look into the matter and see if it could be managed.

Item passed.

Item, Ration Allowances, special to police in certain districts:

MR. GEORGE: What were the certain districts?

THE PREMIER: In the North and in goldfields districts a greater allowance was given to the constables than in the other districts.

MR. GEORGE: Why not state the amount in each district?

THE PREMIER: A return could be given, if he wished it.

MR. GEORGE: The item was one he would like postponed until the report was produced.

Item passed.

Item, Allowance for maintenance to native trackers, £2,781 12s.:

MR. GEORGE: The Premier told him a little while ago about the native trackers, and said it would mean only about a man and a half throughout the year. But last year it took £2,865 7s. 2d. to feed them, and he would like an explanation.

THE PREMIER: In all country districts in the colony there were native assistants attached to police stations. A constable had to feed the natives, and he received something like 30s. a month to do it.

MR. GEORGE: Did the natives work for nothing?

THE PREMIER: They get no salaries. Often they were prisoners from Rott-nest.

MR. GEORGE: Natives were made to catch kangaroos and feed upon them.

THE PREMIER: Thirty shillings a month was a very small sum.

Item passed.

Item, Subsidy to Police Benefit Fund, namely rewards £100, gratuities £1,000; total £1,100:

MR. VOSPER: What had the rewards been given for?

THE PREMIER: The sum of £1,000 was a contribution to the benefit fund, which had been in existence many years and was founded by statute. All the officers contributed to that fund, and when they retired through length of service, or died, or were invalided, the amount was paid either to themselves or to their relatives. As to the rewards, £100, he really did not know to whom they were paid, except that they must be for some special services. Sometimes the police did meritorious service and the Commissioner recommended a small reward to show appreciation. Such cases were very rare.

MR. VOSPER: It was not for "information received?"

THE PREMIER: No; There was a vote for information somewhere, he thought, but that was a confidential vote, and no one knew anything about it but the Commissioner himself and probably the Minister. The sum was very little, and he thought it would have to be increased.

Item passed; other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Defences, £20,569 11s. 4d.:

MR. GEORGE: Under the present circumstances it would not be wise to question any of the items. Had the Government considered any scheme by which a permanent force might be kept in the colony? The matter was one which he thought all the colonies would have to face some day, whether they federated or not; and they could not face it at a better time than the present. Even if we established only a small force, it would be a good thing. He trusted the time would never come when it would be necessary to employ soldiers to keep order; but it might, and it would be an ill day for this colony if, in the case of local disorder, there was nothing behind the backs of the special constables, more than the flimsy respect for law which obtained with some persons. It behoved us to have a body of men disciplined and

well-trained, to send forward with even more confidence than we sent off the lads who left for Africa a few days ago. Apart from the federal and marine forces, the amount spent on defences totalled nearly £14,000; and, without reducing the expenditure for the existing military establishment, a sum might be placed on the Estimates sufficient to form the nucleus of a permanent defence force. All must feel proud of the response made throughout Australia in the matter of the Transvaal contingents, but it would have been much more satisfactory if, instead of volunteers, a small body of trained men could have been sent. He hoped that next session would witness the establishment of a permanent defence force.

THE PREMIER: The Committee would doubtless sympathise with the hon. member's sentiments. A country with any pretensions to be a self-governing State ought to have some permanent military force; and while he (the Premier) had always been, and still was, strongly in favour of the volunteer movement, it was undeniable that volunteers were not so useful for the support of a State as paid troops. The special object of volunteers was to repel invasion from abroad; they were not intended for the prevention of civil discord, though no doubt, if called upon, their services would be available for that purpose. The Government might well consider the question of the establishment of a permanent force. This could not be done immediately, but if hon. members were favourably disposed towards the project, he would be glad to consider the matter during the recess. Without an adequate force behind them, no Government could carry on the affairs of the country, for there would then be nothing to rely on but the loyalty and the law-abiding spirit of the people. [A MEMBER: Public opinion.] Public opinion was very good, but might not be sufficient in an emergency.

MR. VOSPER: Force, unless supported by public opinion, would be useless.

THE PREMIER: The public opinion of British people was undoubtedly on the side of law and order, but law and order could only be maintained by an adequate force. A permanent military force could be established without great additional

expense. Our volunteers were a fine body of men and well worthy of support, but their efficiency would be greatly increased if they mixed from time to time with trained soldiers belonging to a permanent establishment. Much could not be done in this direction; but, as suggested by the hon. member (Mr. George), a commencement could be made in a small way, and as the colony's resources increased, a fairly numerous force could be organised. There was already a small federal military force at Albany, and there should be a similar establishment at Fremantle; in fact Fremantle should be fortified to the same extent as Albany, and these two forces could form the nucleus of a still larger permanent army. With this object he was quite in sympathy.

MR. CONOLLY supported the suggestion with pleasure, more especially as it had recently been his duty to introduce to this House a message to the same effect from another place. It could hardly be said that the volunteer force of this colony was all that could be wished; in fact, several gentlemen who had largely interested themselves in the local volunteer movement had told him that the spirit which inspired volunteering in the early days had entirely died away, and that the force was at present almost moribund. The rates of payment for soldiers or militia in the colonies were abnormally high—for privates 2s., 3s., or 4s. a day, and for sergeants, 8s. or 10s. Such wages were altogether unknown in any country having a standing army. It would be interesting to try in this colony the experiment of paying the private soldier, not 1s. a day, as in the old country, but, say, 1s. 6d.

MR. VOSPER: Few, if any, would enlist.

MR. CONOLLY: But the keep of a soldier cost more than 1s. 6d., and his life was not very arduous, but was, in the old country, regarded as somewhat luxurious.

MR. MOORHEAD: Yet it did not appeal to the masses here.

MR. CONOLLY: There were reasons for that in all young colonies.

MR. MOORHEAD: And in older countries, too.

MR. CONOLLY: In older countries there was no lack of recruits. He hoped

the debate would result in the establishment of a permanent military force.

MR. VOSPER: More good might be done by improving the volunteer system, instead of raising a small permanent force which would be largely ornamental and could hardly exceed 300 men.

THE PREMIER: Less.

MR. VOSPER: Better fall back on a militia, following the example of Canada. Enrol the names of a large number of men who would go into training two or three months every year, and pay them for that period. It would be neither possible nor desirable to train them all at one time; therefore let the training proceed all the year round, or let men go into camp when they found it convenient. Many men in casual employment would be glad to obtain six weeks', or two months' work from the State, and a large body of militia would thus be available for emergencies. There would have to be permanent officers, and perhaps a few permanent soldiers, but most of the expense would be for arms and munitions of war, and for drill instructors. Two or three thousand militiamen would be better than a large permanent force on small pay, or a small permanent force with large pay. He had been rather astonished by a visit he had paid to the fort at Albany. As a rule, a stranger trying to enter a fort was stopped by a sentry, but he had walked some sixty or seventy yards inside the fortifications before he was noticed by the garrison. There was no sentry anywhere about, though a number of men were in the guard room. Ultimately he had been stopped by a soldier apparently off duty.

THE PREMIER said that when at Albany he had always seen a man "on sentry-go."

MR. VOSPER: No doubt when the Premier went there everything was very spruce, but he (Mr. Vosper) might have blown up the magazine or taken a sketch of the whole concern without being discovered. As a mere matter of fact, he did not think he would have been found at all, had he not been looking for some member of the garrison to make an inquiry; and if the proposed military force were conducted in that slipshod manner, it would only be money wasted. No look-out seemed to be kept, on either sea or land, and while this occurred some

two years ago, he had no knowledge that matters were different now. If anything were done in the direction of spending the people's money we should not, just to gratify our vanity, have merely an ornamental force; because what was wanted was a citizen army, in which all would take a patriotic interest, and which would be capable of resisting aggression.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Soldiers and warlike implements were a subject about which he did not know much, and with which he had but little sympathy. A year ago he mentioned, and the matter occurred again to him to-night, that in this colony, with the resources and limited men at command, it would better to put the whole of our strength into such implements as Maxim guns, which, with a limited number of well-trained men, would prove more effective than any other form of defence within our reach. He understood that the Government had already taken some steps in this direction, and that there were some machine guns somewhere in the colony; and with 50 or 100 men trained to deal with this deadly kind of weapon, we would be doing very much more for the defence of this country than could possibly be done in any other way. The suggestion thrown out by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) was valuable in its way, because by that means a larger number of persons drilled and with some knowledge of arms, might be obtained. But after all, in a matter of defence we should have to depend very much on the permanent men of the force. In time of war there must be properly trained men, and it would be beyond the colony's reach to maintain a very large force, the power of which could only be increased by the character of the weapons placed in their hands.

MR. HIGHAM supported the vote because he believed the volunteer element to be one of great usefulness, not only as a means of defence, but as a means of giving a large portion of the population good physical training. He took exception to the neglect of the cadet force, as shown in the Estimates, because the cadets ought to be encouraged in every possible way. He noticed that an item of £400 in 1898-99 for rifles for senior cadets had not been expended, and that there was no item placed under that head

this year. Some of the cadets showed considerable enthusiasm in the movement and would, if encouraged, ultimately form a useful element in the defence of the country.

THE PREMIER: There was a capitation grant of £500 for clothing for the cadets.

MR. HIGHAM: But the vote of £400 for rifles had not been expended, and he regretted there was no intention of making any provision this year, because as a schoolboy he realised the benefits that many lads received from the training in a cadet corps. There was an item which, perhaps, belonged to the ornamental part of the defence, but which showed an injustice to local corps, so far as their bands were concerned. The head-quarters band was very well provided for, but for the bands of all the other corps in the colony, the allowance was only £200. He did not desire to decry the head-quarters band, but there were other bands who, considering their numbers and enthusiasm, were equally deserving of support. As he had said, the volunteer movement should be encouraged in every way, and care taken to select officers who would, by their enthusiasm, infect the members of the rank and file, and in time raise an efficient force to fall back on in times of emergency. The Perth and Fremantle corps were deserving of every credit, as were other corps which he need not particularise; and he hoped the vote would be passed without question. He supported the appointment of a small permanent force of thoroughly well-trained men who, if brought into contact periodically with the volunteer forces, would cause mutual benefit.

MR. OLDHAM supported the vote. The best course to adopt in regard to defences, both internal and external, was the establishment of a not very large permanent artillery force and as large as possible a militia. He did not propose the Canadian plan, by which men were in training for three months of the year, but the plan adopted in Victoria and other Eastern colonies, where the militia were paid £12 per head a year, and in return gave a certain number of days and half days of training, and went into camp for a week at Easter. Major-General Tulloch, an eminent soldier at one time in command in Victoria, said that the militia in that colony would render as good an

account in the field as any portion of the British army; and he (Mr. Oldham) had no doubt the militia had retained that standard of efficiency. All to do now was to get together a sufficient force to defend ourselves from invasion, and he was firmly convinced there would always be found any amount of men willing to undertake the work.

MR. MORGANS: It was an obligation of the mother country to defend us.

MR. OLDHAM: The amount of £150 for prizes for gunnery and musketry appeared to be altogether inadequate, considering the beneficial results of the tests; and in the other colonies this item was one of the largest in the vote, on the ground that men ought to be given an incentive to practice. It was absolutely necessary to train men to be expert shots in the field, as illustrated by the deadly firing of the Boers, and that could only be done by offering prizes for shooting. A suggestion, which had not yet found favour in the colony, was that a rifle club should be established, in which shooting practice could be got without joining the volunteer or militia force; and there were any number of young fellows who would be prepared to practice if supplied with a rifle. He believed some of the very best shots in the Eastern colonies, men who had won Queen's prizes, had been members of rifle clubs, without any particular military training. He hoped the Premier, having heard expressions of opinion from hon. members that an increase of the military force of the colony was desirable, would, at any rate during next session, do something in that direction.

MR. ROBSON: As one who had taken an interest in the volunteer movement, he suggested that the colony could not do better, as a start, than maintain a permanent force of militia, probably of 600 men well officered. If these militia had a small annual fee granted, and a little pay while up for training, say for 28 days of the year at Karrakatta, that would be quite sufficient to begin with. The men should go into camp annually and be well drilled, and that would be a good time to bring the volunteers from all parts of the colony down, say during the last fortnight, to be trained with the permanent force. He could not find on the Estimates of this

year, or of last year, any item for the annual encampment of volunteers at Karrakatta. In previous years the volunteers from all parts of the colony were brought down to Karrakatta at Easter time to go into training.

THE PREMIER: The item "Field Day Expenses, Guards of Honour and Parades, £2,500" covered that.

MR. ROBSON: Last year the only volunteers who went into camp at Karrakatta were those from Perth and Fremantle and the immediate neighbourhood.

MR. GEORGE: And they paid their own expenses.

MR. ROBSON: The volunteers from the Geraldton and other districts were deprived, for financial reasons, from going into camp. The Geraldton men had a small camp of their own, and did good work. Provision should be made for the annual encampment of the whole of the volunteers of the colony. Hon. members had only to go back a few days to remember the fine body of men who were turned out, after only a few days' training at Karrakatta, judging from which good work could be done if the whole of the volunteers of the colony went into camp. He hoped the Premier would promise that the volunteers from all parts of the colony would go into camp at Karrakatta.

THE PREMIER: That was the intention.

MR. ROBSON said he hoped the Geraldton volunteers would not be left out.

MR. MORGANS: There would not be any lack of men to form volunteer forces in the colony. In Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie at present there would not be the slightest difficulty in getting together a body of at least 500 splendid men to form a rifle corps or volunteer corps. These men had been applying to the Government, through the Commandant, for the last two years for permission to form a volunteer corps on the goldfields, but they had been refused for the reason that the late Commandant did not agree to indorse the principle of the establishment of a volunteer force on the goldfields without a proper place could be found in which the men could drill. If it was the intention of the Government, or the Commandant, to go to the expense of erecting a permanent building there would be very little hope of getting a force together on

the goldfields, but if the Government were prepared to accept the services of a splendid body of men on the goldfields, without attaching the condition of a serious expenditure to it, there would not be the slightest difficulty in getting together one of the finest corps in the colony.

MR. VOSPER : A camel corps also.

MR. MORGANS : A camel corps would be very valuable in case of the invasion of this country. He was pleased to listen to the remarks of the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) who believed in concentrated military effort. That hon. member believed in maxim guns, which were the most concentrated form of military effort he knew of, seeing that a maxim gun fired 10 shots every second, and could kill 600 men in a minute supposing the shots went straight. That system of concentrated warfare was very good indeed; it was a very good scheme with which to be able to cope with an enemy. But the discussion to-night did not cover that phase of the question. We wanted to get together a body of trained men in the colony, so that in a moment of emergency 1,000 men could be concentrated if necessary. The present Commandant, he believed, was in favour of the establishment of rifle corps, and was prepared to do all he could for the establishment of these corps, not only on the coast, but on the goldfields. If the Government only lent their assistance in the establishment of these corps there would be no difficulty in Western Australia obtaining a force of, at least, 1,000 men. The feeling of the Committee was in favour of the establishment of these volunteer forces, and it would be of great benefit to the country. He hoped the Premier would take this matter into consideration. He did not suppose the present Estimates could be altered, but for the next year he hoped a considerably larger sum would be devoted for this purpose.

MR. MORAN : This vote was supported by him every year. One would hardly think this lacadaisical Assembly only the other day rose to great enthusiasm in sending away a force to the Transvaal, and when the question was being debated in the House it took all the dignity of the Speaker to prevent hon. members bursting forth into all sorts of wild jingoism; but

now this vote came up, hon. members were very indifferent on the matter. The Committee, as a body, he did not think, at the present time, would be willing to increase the military vote. He congratulated the colony in having an officer who, according to all accounts and the best accounts, turned out a squad of men from Western Australia which for general appearance and military bearing reflected great credit on Major Campbell, after such a short training. Many of the men had had no previous military training. There were favourable opinions expressed on all sides as to the body of men who were sent away to the Transvaal. We should at least level up our recruits, as far as possible, to the old trained British soldiers, who had seen service and knew what war was. It was scarcely creditable that in this colony we had to select 26 or 27 men, to form part of the contingent, who had never handled a rifle before. When we entered on the business of helping the great British Empire in her battles in foreign lands, we should be able to do something to protect our own shores in case of difficulty. We had taken the step of entering into competition, by providing our quota towards the up-keep of the British Empire, and he did not hold with those Australians who said, "We are all right: the old country will look after us." That was the meanest unspirited exhibition of feeling which a person could give vent to. He had no love or respect for the man who said, "We depend on the mother country always." When we entered, by a unanimous vote, into the serious business of attacking nations in other parts of the world, the time had come when we should do something to protect ourselves. How could we expect sympathy from other parts of the world, in case of a visit from an attacking force, if we had not done something for ourselves. It became us as Britishers to take our part in the field with the rest of the British Empire. We could turn out in Australia as weedy a lot of humanity as could be found in any part of the world; we could turn out as many ill-shaped, ill-grown, ill-disciplined, lot of weeds in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth, as could be turned out in any part of the world; we could turn out as useless a lot of humanity in the youths of

Australia in our larrikin element as could be found anywhere. Go down the streets of Perth and see the class of young men growing up at the present time; the cigarette consuming little urchins who had no discipline, no home training, and no chance to grow. Add to them the great army of bicycle riders, who did nothing else, and we were developing a class of Australians who would not be able even to pass the 34-inch limit round the chest. This was largely the fault of Australian Governments: youths had too much liberty. He did not believe in it. Every boy born under the sun of Australia, whether a weakling or whether strong, should be taught drill and to bear a weapon of some sort; and having agreed to women's rights, we might perhaps teach women the serious business by taking them into camp at Easter. The great cure for larrikinism and the want of responsibility felt by the Australian youth was drill and instruction. We should teach our boys that they had some responsibility, so that they would be prepared if the time came to uphold the Empire. It was the want of responsibility and the total dependance on the mother country which caused this growth of larrikinism in our midst. Those being his (Mr. Moran's) views it would be understood that he supported the vote. He regretted that rifle corps had not been established on the goldfields. Two or three years ago application was made for the establishment of corps on the fields, where as fine a body of men as could be found in any part of the world could be got together. He did not wish to refer to the trouble which had arisen at Kalgoorlie, because he was one of those who looked with a certain amount of ridicule upon the statements about bloodshed and murder, which it was stated were likely to arise from the alluvial trouble at Kalgoorlie. Certain persons wrote constantly and said if so-and-so were not done there would be bloodshed and murder. He did not hold with that view; and, as representing the district, he thought ninety-nine hundredths of the people in that place were loyal to the Constitution, and if there were a hundredth not loyal he would teach it to be loyal quickly. He was not advocating this military corps in view of any slight local trouble that might arise. There was a tremendous

lot of talk, but we heard little of the fighting business about it. All the same, where there was a splendid body of men like we had there, we should have some sort of military organisation in training, which might be utilised in case of trouble. We were not always going to have the mother country to look after us, though we might for centuries. The day must arrive when Australia would have to look after her own interests. According to the history of nations, the British Empire would rise and fall, and he hoped that the destiny of Australia would continue to rise for many years to come. We ought to be like that little nation we were now fighting against, which merited the admiration of the world for its military display. That nation consisted of a handful of people, and every man was fighting. It was an object lesson for the Britishers: the Boers had a country and a principle, and every man who loved his country believed in its destiny and was man enough to fight. Those people were able to fight, and were trained in the use of a weapon, so that when the time had arrived they were not afraid to take action against the greatest nation of the world. He hoped that the Boers would be conquered (because they must be conquered) with as little loss of life as possible, because the world could ill spare men of their stamp, and it was far better to educate them than to wipe them out altogether. He hoped the Western Australian Government would consider the advisability of establishing a rifle corps. We were told by experts that the days of the infantry-man were drawing to a close, but we did not find such was the case in South Africa. We could not have squads all over the country. The important thing was to train riflemen, or artillery-men, or cavalry, and teach them to obey their commanding officers. If we engendered a spirit of patriotism and manliness, we should always find trained men ready to adapt themselves to any kind of warfare. He hoped the Government would not be niggardly in regard to this vote in the future, but, if necessary, exercise economy in other directions, and provide a substantial defence vote, perhaps even double the present amount, to put Western Australia in a position of being able to take a small part in the defence of the

Empire to which we were all so proud to belong.

MR. CONOLLY called attention to item 15, Band-master, Head-Quarters Band; 16, Band Sergeant, ditto; 17-45, Bandsmen, ditto, and said that later on he would refer to item 62, Head-Quarters Band, maintenance and incidental expenses. Lately we had an excellent display of the quality and ability of our band in Perth, and he regretted we did not hear the band oftener in this town. In all other cities he had been in, the military band was often turned out for the special enjoyment of the people—more especially for the citizens of the capital towns. In most countries of Europe it was the recognised thing that the band should play once a week, generally Sunday. Even if it involved increasing the vote somewhat, he would like to see a measure of the kind adopted in this colony.

MR. WALLACE: Seeing the action of hon. members this evening, and recollecting that taken in reference to this vote last year, the thanks of all those gentlemen dependent on the passing of this vote should be given to the unfortunate Boers for having inspired the amount of enthusiasm displayed. He thought that last year almost every member of the House was anxious to strike out the whole vote, if possible.

THE PREMIER: The year before, he thought.

MR. WALLACE: The desire then was, he thought, to disband the present volunteer force. To-night all hon. members who had spoken were entirely in accord with the vote. If in order, he would like to call attention to item 57, Forage Allowance, Commandant. Last year and the year before it was supposed this forage was for a horse, and members were satisfied the Commandant did not possess a horse. He believed the insertion of the item this year was an oversight on the part of the Premier. He moved that the item be struck out.

THE PREMIER: The Commandant had a horse, he thought.

MR. MOORHEAD: Upon the general issue raised he would like to say a few words. He did not wish to prolong the debate, nor did he desire to curtail this amount, but looking at our population, he thought it would be a mistake for the Minister at present to venture to increase

the sum by any attempt at the erection of a permanent force in our midst. In his opinion the very arguments used to-night ought to dissuade us from such a course. It was urged that volunteers were raised for the purpose of preventing aggression, whilst a permanent force was instituted to suppress internal disputes, but he thought that was an inversion of the constitutional precedent, and that the suppression of internal disturbances belonged to the civil arm of the law as represented by the police, whilst a permanent force was for the purpose, not alone of preventing aggression, but also for the maintenance of outside possessions of a nation.

THE PREMIER: That was not so in England.

MR. MORAN: Nor Ireland, either.

MR. MOORHEAD: If we took the history of the institution of the British Army, the establishment of a permanent force went back only to about the reign of Charles II., and its institution was for the purpose of preserving Tangiers, which was brought to England by the marriage of Charles with a foreign princess. What did we want a permanent force at all for in this colony, with a population of 170,000? Mr. Moran told us the institution of a permanent force would mean doing away with larrikinism—[MR. MORAN: No, no]—but one would rather say that if we improved our educational system, if we instituted technical schools, paid our teachers better, gave our people recreation grounds, attached libraries to our schools, and instituted gymnasiums, we would do more to suppress larrikinism than by the institution of a force of permanent soldiers. What would the institution of such a force mean? According to the Premier, it would be solely for the purpose of suppressing internal disturbances; but that belonged to the civil arm of the law as represented by the police. What good would the institution of 100 soldiers be against any aggression?

MR. MORAN: Let us have 500, if necessary.

MR. MOORHEAD: What could 500 or 5,000 do? With long-range artillery such as we read of, Fremantle could be bombarded from a distance of 10 miles; and what then would be the use of a

permanent force of infantry? What we should require would be, as the member for Central Murchison suggested, an artillery force; and where could we get that from a population of 170,000, with our present revenue? because the institution of a permanent artillery force to repel aggression would mean an expenditure of something like three millions annually. Were we prepared for that? As long as we had outlets for the expenditure of any surplus funds in the improvement of our educational department, he would be strongly opposed to the institution of a permanent force. He viewed such force with suspicion, and thought its institution would mean what was practically the case in continental countries—the suppression of free debate. No doubt the institution of a volunteer force or militia force benefited the physique of the people, and established an *esprit de corps*; but once we established a permanent force we should be practically putting into the hands of the Government, for the time being, an instrument that might very often be used for the suppression of debate and the prevention of an open expression of grievances. With our present revenue and population, and with other much more beneficial outlets for expenditure, this was no time to establish a permanent force; and he trusted the Premier would not at present consider the suggestion for an increase of the vote with that object.

MR. MORAN said that he had not suggested the creation of a permanent force to prevent larrikinism, but at the risk of being considered undemocratic he maintained that even in view of internal disturbances it was wise to have a permanent force. Such tumults frequently produced great calamities, and a standing army should be in readiness for their prevention.

MR. MOORHEAD: A militia would suffice.

MR. MORAN: As a militiaman was under martial law, and was liable to be shot for disobedience, why object to a permanent force? To train soldiers, a soldier was required; and there must be a central dépôt as a rallying point. In the capital of the colony, and in other convenient centres, there must be small permanent bodies of troops to support the Executive, otherwise what was the

use of Government? Anarchy must be crushed, and he would always repel any suggestion to tolerate disobedience to law, whether that law were good or bad, or even if it were represented by the decision of the humblest of our courts.

MR. RASON: As appeared by the Notice Paper, hon. members would soon have a special opportunity for discussing the desirableness of a permanent defence force; and nothing could be gained by debating such a question while on the Estimates. He would support the defence vote as a whole, knowing that the colony received full value for any money spent on the volunteer movement.

MR. VOSPER: With regard to the item "accountant and clerk," he had been informed that this officer had gone to the Transvaal, and that a substitute—a mere lad—had been appointed. Would that substitute receive the increase of salary which had been granted for the current year?

THE PREMIER: If the permanent officer had gone to the war, his salary would not be paid him after the end of last month, as he was now on the military establishment. It had been proposed to engage temporarily an experienced man—not a mere lad—to do the work; but the arrangement, he believed, had not yet been completed.

MR. VOSPER: Some confusion might result from the substitute receiving less than the amount on the Estimates.

THE PREMIER: No; there would be nothing unusual in having a surplus on hand. Returning to the item "Forage allowance to the Commandant," if the Commandant did not keep a horse, or was put to no expense for a mount, this allowance ought not to be drawn. He would make inquiries.

Amendment (Mr. Wallace's) by leave withdrawn.

MR. MORAN: Though the last Commandant never kept a horse, he had drawn the forage allowance of £50. Perhaps the present Commandant considered this item a perquisite.

THE PREMIER: It was not a perquisite.

MR. ROBSON: This was not the only forage allowance on the Estimates, as many other officers and magistrates were similarly treated.

THE PREMIER : But they must keep horses.

MR. ROBSON : It was sufficient if they found horses when required.

THE PREMIER : No.

MR. ROBSON said he would oppose the striking out of the item unless the Commandant's salary were increased by the same amount.

THE PREMIER : Where a combined forage and travelling allowance was given, a horse need not be kept if other travelling expenses absorbed the whole allowance. But where a specific forage allowance was granted, the officer must certify monthly, when drawing the allowance, that he had kept a horse available for public service. To give a forage allowance where no forage was used would be absurd, and he said without hesitation that it was an abuse for an officer who kept no horse, and who was at no expense for forage, to draw such an allowance.

MR. MORAN : The system having existed for two or three years, why not allow it to continue ?

MR. CONOLLY : All that could reasonably be expected was that an officer should provide a horse when required, whether the horse were hired or borrowed from a friend. Why should an officer keep a horse for use two or three times a year ? If an officer or civil servant received forage allowance and provided himself with a horse whenever it was required, that surely was all he was called upon to do.

MR. VOSPER : If an officer had an allowance for a horse he should keep a horse, and a man who obtained money for a horse which did not exist, obtained money under false pretences. The Commandant should be decently mounted, and to use a borrowed horse unaccustomed to military uniforms, firing, or crowds might prove dangerous to the public. But as an assurance had been given that this question would be inquired into, it might be left in the hands of the Government.

Vote put and passed.

Admiralty Surveys, £395—passed.

This completed the votes for the Treasury Department.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT (Commissioner, Hon. F. H. Piesse).

THE PREMIER : The Commissioner of Railways was unfortunately absent

through illness, and under the circumstances he moved that the consideration of the estimates for this department be postponed until after the consideration of the other votes.

Motion put and passed.

LANDS DEPARTMENT (Commissioner, Hon. George Throssell).

Vote, *Lands and Surveys*, £56,184 :

ANNUAL STATEMENT.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : I desire to follow the custom of making a few remarks for the information of hon. members. Hon. members will notice that the estimated revenue last year was £147,200, and the amount actually received £142,719, showing a shortage of £4,481; while the estimated expenditure was £79,436, and the actual money spent £79,520, or an increase of £84. Anticipations appear to have been fairly realised, except in regard to land sales. It will be remembered that in the first six months of last year we passed through an unmistakeable slump, especially in regard to the sale of Government land; but in every other direction, the amount was exceeded, in connection with rent, timber, and so on, and hon. members will be gratified to learn that the shortage will be more than made up. A new departure has been made in giving credit for one, two, or five years for town lots, and at the present time the sum of £37,000 is due of these unpaid balances, which will come in due course. In regard to land settlement it will be noticed that of late there has been some falling off. In 1897 land settlement came up to 400,000 acres; and in 1898 it was, in round numbers, 300,000 acres, and at the present time land settlement is going on—and I am now speaking of farm lands pure and simple—at the rate of 250,000 acres per annum. Hon. members who know anything about the subject, will realise that land settlement in a great measure depends on the prosperity or reverse in the other colonies; because if there be a failure or a partial failure of the crops in the Eastern colonies, there follows an exodus to Western Australia. Last year throughout Victoria and the other colonies there was a very fair harvest, and consequently there were fewer settlers coming in this direction. Possibly the harvest may be

a fair one again, but from inquiries we have from the Eastern colonies, there is no fear of a decrease of settlement. The homestead leases introduced by my predecessor have been a great success. In 1897, these leases represented 71,000 acres, and in 1898, 71,000. There is a growing desire, especially with the increased production of wool, mutton, and beef, for farmers to go in for mixed farming, and I regard this as a very valuable part of the land settlement system, which reflects great credit on my predecessor. It is worthy of note in passing that there was a marked increase last year in the number of timber areas. In 1897, 236,000 acres were taken up, while during the year ending 30th June last, there were 594,000 acres; but it is hardly anticipated there will be any great increase during the year on which we are now entering. The late Conservator of Forests, Mr. Ednie Brown, was an efficient officer who did good work for the colony. He placed the timber lands on a business-like basis, for which the colony is considerably indebted to him, and we are indebted to him notably for the reports he issued in regard to these lands. As to Mr. Brown's successor, or what shall be done in the future, there is an opinion abroad that an expensive conservator at a salary of £475 may not be required, but that economy should be carried out by an amalgamation of offices. But when I point out that the department is dealing with a national asset which is worth many millions sterling, and that the income last year was £25,000, and that this year the anticipated income is £22,000, with an expenditure of under £3,000, it will be seen how very important it is we should have a very efficient officer at the head. There are many questions arising in which the advice of an experienced conservator is very valuable indeed. Take, for instance, the question of settlement on timber leases on land fit for agriculture, and not containing marketable timber. In practice we find it very difficult indeed to settle people on this land. A man who takes up 20,000 or 50,000 acres naturally objects, and obstructs settlement, but, I am glad to say, we have made a new departure that will do away with that evil. Thus, when a man applies now for a 20,000-acre timber lease, the

land is examined, before the granting of the lease, to see that good agricultural land fit for settlement is not included, and instead of having to do as we do now—to refer every application for 100 or 500 acres to the leaseholder, who has all sorts of objections—the department will deal directly with applications. In cases where leases are already held we propose, instead of resuming so many acres as required, to at one swoop, take all the land likely to be needed for settlement. I desire hon. members to remember that there is no desire to touch land on which there is marketable timber, even if we had the power to do so; but there are always large areas admirably suited for settlement, and which we are now, in a great measure, prevented from utilising. At the present time we have nearly 2,000,000 acres of timber land held under lease, or one-fourth of the whole of our national asset; and as, without careful management, it is quite clear that in the next quarter of a century, our karri and jarrah forests will cease to be a great asset, it is absolutely necessary to have a thoroughly experienced man at the head of the department. In time it will be necessary to declare State forest reserves in different parts of the colony in which timber may be planted in order to recoup the country for the timber now being cut; and it is notable that Western Australian timber very soon recoups if left alone. I throw this suggestion out as showing another reason why we should have an intelligent man at the head of what I consider one of the chief departments of the Government. I call attention to the fact that the total expenditure under this vote, including all branches, is not £3,000 a year. We have four or five different rangers seeing that immature timber is not destroyed; and I believe it will be recognised from my explanation, although nothing has been definitely settled yet, that it will be absolutely necessary, and wise, and economical to have an efficient officer at the head of the department. We are following the principle of decentralisation in connection with the Lands Department. If a new settler lands at Albany, at Geraldton, or Fremantle, and goes into an inland town there he will find a local lands officer, from whom he can obtain all information. If a new

settler lands at Albany he can travel over the railway line, and pass from one agency to another. If he does not find land in one district that will suit him he will be passed, by letter of introduction, to another agency, and so on all through the Avon district. The would-be settler will be able to obtain all information in regard to land settlement in the country, instead of having to send to the central office in Perth for the information. Respecting the inspection of settled lands, we have now a system which has answered very well, of dividing the colony into four portions. Inspectors of compulsory improvements are scattered throughout the country, who make it a point to inspect holdings at fixed periods, and hon. members will realise how absolutely necessary this is if the chief principle of the Land Act is to be carried out in its entirety, for compulsory improvements cannot be carried out unless there is rigid inspection. I foresee that before long we will have to appoint more inspectors for this purpose, and hon. members will realise that must be so, when I tell them that in 'round numbers, at the present time, we have three millions of acres of land settled on compulsory conditions of improvement, all of which require inspection. We have a system, too, by which the different officers keep themselves in touch with the head office, not only by sending in their usual monthly reports, but by reporting every month to their chief what comes under their notice, and by keeping themselves in touch with the settlers and all that is going on in the way of settlement. I come now to the salaries, and I may as well call attention to them, as perhaps, if I did not do so hon. members would call my attention to them, because complaints have been made that my department has been unfairly dealt with, and that no increases are provided for. Hon. members will find that very few increases have been made, and I think it is possible that some of my officers have grounds for complaint. Hon. members on previous occasions have mentioned that my department was one of the departments that had been passed over. I want to say by way of explanation, and it is due to the Treasurer that I should do so, that certain recommendations respecting increases for officers who have proved themselves worthy, and who have been in the

service for a number of years, and have shown their loyalty to the department by working overtime, were recommended for increases, but these increases do not appear on the Estimates. By some mistake, it appears, these recommendations never reached the hands of the Treasurer, but I am in a position to say that any mistake of that kind will be corrected, and officers who have proved themselves worthy, and who have been recommended by myself, after fair inquiry, will be set down for reasonable increases. I had great hopes that the Public Service Bill would be passed, as I for one would be relieved of the trouble, the annoyance and the anxiety which is caused in dealing with salaries. This Bill is not to become law, therefore we must do the best we can. There is one increase that possibly may be referred to, I allude to the £75 increase to the Secretary of the Agricultural Department. I can only say by way of explanation that this officer has been a long time in the service; he has done a great deal of good work, and the increase of £75 given to him, has been done so at the special request of the advisory board who work with the Secretary in that department. The officer has done good work for the colony, and he has taken charge of other departments. In carrying out duties under the Insect Pests Act, this officer may not please everyone. If a man tries to please everyone, in the end he will be "carrying the donkey." With regard to the Agricultural Department, I may explain that the gross amount set down on the Estimates for that department is £5,555. Before this department was placed under my charge the cost to the country was £7,000, whereas the amount now set down is £5,555. We anticipate an increase of £1,650 from fees, which will reduce the cost to about £4,000. That amount will compare very favourably with the £7,000 which the department previously cost the country. One of the works of this department has been the establishment of a butter factory—the first in the colony—in the district of the Vasse. In that case £2,000 was expended, and from an unexpended vote in my charge I was able to lend £1,000 on approved security, for the establishment of the factory, taking security over the whole of the works, and charging a low rate of interest for

the money for a few years. The output from that factory during the last month was a trifle under three tons of butter. I hope to be able to announce in a short time that we have been able to start another butter factory, and one or two cheese factories, which, I hope, will be established at small cost, and with good result to the country. If we can start with the ABC of a few factories, in the end we may be able to reduce the importation of cheese and butter to this colony. A new officer has been set down on the Estimates—an inspector of rabbits, at a salary of £200 a year. I may say we have heard a great deal about the rabbit question; some hon. members do not believe in the existence of the rabbits at all. I know that they do exist, and I am in a position to say, keeping in touch with the various districts of the colony, that the rabbits do not seem to increase. We have a standing offer of one sovereign for the first rabbit skin taken from the first rabbit caught in Western Australia. A few weeks ago it was reported that a rabbit had been caught and the skin was sent to me, and, it seems, the most that could be secured was half a skin. We have lots of evidence, I can assure hon. members, of the existence of rabbits. Acting on the suggestion of members, who appeared to be very anxious respecting the incursion of rabbits, we have appointed an inspector of rabbits. I have the idea that, like the Kimberley cattle tick, the rabbits will not prosper in our country. Whether that is from the fact that they are not here in large numbers, or whether the far famed poison plant keeps them back, I do not know. I am in telegraphic touch with the various districts, and I get very little news of the rabbits. There is another matter which, if I do not mention it may be brought up in connection with this rabbit question, the sending of cats into the country. On the recommendation of my officers the cats were sent into the country, and I am in a position to tell hon. members that the cats are doing the work they were intended to do, and are proving a success. Whether they will turn into “wild cats” I do not know. Coming back to the Department of Agriculture, I would like to say one of the great works being carried out now by that department is the control of the insect

pests. The measures of the department may be a little harsh, both in dealing with fruit trees and gardens, but if we wish to succeed we must be very firm in carrying out this Act. The principle is recognised in regard to diseases in every direction. If only a few sheep are diseased with scab the whole country runs a risk and the owner of those sheep may be penalised to the extent of £100 I think. If a person has two or three trees which are infected with disease, the disease may be spread over the whole of the colony. Hon. members may not require me to tell them that thousands of pounds are spent annually in planting orchards and vineyards, and any neglect may be attended with disastrous results. Last year it was suggested that the experts attached to this department should be dispensed with, but upon representation from all parts of the colony these officers were retained. We intend to republish the journal of the department, but those taking the journal will have to pay a small fee for it, something like half-a-crown a year. People have made such strong representation to the department, that I feel bound to make an effort to again publish the journal. There is another matter of interest to hon. members, in regard to the principle of the responsible officers of the department finding bondsmen. The old system was for an officer to find a couple of friends to become bondsmen for him, but when the bondsmen were wanted frequently they were not to be found. For the current year we have made arrangements with the Ocean Accident Guarantee Corporation for every one of our officers who have money in their charge, to be guaranteed, and this is done at the small expenditure of £24 17s. 6d. a year. We have 50 officers guaranteed for sums varying from £50 to £1,000, and the company will make good any defalcations. Some officers are guaranteed to the extent of £1,000, some for £500, and others for the small amount of £50. The system will commend itself to hon. members. It is a wise provision, and is carried out with a small expenditure of money. I cannot claim originality for this departure. I believe the Director of Public Works has the same system in vogue in his department, but it is a new departure in the Lands Department. It will be a great relief to me, and a great use to the

country generally. I do not think I need say anything more in regard to my department. I am in a position to say that in cases where officers appear to be underpaid, recommendations were made. I am happy to state that I am in hearty co-operation with my political chief, the Premier and Treasurer, and I desire to make one remark before I sit down. The other evening the member for Albany made an observation which was reported in some of the papers, and I suppose he did it in a bantering way; but, for my part, I ought not to let it pass without notice. He asserted there was not a Minister who would come to a decision without first consulting the Premier; and I think this is the proper time and place for me to deny that *in toto*. It was unjust to the Premier, unjust to Ministers, and unjust to myself. If I and other Ministers have not formed our own opinions, and have not followed those opinions, we ought not to retain office. But there is another side to the subject. The Premier has been in office nine years, and has had vast experience, knowing a great many things that others do not; and whenever I am in doubt, it gives me great pleasure to go to him, not as to a man who rules me, but as a friend and colleague, and to take advantage of his great experience. I hope hon. members will agree with me in this matter. In conclusion, I have to thank hon. members on both sides of the House for the generous support they have given me, not only on the present occasion, but ever since I have had the honour of holding office.

MR. ROBSON, referring to item 97 (land agent at Geraldton, £40), in comparison with item 34 (land agent at Katanning, £420), item 35 (land agent at Albany, £200), and item 36 (land agent at Northam, £75): Some months ago he had occasion to refer to the lands in the northern portion of the South-Western division of this country (Geraldton district), and since then the Minister had sent up the Surveyor-General and other officers, who would confirm his (Mr. Robson's) statement that there was a large wheat area in that district capable of being put to good use, all that was wanted being development. In Albany a few days ago he had noticed a large board referring to the land office, the

Agricultural Bank, and so forth, and stating, "All information supplied here." The Minister of Lands promised him that he would establish in Geraldton a system similar to that prevailing in other portions of the colony. The present officer had to discharge various duties. He found from the Estimates that the same thing was perpetrated as had been going on for years. Item 97 showed an allowance of £40 a year for the land agent at Geraldton, and let that be compared with £420 paid at Katanning.

MR. A. FORRESTER: The officer there was a professional.

MR. ROBSON: A professional man was wanted by him. The draftsman at Katanning was to receive £170, and the clerk £170. The land agency at Katanning cost £760. The land agent at Albany received £200, and the clerk £60. He was not aware that there was any good land at Albany. There might be good land at Katanning, but he repeated that there was a quantity of good land in the northern portion of the South-Western division which required developing. As long as the registrar at Geraldton only received £40 a year to spread information, what could be expected? He asked the Minister to advertise that land, and to have at Geraldton a live and efficient lands office.

MR. GEORGE: There were a lot of little items which seemed to be hole-and-corner additions to salaries. In other parts of the Estimates, one was able to trace the amount of salary paid to favoured officers, a person getting perhaps so much for one duty and so much for another; but in the Lands Department this information was not given. There was one flagrant instance in which perquisites came to £600 or £700, and members had a right to know what it meant.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The Katanning agency was appointed before the building of the Great Southern Railway, and it was one of the most successful agencies in the colony. The next important office was that at Albany, where a large number of people landed in the colony and wanted the fullest information; and that agency was most successful. At Bunbury there was a large amount of settlement, and the agency was a responsible one. Within a few

days the officer received £1,100 or £1,200, and remitted the amount to the head office. As to the agency to which the member for Geraldton referred, if the hon. member would let that promise rest until he (the Commissioner) visited Geraldton and other places, the matter should be put right. He believed the officer there was Clerk of the Court, and received a little fee and gave what information he could. Not only was there an agent in every district, but a map was available. If the member for Geraldton could convince him that further provision was necessary for the representation of the department at Geraldton, he would see that the necessary steps were taken.

MR. GEORGE: The Clerk of the Court at Geraldton had something to do in connection with the harbour.

MR. ROBSON: In raising his protest against the inadequacy of the sum he did not in any way intend to cast any slur upon the officer in charge of the department at Geraldton. The officer was generally an efficient officer, but he had many other duties to perform.

MR. A. FORREST: Against the officers or the department he had nothing to say, but he desired to draw the attention of the Minister, to whom members listened with a great deal of respect, to the fact that he said nothing with reference to the carrying out of the present Land Act. He (Mr. Forrest) wished to deal with that Act. The Minister said nothing about the carrying out of the old special occupation license regulations. What course was to be taken with regard to such settlers, who had been paying rents on the S.O.L. system of one shilling an acre per annum, many of them for 15 or 16 years? Those men had made certain improvements, but had been unable to get their titles.

THE PREMIER: What about those who had made no improvements?

MR. A. FORREST: Each of them had, nevertheless, paid a total rental of from 16s. to £1 per acre, whereas at present the Government were practically giving away land for nothing.

THE PREMIER: No. Improvement of land was still compulsory, as a condition of the grant.

MR. A. FORREST: The S.O.L. settlers were entitled to some consideration.

THE PREMIER: Let them do their improvements.

MR. A. FORREST: Could not the Minister hold out to these settlers some hope of getting their title deeds? Many of them had been ruined by paying the rents.

HON. S. BURT: Then why did not they abandon the selections?

MR. A. FORREST: To do so would mean absolute ruin.

THE PREMIER: Surely there were few S.O.L. settlers in such distressed circumstances.

MR. A. FORREST: A large number of them complained bitterly.

THE PREMIER: They had not fenced their land.

MR. A. FORREST: They had done the fencing, but could not comply with the other conditions of improvement. Would not the Minister give title deeds to those who had taken up the land before 1890, seeing that under the present Act other land could practically be had for nothing?

HON. S. BURT: If a man took up land on condition that he paid a small rental and effected improvements, he had no right to ask for anything like a Crown grant until such conditions had been complied with and the improvements effected. It was questionable whether many such settlers had been paying rent for 16 or 17 years and were unable to effect improvements, because a man, if unable to make the improvements in that period, would abandon the land.

MR. A. FORREST: They could not afford to abandon.

HON. S. BURT: When a man had pledged his S.O.L. security and had ceased to work the land, leaving the mortgagee to pay the rent, no doubt the latter would like to get the fee-simple; but that consideration did not trouble such settlers, many of whom had left their districts.

MR. A. FORREST: No.

HON. S. BURT: It was not the poor settlers but the mortgagees who had been paying the rents for all those years in order to keep the securities alive. Every such case should be carefully inquired into before being dealt with, for no one but a *bona fide* settler was entitled to any relief; and even then, if the conditions of improvement had not been fulfilled, no title should be issued.

MR. A. FORREST : But those men were paying twice as much rent as the new settlers.

HON. S. BURT : In the majority of cases the land was in the hands of money-lenders who were holding it for speculative purposes, hence their desire to get the Crown grants.

MR. ROBSON : What had become of the Rural Lands Bill which had been brought in with a view of reaching the very speculators to whom the last speaker had been referring? That Bill had been sent to another place, and had mysteriously disappeared, while the Noxious Weeds Bill, introduced with a similar object, had unfortunately been withdrawn by the Government. Against that withdrawal he entered his protest.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : Speaking generally, he had received no grave complaints of the kind mentioned by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest). Compulsory improvement must be insisted on, for if that principle were abandoned, then good-by to any hope for agriculture. Men who had taken up second or third-class land, which afterwards proved on departmental inspection to be unfit for agriculture, received consideration ; but where that land was good enough for cultivation he had laid down the broad principle that there should be no waiver of the improvement conditions. Each case, however, was dealt with on its merits.

MR. GEORGE : The discussion showed the necessity of having officers who could properly perform their duties. A few minutes ago he had drawn attention to the Geraldton land agent, who received £40 a year. The Minister had replied that this officer was also Clerk of the Court ; but, further on in the Estimates, it appeared that the Clerk of the Court at Geraldton performed no other duties than those of that office, or if he did, it was without the knowledge of the Attorney General. Though such answers were doubtless not intentionally misleading, he must protest against them. If they were to continue, as well pass the Estimates *en bloc*.

THE MINISTER OF MINES : Let the hon. member ask a definite question.

MR. GEORGE said he had asked the question plainly on two occasions.

Vote put and passed.

Fisheries, £1,280—agreed to.

Woods and Forests, £2,830—agreed to.

Stock, £3,793 :

Items, Veterinary Surgeon and Consulting Veterinary Surgeon :

MR. WALLACE : The salary of the Veterinary Surgeon was £310, and that of the Consulting Veterinary Surgeon £200. Why should not these two offices be filled by one man?

THE PREMIER : One of the surgeons had to travel all over the colony, while the other was permanently stationed at Fremantle.

MR. WALLACE : Was it necessary to have a surgeon permanently stationed at Fremantle?

THE PREMIER : There was the cattle tick to be looked to.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : One surgeon at Fremantle was required to inspect cattle from the Kimberley districts, whilst the other attended to all the public departments in connection with which horses were kept, as well as to the Stock Department generally.

Items passed.

Item, Incursion of Rabbits, £500 :

MR. GEORGE : The Commissioner in his speech seemed to look on this as a small item, but, in addition to the £500, there was £200 for an inspector, and some more information ought to be given in regard to the item.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS : It did not follow that the £700 would be spent, and so far as he could see at present, none of it might be necessary. He heartily approved of the appointment of a local man as an inspector, because he was on the spot and in touch with the whole circumstances. The placing of the £700 on the Estimates enabled the department to take steps if necessary.

HON. S. BURT : It would be better to propose an expenditure of £50,000 instead of £500, if it were really intended to keep rabbits out of the colony.

THE PREMIER : There had not been one rabbit found yet.

HON. S. BURT : That was at one time said in Victoria and elsewhere, but it was perfectly well known that in the last 10 years rabbits had advanced some miles from South Australia in the direction of this colony, and if they once got into the

North there would be an end to those pastoral districts. He saw that last year £22 2s. 5d. was spent in keeping back rabbits; but really some sensible action should be taken in connection with this matter. It would be difficult to keep rabbits out of this country, but still there was a chance of doing so, seeing the big stretch of land which lay between the settled portion of this colony and the places in South Australia where rabbits were; but nothing was being done. In Victoria it was stated for years that rabbits could not live there, and he had read of a member of another place who actually said it was absurd to think that rabbits would ever come to Western Australia. If, however, that hon. member lived long enough he would see rabbits here.

THE PREMIER: Rabbits had given rise to a great industry in Victoria.

HON. S. BURT: Rabbits were 100 miles nearer Western Australia than they were 20 years ago, and that one fact proved they were coming here. As time went on the wave of rabbits would increase, and steps should be taken at once to meet the difficulty.

Item passed; other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Agriculture, £5,555:

HON. S. BURT: The Department of Agriculture had the administration of the Insect Pests Act, an Act with which he had something to do when in office under the Crown, and in which he took very great interest. The legislation did not find much favour in the House some years ago when he introduced two Bills dealing with this question, believing as he did in taking ample steps to prevent the importation of fruit diseases. The Act of last year, which consolidated all the other Acts, was very stringent, and if members saw the powers given to the department they would be surprised. What he desired to point out was that if these powers were exercised at all vindictively or maliciously by the officials, it would not be many years before the House would repeal the law. Quite recently an instance had come under his notice in which he thought there had been vindictiveness and malice in the administration. The Bureau of Agriculture, who at one time had the administration of the Act, carried it out strictly

enough, but the gentleman at the head possessed practical knowledge, whereas now the administration was left to the Secretary of the department, whose salary it was proposed to increase by £75 per annum. He (Mr. Burt) would not say a word about the proposed increase in salary, but he pointed out that the Secretary himself and all the inspectors, dairy experts, viticulturists, analysts, artists, engravers and others would have to go if the Act were repealed; and, therefore, in their own interests, they ought to be careful not to overstep the very large powers given to them. The secretary of the department admitted that a certain place was perfectly free from disease, but he desired to carry out, in the administration of the Act, a scheme—a very good one if he had the power to do it—to pick all the citrus fruits in a certain district. He wished to pick the lemons and oranges, the whole crop, belonging to everybody in a certain district, for fear the fruit fly, if it came about, might get into these fruits and form its habitat there. That was a very laudable desire, but one questioned whether the Act allowed it to be done, and if anyone perused the Act he would find there was no power given to the department to go into an orangery consisting of perhaps 1,000 trees, and to order the owner to pick all the fruit immediately.

MR. GEORGE: Could it not be done under the regulations?

HON. S. BURT: This was a matter of law. There was no power in the Act, and if anyone suggested there was power under the regulations, an opportunity would be given shortly of proving that. The oranges in these orchards were perfectly clean, but for fear that if left unpicked the fruit fly might get into them, all the crop had to be sacrificed. He (Hon. S. Burt) suggested to the department that compensation be paid; but finding that the Act said distinctly that "no compensation shall be paid," he then warned the officer that if the compulsory picking was to be enforced, the officer had better find authority for his actions before he started. If compensation had to be paid, one felt sure the Act would soon have to be repealed.

THE PREMIER: Was not the fruit ripe?

HON. S. BURT: It was ripe.

THE PREMIER: Where was the loss, then?

HON. S. BURT: The fruit was being picked day by day. He wished to point to the assumption of power on the part of inspectors in thinking they could compel the owner to pick every fruit from, say, 1,000 trees without compensation. Unless the department had the power difficulty would arise. An arrangement was made that the oranges should be picked every day as they became ripe; but the tenant of the place had then a difficulty in getting cases in which to put the fruit. Two inspectors were watching the place for weeks to see that the fruit was picked; and as they came to the conclusion that it was not being picked, they entered the orangery themselves and began to strip the trees. Luckily the Supreme Court was appealed to, and it stopped that sort of thing; now an action at law was pending, and we would see if the department had the power they thought they had. He regretted to think that, because of their hand being stayed in this way, the department had since then searched the Act for further powers to worry that tenant; and the next step was that they ordered the tenant to erect an immense tent over the trees, and the department were going to smoke each tree. Thus it appeared that when the Supreme Court writ stayed the hand of the department, the officers tried to find out some other means of worrying the tenant; and this showed that the powers were being carried out vindictively. The eradication and prevention of disease was so important to the country that he would be sorry to see the Act repealed; yet if the powers were not exercised with care and fairness, he was afraid the Act would be repealed. The department should not act in a high-handed manner, such as to give orders to pick the whole of a crop of oranges, especially when it was admitted that the fruit was perfectly free from disease. If he (Hon. S. Burt) were in the House next year, he would take the opinion of hon. members as to whether we should place in the hands of the department such a weapon as this.

MR. GEORGE: While desirous that the department should not enforce the Act in the arbitrary manner spoken of by the hon. member, yet we should take care

that we did not frighten the inspectors so that they would not do their duty.

MR. A. FORREST: Why should the inspectors ride roughshod over one?

MR. GEORGE: Anyone who would ride roughshod over the member for West Kimberley had more courage than he gave the officers of any department credit for. While he did not think the Committee would be prepared to allow the department to perpetrate an act of tyranny, we should be careful that we did not check them so as to neglect their duties. In some respects this department was doing good, but it might make some mistakes, although he would not like to see the Act become a dead letter. There was an item of "Office rent, rates, and taxes, £250": what had the department to do with paying office rent, rates and taxes? In the Government building there should be room for this department, which would be kept under the eye of the Minister, who could keep a close check on the department. How could Ministers keep control of their departments, when they were fixed up in that sort of style? When we arrived at that item, he would move to strike it out.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) had referred to the control exercised by the late Bureau of Agriculture. Recognising the great experience of the chairman of that board, who was also chairman of the present Advisory Board, he (the Commissioner) did not fail to consult him respecting the various Acts, and the Act in question had the earnest approval of that gentleman. He (the Commissioner) knew something about the case referred to by the hon. member. When a distinction had to be made, we should make it in the case of the poor man instead of the wealthy one. His general instructions to the secretary had been, "If you have to put the Act in force, never commence with a poor man: commence with a strong man." He differed *in toto* from the assertion of the hon. member that there was no control exercised over this department. The Advisory Board was still in existence, and measures were always referred to that board for its advice and approval; and if the board disapproved, he would not think of introducing a measure. It was for the

good of the community that action should be taken in order to prevent the introduction of disease. Seeing what had taken place in California by the introduction of these diseases, we could not be too careful. He could only say, in general terms, that he sympathised with the hon. member in deprecating harsh actions, and he did not think the officials would dare to take them without consulting him. He again asserted that if there must be action taken, he much preferred it should be taken against a man able to defend himself instead of against a poor man. The greatest credit was due to the board, the members of which were not too domineering. Hundreds and thousands of pounds had been spent in the Goulburn Valley (Victoria) in order to protect orchards from the codlin moth and other diseases. He would take care there was no undue hardship exercised in this colony over the persons concerned.

MR. A. FORREST: The Committee must have been rather astonished at the remarks from the Minister of Lands, in which he asserted that he instructed his officers to "go for" the prominent man, the rich man, and leave the other alone. In no other Parliament of the world had a Minister of the Crown said "Go for the strong man and leave the weak alone."

MR. GEORGE: Quite right, too.

MR. A. FORREST: In his opinion, the Minister did not mean it. If he did mean it, he was not fit to occupy the position he held in the Government. The Minister should protect all classes of the community, and he ought to instruct his officers to "go for" persons on the same basis, whether poor or rich. There were too many officers in the department. The burdens of the country from this department were such that they became intolerable. The member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) had spoken of a case in which a man came in and said, "You shall pick all your oranges," when there was no disease upon them and before they were ripe. He (Mr. Forrest) would not allow an officer to come into his garden and compel him to pick oranges when they were not ripe. He would use the shooter. The department needed to be kept in check with a strong hand. The chief inspector under the Insect Pests Act received £450 a year,

and one did not know whether he was worth it, but he must be kept under control.

MR. GEORGE: The secretary, not the expert, was complained of.

MR. A. FORREST: All of them were complained of by him. They were oppressive to the people.

MR. GEORGE: It was always a rule with him, when he had some power in regard to the Perth Water Works, to go for the great man, and he did not agree with Mr. Forrest.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member went for the little man, too.

MR. GEORGE: The big man he went for. He certainly said, "Go for the big man," because the big man got the biggest profits, and why should he not obey the law? If persons showed they were not afraid of the big man, and went for him, that created considerably more talk among the little men than there would otherwise be, and they put their house in order without incurring a lot of law costs. Wealth had its responsibilities as well as its pleasures. He would always support the Minister in enforcing the law in respect of a man of wealth, and in leaving the poor man to learn the lesson at the wealthy man's expense.

HON. S. BURT: If the correct principle were to "go for" the big man instead of the little one, the Minister had made a mistake, for the man attacked was a Chinese gardener. In that case the department had admitted that the orangery was wholly free from disease. The officers were warned that they had no power to do what they were doing, but they insisted on doing it until an injunction was obtained from the Court; and then, instead of submitting to defeat, the department issued further orders to the gardener simply for the purpose of annoyance. To persist in such vindictive proceedings would undoubtedly lead to the repeal of the present Act, which when not abused was a good Act, and an Act which he had personally introduced.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS assured the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) that he was incapable of acting in the manner indicated by that hon. member. There was a tendency in some minds, when confronted with offenders differing in social position, to begin with the poor man and to

let the rich man go free. No one would more strongly deprecate such conduct than the hon. member; and in such cases the department very properly began with the man of wealth. He gave the assurance that he would be extremely watchful against, and would much regret, any high-handed or unnecessary action by his officers. At the same time, he would not flinch in carrying out the Act.

Vote put and passed.

Agricultural Bank, £1,270 :

Item, Allowance to manager for horses and man, and personal expenses when travelling:

MR. GEORGE: How could the bank manager, who travelled a great deal, provide two or more horses and a man for £2 a week?

THE PREMIER: The expenditure for the previous year had only been £84.

MR. GEORGE: But last year the manager practically had to groom his own horse.

MR. A. FORREST: The manager was perfectly satisfied.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: The item had been inserted in error, and a substantial increase had already been provided for. He had pleasure in testifying to the efficiency of this officer, and to the economy with which the department was managed.

Item passed.

MR. ROBSON, referring to "Incidental expenses (including travelling expenses)," said the member for the Murray (Mr. George) should have taken into consideration the amount of this item, £250, when deprecating the small travelling allowance to the bank manager, for the manager was probably the only officer who travelled.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member (Mr. George) did not really study the Estimates.

Item passed; other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

This completed the Lands votes.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 11 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 14th November, 1899.

Papers presented—Question: Circuit Courts Act—Roads Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Bills of Sale Bill, third reading—Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, second reading (concluded), in Committee, Division; progress—Electoral Bill, in Committee, reported—Fisheries Bill, first reading—Cottesloe Lighting and Power Bill (private), first reading—Motion: Harbour and Pilot Services, Joint Committee's Recommendations—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

BY THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Report on working of Government Railways and Tramways, 1898-9. 2, Report (with estimate and plan) of route of proposed Railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. 3, Report (with estimate and plan) of route of proposed Railway from Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale. 4, Report (with estimate and plan) of route of proposed Railway from Menzies to Leonora. 5, Report (with estimate and plan) of route of proposed Railway from Northam to Goomalling. 6, Land Selection for six months ending June, 1899. 7, Cookernup Cemetery Board balance-sheet.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—CIRCUIT COURTS ACT.

HON. A. P. MATHESON asked the Colonial Secretary, what steps has he taken to carry out the promise he gave this House on the 17th August, to introduce a Bill amending the Circuit Courts Act, 1897?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:—It is still the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to amend the Circuit Courts Act, this session.

ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by HON. R. G. BURGESS, and read a first time.

BILLS OF SALE BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by HON. A. B. KIDSON, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.