

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that if miners moved frequently from one district to another, this circumstance did not entitle them to select the member for the new district into which they had last moved. A period of residence in a district would better enable the voters to judge of the suitability of candidates for that district.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) hoped the hon. member for Albany would not press the amendment to a division, as it was not likely to be assented to by the committee; and it was obvious that any alteration in the direction proposed by the hon. member would not make the Bill more acceptable in another place. This would not be the only colony where a six months' residence in a district was required, for this provision certainly existed in New South Wales and in Queensland, but not in Victoria. These clauses were almost identical with those in the Constitution Act of Queensland, and the experience of its working in that colony might be accepted here as sufficient. It was not illiberal to say that a person must be six months in a district before obtaining a vote. A person who valued his vote would not object to wait six months before exercising it. It would be better to leave the clause as it stood. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Geraldton, it might be expedient perhaps in the Electoral Act to make some provisions to meet the peculiar conditions under which those engaged in mining pursuits carried on their work—shifting about from one alluvial patch to another.

MR. DEHAMEL said that if the Premier thought that the altering of the residence term would have the effect of wrecking the Bill in another place, he would adopt the advice and not press the amendment to a division, as he wanted to see the Bill become law.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to another part of the clause, asked whether, after passing this Bill into law, and assuming that an Electoral Bill would be brought forward, any condition could be inserted in the latter Bill, if necessary, such as requiring an elector to sign his name on the roll and pay a fee, without thereby repealing clauses in this, as the principal Act.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that if an Electoral Bill were afterwards passed, it would have equal force with this Act, in fact more force, by being a later enactment. A fee might be required for registration, or a man might be required to sign his name on the roll, and he found that any provision of this nature was contained in the Electoral Act, and not in the Constitution Act, in other colonies.

Clause put and passed,

The remaining clauses (20 to 23) were agreed to without comment.

Clause 1 (which had been postponed).—Short title and commencement:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to fill in the blanks by inserting the 18th October as the date when the Act should come into operation, that being the date upon which the existence of the present Upper House would terminate, according to the published proclamation.

Put and passed, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at three minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

*Monday, 31st July, 1893.*

Homesteads Bill: first reading—Post and Telegraph Bill: third reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: referred to a select committee, as regards Clauses 6 and 15—Message from the Governor: Assent to Bills—Excess Bill, 1892: second reading; in Committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

### HOMESTEADS BILL.

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

## POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL.

Read a third time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL.

CLAUSES 6 AND 15 REFERRED TO A  
SELECT COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day for the further consideration of this Bill in committee,

MR. RICHARDSON moved that the Bill be referred to a select committee as regards Clauses 6 and 15 (defining the boundaries of the electoral districts and divisions, and their representation).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Is the hon. member in order in moving to refer the Bill to a select committee now?

THE SPEAKER: This will be the only opportunity afforded to refer the Bill to a select committee, because, according to our Standing Orders, a Bill cannot be referred to a select committee after the Chairman has reported the Bill. If the House, in committee of the whole, went through the Bill to-night, and the Chairman reported the Bill to me, it could not be referred to a select committee, and this is the only opportunity of doing so.

Motion put and passed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said, as the matters to be referred to the select committee were very important matters, there seemed, to be a general desire that the committee should consist of a larger number of members than usual. The Government would be quite content with five members, but as there seemed to be a desire that there should be a larger number, he begged to move that the select committee consist of seven members, instead of five, as provided for in the Standing Orders of the House.

Agreed to.

A ballot having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover (Mr. Richardson), were appointed to serve upon the committee: Sir John Forrest, Mr. Harper, Mr. Simpson, Mr. A. Forrest, Mr. Quinlan, and Mr. R. F. Sholl.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE  
GOVERNOR— ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he

has this day assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the undermentioned Bills:—

1. "*An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of One hundred thousand pounds to the Service of the year ending 30th June, 1894.*"
2. "*An Act to provide for the raising of a sum not exceeding Five hundred thousand pounds by the issue of Treasury Bills, and for other purposes.*"

Government House, Perth, 28th July, 1893.

## EXCESS BILL, 1892.

## SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I rise to move the second reading of this Bill, to confirm certain expenditure for the year 1892. Hon. members may probably be surprised at the amount included in the Bill; it shows that a sum of £36,883 15s. 3d. has been expended in excess of the votes of Parliament. But I would like to point out to hon. members that this amount could have been almost altogether done away with, or at any rate considerably reduced, if the Government had acted as they did last year, in accordance with the provisions of the Audit Act, and allowed a transfer of items, so long as the total vote was not exceeded. But I thought, after considering the matter, that the procedure we followed last year was not a wise one; in fact, I do not approve of the provisions of the Audit Act which allows a transfer of votes from one item to another; and members will notice that during this year the Government have not allowed any transfers whatever, and this accounts for the large amount included in the present Bill. But, although we have asked for a confirmation of so large a sum as £36,883, members who have read and studied the public accounts for the financial year, prepared by the Treasury and audited by the Audit Department, will at once have seen that although there is an overdraft of this amount, there is also an underdraft of more than double the amount. The underdraft for 1892 amounted to £82,261 11s., whereas the actual amount of the overdrafts amounted to £36,883; so that what appears at first sight to be a large expenditure of money beyond the votes of

this House will appear upon closer scrutiny to be really overdrafts as regards certain items with overdrafts of twice the amount on other items. My task in placing this Bill to-night before hon. members is made more easy by the excellent report of the Auditor General which is attached to the statement of the public accounts of the colony prepared by the Treasury. Every single item of overdraft will be found set forth in Appendix B of this most admirable report, together with the reasons for it, so that members will be able to place their finger upon any particular item and see at once the reason how the overdraft occurred. The same information is also furnished with reference to the underdrafts, in Appendix C of the same report. I do not think, therefore, it will be necessary for me now to go through all these items, because, as I have said, every information is given in this report; but I may refer to a few. Take, for instance, the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, where there is an overdraft of £321 15s. 10d. If members will turn to the underdrafts they will see they amount to £230 18s. 3d., so that the actual overdraft is very small. Then again with reference to the Medical Vote, where there is an overdraft of £1,572 4s., it will be seen that the underdrafts under the same head amount to £1,173 15s. The same again with the Police Vote; although there is an overdraft of £1,455 15s. 4d., members will find there is an underdraft of about the same amount, £1,443 12s.; and so on throughout almost all these items. When we come to the item of Defences, members will observe that the overdraft is £1,775, whereas under the same head there is an underdraft of £8,154. The same again with regard to the Postal and Telegraph Vote, where there is an overdraft of £1,390 and underdrafts amounting to £2,678; and when we come to Works and Buildings it will be seen that the overdraft amounts to £2,848, while under the same heading there are underdrafts amounting to £53,065. I think, whichever way hon. members will look at these accounts, they will come to the conclusion that the Government, in order to place the matter before the House in the clearest and best way possible, has not even taken advantage of what the law allows them to do; they have

not transferred one of the items to another item under the same vote, as they might have done, but have placed before the House every single item of overdraft, and we ask the House to confirm each item, irrespective of the underdrafts under the same head. The result is that there is an actual underdraft on the transactions of the year amounting to £45,377 15s. 9d., the total amount provided by Parliament and not expended being £82,261 11s., while the total sum which we now ask the House to confirm is £36,883 15s. 3d. If members will look closely into the matter they will find that the amount of this Excess Bill, £36,883 15s. 3d., differs slightly from the total amount of the overdrafts in the Treasury accounts, the latter being £54 13s. 1d. more than the amount which we are asking the House to confirm. The reason we do not ask for confirmation of that amount is because it has already been approved by Parliament, and therefore it is unnecessary to confirm it by any other Act. I do not think I need say any more at the present time. I have had some information prepared in order to be able to answer any questions that members may desire to be informed upon in committee. I now move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I am rather disappointed that the Treasurer did not give us a little more information when moving this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is all in the papers before you, the Auditor General's returns. It's no use beating a dead horse.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think it is the duty of the hon. gentleman, when asking this House to confirm an unauthorised expenditure of £36,883, to enlighten members in every possible way as to the necessity for this confirmation. He told us—and the Auditor General also states so in his report—that the Government have not taken advantage of the power given to them under the Audit Act to transfer amounts from one subvote to another, and that, had they done so, instead of there being an excess there would have been an underdraft. I must congratulate the Government upon not acting in accordance with the Act in that respect, because I think the practice of transferring items, although sanctioned by

law, is very objectionable. The Treasurer also told us that there are underdrafts amounting to £82,000, as against this overdraft of £36,883; but, if members will take the trouble to look through these accounts, as I have, they will see that the bulk of that underdraft is in consequence of works authorised by this House not having been undertaken.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Only £53,000 out of £82,000.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That reduces the underdraft to £29,000. I quite agree with the Premier that the clause in the Audit Act which empowers the Government to transfer amounts from one item to another ought never to have been inserted, and, I think, the sooner the Act is amended the better, so that when this House votes money under certain sub-heads the money should only be expended under those sub-heads, and no other; and, if the money is not expended, it ought to lapse to the revenue of the colony. There are many items in this Bill which do appear to me to be very large sums, and I think will require considerable inquiring into. Some of them suggest a kind of secret service vote.

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

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I say they are very suggestive. There is the "Miscellaneous" vote, for instance, which seems to be a sort of "cut and come again" vote. You can cut into it as much as you like, and it does not show. Under this head we have the item "Travelling expenses of officials." I notice that this vote was exceeded by £656 13s. 8d. I notice, from the Auditor General's report, that that is accounted for to a large extent by the expenses of the Commissioner of Railways in his tour around Australia, and by the visit of the Postmaster General to Hobart, and the visit of Mr. Brooking to Melbourne. Under the same head, "Miscellaneous," we have another very elastic item, — "Incidental Expenses," amounting to £3,540 2s. 8d. The vote for 1892 was £2,500, and that has been exceeded by over £3,500. The total vote under the head of "Miscellaneous" was £25,157, and on that large amount we now have an overdraft of £6,722. Then again for Lands and Surveys—which seems to be a very expensive department

—we voted £19,035; but even that was not enough, for we have here an excess vote of nearly £1,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is an underdraft of £729.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I suppose that is simply because some of the money voted by this House was not expended. If this House votes money for a certain work and that work is not undertaken and the money not expended, you can hardly call it an underdraft. There used to be a practice in force under the old Constitution, and I think a very wise one too, namely, to refer these Excess Bills to a select committee. When they are referred to a select committee the items can be inquired into and carefully scrutinised, but if the matter is left to be dealt with in the House the general feeling seems to be that it is nobody's business more than another to inquire into these items. The amount of the Excess Bill now before us is to my mind a very excessive amount for one year, and in order that time may be saved—otherwise I shall certainly ask for information with regard to all these items from the Premier—I shall now move that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must do that after the Bill has been read a second time.

Motion for second reading put and passed.

MR. R. F. SHOLL moved that the Bill be referred to a select committee.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government have not the slightest objection to refer the Bill to a select committee, and, if the members of it require any further information, I can promise them this: that the Government will be glad to furnish them with every information in their power, and to facilitate their labours in every way. And I can tell them this: that when they have concluded their labours they will discover very little to find fault with. Under the present administration we pride ourselves that we have nothing to hide, nothing to keep back; everything we do can be investigated and looked into as closely as even the hon. member for the Gascoyne desires. I hope the House will nominate members on this committee who have plenty of time to spare, so as to be able

to give the closest attention to this matter, and to investigate every item. All I can say is, the Government have not the slightest objection to the Bill being referred to a select committee, if the House wishes it; only I would ask the hon. member not to place any member of the Government upon this committee, for we are so busy that we really have no time. I leave the matter entirely in the hands of the House.

MR. CANNING: Select committees are, no doubt, extremely useful at times, for certain purposes, but I would venture to remind members generally that, like everything else, they may be abused—the system of referring matters to select committees may be abused. It is, no doubt, a very convenient way of blinking questions, and of concealing them from the public eye, questions which the public have a perfect right to become acquainted with. A reference to a select committee is a very convenient mode indeed of evading the discussion of questions which the public have every right to be informed upon. What is the usual course when matters are referred to select committees? A report is brought up and generally adopted, and nobody knows what the reasons are which have led the committee to form their conclusions. After all, it is the public that is mostly concerned in all our proceedings in this House. We are merely the representatives of the people of the colony generally, and the people of the colony generally have a perfect right to know all that takes place here, and all that is discussed by their representatives. But when questions of public importance are referred to a select committee, and dealt with by that committee, what follows? The most important matter that concerns the public—that is, the opinions of their representatives—is concealed. The report is brought up, and, in most cases, adopted, and there the matter ends. No doubt it serves a very convenient purpose of enabling members to carry their point, or to carry their views, when they could not possibly do so if the matter were discussed publicly, in committee of the whole House. I shall oppose the reference of this Bill to a select committee.

Question put and negatived.

The House then went into committee on the Bill.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Excesses on votes for the year:

Put and passed.

Schedule:

*Legislative Council*, £66 13s. 4d.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked what was the reason for this excess in the vote for the "Hansard" reporter?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it had been caused by reason of the reorganisation of the "Hansard" staff, in accordance with the recommendations of the Joint Standing Orders Committee.

Item agreed to.

*Medical*, £1,572 4s.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the House voted £14,496 for this department, for the year, yet that large sum was exceeded by £1,572; he should like some explanation on the point.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) pointed out that there was an underdraft of £1,173 15s. under the same head. The excess had been partly caused by the creation of two new offices—one being that of a night porter, and the other a Resident Medical Officer at the Murchison. There was an overdraft also in the item for provisions in hospitals, owing to the increased number of patients under treatment. A sum of £558 was also expended in excess of the vote for the Lunatic Asylum, the expenditure being incurred chiefly in establishing a branch asylum at the "Knowle." There was an excess also in the item "Medical and Surgical Instruments," the sum voted for this purpose having proved inadequate. There had also been an overdraft of £143 in connection with quarantine stations, owing to the introduction of small pox from Mauritius on board the late Mr. Avery's vessel.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he did not consider the explanation "that the sums voted by that House had proved inadequate" was any explanation at all. That was the excuse for the excess in the vote for medical and surgical instruments. He noticed that they voted £800 for this purpose for the year, yet that amount was exceeded by £265. It seemed to him an extraordinary expenditure, over £1,000 for medical and surgical instruments in one year; and the bald statement that the amount voted had proved inadequate was very unsatisfactory. Of course it

was inadequate, otherwise the vote would not have been exceeded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) suggested that if the hon. member was not satisfied with the information furnished in the Auditor General's report with reference to any item of expenditure, his best course would be to move for a return showing how the money had been expended. It could not be expected that he (the Premier) should be able to furnish detailed information with reference to all these items beyond what was supplied by the Auditor General.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said that was the very reason he had suggested that the Bill should be referred to a select committee. He did not expect that the Colonial Treasurer would be able to explain every item in detail. It showed the absurdity of asking them to pass a Bill like this without this detailed information. These votes seemed to him to be exceeded in the most haphazard way.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was not such a haphazard thing as the hon. member imagined. The votes of Parliament were the basis upon which each department went in regulating its expenditure, and, before any vote was exceeded, the Minister had to be consulted, and the Minister had to submit the matter to the Cabinet, who had an opportunity of scrutinising the expenditure, and, if approved, they had to recommend it to the Governor for his approval. He need hardly say that neither Minister nor Cabinet were very anxious to ask the Governor to increase a vote, if they could possibly avoid it; and there was no such thing as a Minister himself increasing a vote without submitting it to the Cabinet and obtaining the Governor's approval. If he did, he would be evading the rules; and, if he did that, he would be very soon told not to do it again.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) pointed out what appeared to him to be an error in the nomenclature of this vote. In the Bill it was styled "Medical and surgical instruments," but in the Estimates it was "Medicines and surgical instruments," which was a very different thing. He could quite understand that the expenditure upon medicines should have exceeded the vote in the various hospitals of the colony.

Item agreed to.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item, "Printing: extra labour, £705 18s. 9d.," said they voted £7,057 for this establishment on the Estimates for 1892, and now there was an excess of over £700, or ten per cent. beyond the estimated and authorised expenditure. He had not looked up the amount voted for the first six months of the present year, but he believed it would be found to be considerably in excess of the vote for 1892. It appeared to him that the expenditure in connection with this department was growing, he might say, to an alarming extent, and he could not say really that, for the amount of money expended, the work was very expeditiously done. The "Votes and Proceedings" and the Blue Book were generally in the hands of members only a month or two before the following session commenced, and "Hansard" only a little before the other two. The same with official reports. One report that was asked for last session—the Government Geologist's report on the Murchison goldfields—was not issued for six or seven months after it had been in the hands of the Government Printer, and when it was comparatively useless for the purpose it was intended. That was only one instance. There were several instances of the difficulty of getting the work done in the Government Printing Office. There might be some very good excuse for all this delay, but, when they looked at the large amount voted for the upkeep of this establishment, it did appear to him that the work might be more expeditiously done. He did not know whether this excess vote included the work done outside the Government Printing Office, work done by contract.

MR. SIMPSON: No!

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he should like an answer from the Colonial Treasurer.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It does not. I believe there is a great deal more paid for printing, outside. But I may point out that there is an underdraft of £482 upon this vote.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: On account of machinery not yet imported.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said all he could tell the hon. member was that the Government Printer informed him that he was worked to death—[MR.

SIMPSON: He looks it]—and that he could not leave the place once a week. Of course the printing work of the colony had increased, and was increasing. The printing connected with the railways and other public works alone was very considerable, as they all knew. There was also the *Government Gazette*, which had to be published weekly, and which was not such a simple matter sometimes as some hon. members might imagine. Of course members were aware that this department was not under his special care; it was under his hon. friend the Colonial Secretary, and, no doubt, if his hon. friend were in the House, he would be able to give a very good account of it. There was one thing they could say, at any rate: it did its work very well; so that if members did consider that it was rather an expensive department, he was sure they would all gladly admit that the work it turned out was of most excellent quality. He knew, from his own knowledge, extending over a long course of years, that the Government Printer was a most conscientious, painstaking, and able man at his business; and he should be sorry indeed to think that he would spend a single penny unnecessarily. The department was growing, and so was the colony growing. The work in connection with Parliament alone was getting very heavy, as members could see. The Votes and Proceedings and *Hansard*, and the printing of all the documents laid on the table of the House each session, must strain all the efforts of the department, during a portion of the year; besides which they were continually wanting regulations and other work printed in connection with the Railway Department, the Lands Department, the goldfields, and all kinds of work, which was thrust upon the Government Printing Office; and he should be unwilling to believe that the present Government Printer, who, as they all knew, was a most efficient officer, and, he believed an economical officer—certainly he had never given him the idea of being extravagant in any way whatever; the only extravagance he ever heard laid to his charge was that he wanted to do his work too well—he should be unwilling to believe that the Government Printer would spend a penny unnecessarily in working his department. With the information before them, he hoped

members would not say anything detrimental to this officer.

MR. A. FORREST thought it was absurd that the Minister or the head of this printing establishment was unable to say within £800 what amount of labour would be required for one year. He did not know whether it was the Minister or the head of the department that was to blame, but he thought everyone would agree with him that, in framing the Estimates for the year, whoever was responsible ought to be able to gauge the probable requirements of the department nearer than that. The department, he believed, was well conducted, and it had an able man at its head; but it was one of those departments that was growing very fast, and he thought it was about time the House put its foot down, and said it would not increase this vote at all. When the Estimates came on, he should be able to say more; it was hardly worth while saying anything now, because the money had been expended; but he thought the overdraft was out of all proportion with the amount asked for and voted for labour in this printing establishment.

Item agreed to.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to the item "*Inspection of Stock, £310 14s. 11d.,*" said that when people incurred the large expense of bringing sheep from the North to this market, every care should be taken when these sheep were passing through an infected district. It was reported that ordinary care was not taken with these sheep in passing the Irwin, because the other day, some sheep that came down in December, after a large amount had been paid for dipping, broke out with scab, after they were brought to this part of the colony. He thought those in charge of the dip should exercise more care. If it was a fact that these sheep passed through the dip without its doing them any good, it was very hard upon those who brought them down, in having to spend a lot of money for nothing. He hoped the Government would see that proper precautions were taken with sheep coming from the Victoria district, that being the scabby district of the colony. They did not want scab introduced into this part of the colony through the neglect of ordinary care on the part of those in charge of this dip. He hoped the Government would

communicate at once with the gentleman in charge of the dip, to see that proper precautions were taken in dipping all sheep passing through that district.

MR. RICHARDSON had very much pleasure in endorsing the remarks of the hon. member for West Kimberley. He thought we were in the face of a very serious dilemma in this matter. It was understood that either the Inspector himself or a deputy-Inspector was to personally superintend the dipping of every sheep passing through this Irwin dip; but it was quite evident from what had taken place that either the sheep referred to had not been dipped at all, or had been done in a very careless manner indeed; and he thought that a very searching inquiry should be made to ascertain whose fault it was, and that punishment should follow, so as to prevent a repetition of such carelessness. He thought the Chief Inspector should be the man upon whom the responsibility should rest in the first place; if he had deputies who were not fit for the position he should see that he got better men to do the work.

MR. CLARKSON said there had been abundance of evidence to prove that this dip was perfectly useless. He had himself conversed with many of the drovers who brought sheep down from the North, and, from the way they described the operation, he knew it was simply waste of time and money. It put the owners to a great deal of trouble, and to a certain extent injured the sheep, and it could do no possible good. He presumed the proper man to throw the blame upon was the Chief Inspector, who was supposed to superintend these dips personally or by his agents. It was a very serious matter for this part of the colony, sheep being allowed to pass through this particular dip and afterwards breaking out with scab after they came down here. He hoped the Government would see that in future this work was properly done.

MR. PHILLIPS said he should like to ask the Government what information they had with regard to the outbreak of scab referred to, and whether they were sure that the cause of it was that which had been attributed by some hon. members. So far as he knew of the Irwin dip, he thought it would be found that things were not so carelessly done as had been represented. He knew the Chief Inspec-

tor was often on the spot, and he did not think he was a man who would allow the dipping to be neglected. At any rate he was the man they looked to, to see that things were properly done.

MR. SIMPSON said he could entirely support all that had fallen from the hon. member for the Irwin with regard to the careful and exact way in which the Chief Inspector of Stock carried out his duties. He had an intimate acquaintance with that gentleman, and he knew that neither late nor early did he fail to have due regard to the exigencies of the situation. He believed he was one of the most able and energetic public servants we had in this colony. With regard to the outbreak of disease among the sheep referred to, he thought it was absurd to suppose that, because scab broke out eight months after the sheep had passed the Irwin, the fault was to be found in the Irwin dip. He had no hesitation in saying that those who made such an assertion had not a tittle of evidence to support it.

Item agreed to.

MR. R. F. SHOLL called attention to the item "*Educational*, £1,314 1s. 6d.," and asked for some explanation as to this excess of expenditure. The House had voted £13,625 for this department for the year; yet the vote was exceeded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the excess had been caused mainly by an increase in the average attendance of scholars, and the consequent increase of the capitation grant. It was quite impossible to accurately estimate the number of children who would attend school during the year, and the amount of the capitation grant, which depended upon the attendance. There had also been an increase of schools, and some extra expenditure on school buildings and repairs. If the hon. member wished for any further information, it was quite competent for him to call for a return showing the details of the expenditure of the whole vote.

Item agreed to.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to the item "*Government Gardens*, £9 0s. 5d.," asked if the Government had any intention of putting up a more ornamental fence around these gardens, and also of arranging with the City Council for a better footpath?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member, as Mayor of the city, knew very well that the Government were quite prepared and had offered to bear half the expense of any footpaths made by the City Council in front of Government property; but the corporation had not acted upon his offer at all. He would ask the hon. member as Mayor to carry out his part of the contract; if he did so, the Government would be quite prepared to do their part. As to the fence around these gardens, the present fence was certainly getting old, and, when it got out of repair, the Government would be quite willing to put it in repair.

Item passed.

MR. R. F. SHOLL called attention to the item "*Defences, £1,775 5s.*" He said this excess was principally made up of £1,722, the amount of our contribution toward the upkeep of the Australian Auxiliary Squadron; and he would ask the Premier whether it was worth while to continue this contribution any longer. It appeared from the newspapers that there was one vessel belonging to the squadron then at Albany, having made three unsuccessful attempts to come round the Leeuwin to Fremantle. The excuse was that the weather was too rough. It was strange it should be too rough for one of Her Majesty's vessels, when our own little coastal steamers were able to make the passage successfully. It was a pity the Government did not telegraph to Albany to let the hopper dredge tow this man of war. If this vessel was a specimen of the other vessels of the squadron, he did not see the good of it. If Fremantle were in danger from a foreign foe, and the weather was a bit rough, the whole town would be razed to the ground before the vessels of the squadron could round the Leeuwin. What was the use of our contributing to a squadron like that?

MR. A. FORREST thought it was a pity that when the hon. member for the Gascoyne got up to speak he did not talk a little sense. It was ridiculous to say that this man-of-war did not come round the Leeuwin because the weather was a bit rough. Everyone knew it was not the weather that prevented her, but instructions from headquarters, in view of the threatening state of affairs between

France and Siam. He did not believe the vessel ever had the slightest intention of coming to Fremantle at all.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said of course when the hon. member for West Kimberley opened his month he generally said something; but whether there was any great amount of sense in what he said was really a matter of opinion. The hon. member pretended to know all about the movements of this cruiser, as if he were in private communication with the Admiralty. It was ridiculous to say that she had never intended to come to Fremantle, when it was well known that she had made three unsuccessful attempts to do so, and that she had to put back in consequence of the roughness of the weather. Yet our own little coasters were able to round the Leeuwin in the same weather. When this vote came on for discussion on the annual Estimates he should have more to say on the subject.

Item agreed to.

MR. SIMPSON, on the item, "*Postal and Telegraph, £1,390 17s. 3d.,*" asked what was the necessity of a post and telegraph assistant at Newcastle, where there was hardly any business done. Only the other day the local bank had to close its doors there, because there was nothing doing. Surely there was no necessity to provide the telegraph operator with an assistant.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was a good deal of work in the telegraph office at Newcastle, as it was necessary to have a repeating station there for all the messages from the North, and also in connection with the Yilgarn line. This assistant was a new office created on the 1st June, last year.

MR. A. FORREST asked whether the Government intended to take any steps to improve the present telephone service between Perth and Fremantle. It was really annoying to have to put up with the way the service was conducted. For his own part he preferred to send a telegram than trying to send a message by telephone. The same difficulty occurred in Perth; about 11 o'clock in the day, you could hear everybody else's business through the telephone, but you could not get connected with the person you wanted to communicate with yourself. He hoped that some provision would be made on the Estimates for an improved service between

Perth and Fremantle, and also in the city of Perth, for the present service was a nuisance.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said no doubt it was true to a certain extent what the hon. member had said, but he thought it was probably, a little exaggerated. He had as much to do with the telephone, probably, as anyone, and he could generally find the person he wanted to communicate with.

MR. A. FORREST: Because they know your voice.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All over the world there was this difficulty in connection with telephones. When he visited London some years ago, he used to give it up altogether. He did not think our telephones were in any way inferior to those of the other colonies; he thought they were quite as good. However, no harm could come from calling attention to the matter, and he would endeavour to see what could be done to improve the present service in the direction indicated by the hon. member.

Item passed.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he noticed there was an overdraft of £84 17s. 5d. in connection with the crew of the Revenue vessel on the North-West coast. He thought this was a vote that might be done away with altogether now.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said they were going to do away with it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL called attention to the item "*Miscellaneous*, £6,722 0s. 9d." He said the House voted no less a sum than £25,157 on the Estimates under this head, and now they found it exceeded by nearly £7,000, about half of which came under the head of "Incidental Expenses." He should like some further information with regard to this item, beyond what was furnished in the Auditor General's report. For instance, what had become of the handbook of the colony written by Mr. Nicolay, and the one published by Sands & McDougall, which he believed cost over £300?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the one written by Mr. Hart, and published by Sands & McDougall, had a very large circulation; it was sold all over the world. Mr. Nicolay's book was then in the hands of the printer, and he believed would shortly be issued by Stein & Co. He thought these handbooks did

a great deal of good. One of the things we suffered from in this colony was the want of publications of this kind, giving information about the colony. In the other colonies they spent immense amounts in disseminating information about their resources; but, with regard to Western Australia, it was very difficult—or had been until recently—to find anything to send people who asked for information about the colony and its capabilities. During the last year or two, there had been published more works about Western Australia than had been previously published during the whole of the colony's existence; and he hoped they should continue to make the colony known.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought these publications might be printed at the Government Printing Office, instead of at private establishments.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said they had not the means nor the room at the Government Printing Office at present to undertake such work. When they got the new building, things, he hoped, would be better.

MR. MOLLOY, referring to the item, "*Railways and Tramways*, £11,225 3s. 2d.," said he should like some information with regard to this very large overdraft.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said there was an under-draft of nearly £5,000.

MR. MOLLOY said that would leave £6,000 to be accounted for, over and above the Parliamentary vote. He heard some time ago that a considerable expenditure was incurred by this department in connection with a pleasure trip provided for some ladies and their friends to enable them to see the new harbour works at Fremantle. He thought members would agree with him that if such reckless expenditure, for such an object as this, was incurred by a public department, the officer responsible for it should be able to give a very satisfactory reason for it. The object of the trip appeared to have been to provide comfortable facilities for people to go and admire the skill of the Engineer-in-Chief.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he should be glad to give the hon. member all the information he required with refer-

ence to this vote. With regard to what the hon. member had said about some expenditure in connection with what he called a pleasure trip, he might inform the hon. member that no such expenditure had ever been charged to the Railway Department for such a trip, and the hon. member had been altogether misinformed on the subject. No party had ever been taken down to witness the new harbour works since he had been in charge of the department, except on the day when the first truck load of stuff was tipped into the sea; and the expense of that trip was not charged to the Railway Department at all, nor did it form any portion of this overdraft. This overdraft had been caused by unforeseen expenditure, necessitated by increased traffic. In 1892 the Railway Department took over from the Customs the control of all the jetties of the colony that had direct connection with the railways,—the Fremantle jetty, the Bunbury jetty, the Geraldton jetty, and the wharf at Roebourne. He was unable at the time to form any idea of what it would cost the department to work these jetties, and, in preparing the Estimates for the year, he under-estimated the amount it actually cost.

MR. A. FORREST said no doubt the traffic on our railways was increasing, but so also was the expenditure. This overdraft was chiefly made up of wages; not much more than one-third of it was made up of materials and repairs. He was not aware that we had opened any new lines of railway during the year, or that the traffic had increased to such an extent as this. He should think that the head of the department should be able to estimate his probable expenditure within less than £11,000, a very large proportion of which was for wages alone.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The actual excess is only £6,000, and, out of that, there is £4,200 for material.

MR. A. FORREST: Even then he thought the overdraft for wages was altogether out of proportion to the vote. The very first item was for wages, amounting to £3,365 14s. 1d. Surely the increased traffic during 1892 did not justify that excess. He noticed there was another sum of £1,363 for wages. What was there to justify all this extra expense? All he wished to do was to draw the

attention to the excessive amount of these overdrafts, so that Ministers should exercise a little more care in framing their Estimates. Surely any Minister should be in a position to make a nearer estimate than this, where there was an excess of £11,000.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he did not think there ever had been Estimates prepared with such care, and such accuracy and such exactness as the Estimates of the present Government. He had already told the hon. member the reason why he had not been able to estimate the probable cost of working the jetty traffic, as the department only took over the jetties last year for the first time; and this alone accounted for over £3,000 of this overdraft.

MR. MOLLOY said that notwithstanding the explanation of the Commissioner of Railways, he still thought this large overdraft was very unsatisfactory. Although this department was costing an enormous amount of money, there was still the same difficulty in obtaining trucks when they were required. This was particularly the case between Smith's Mill and Perth, although they had been told that when those New Zealand trucks were imported there would be no further difficulty in meeting the public requirements. But things were just as bad as ever, and, between Smith's Mill and Perth, were in a deplorable condition. Considering the existing state of things, he did not think it justified such a large overdraft as even £6,000.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item, "Government house and domain, Rottnest and Fremantle cottages, £41 14s. 8d.," said he should like to know what all these establishments of the Governor really cost the colony, or, in other words, what the Governorship was really worth, in addition to the salary. He thought that in the appointment of any future Governor, it should be clearly understood that he should have a certain fixed salary and no extras at all. There was another item he wished to refer to, and that was the item, "Upkeep of Water Service at Fremantle." Last year they voted £2,000 for this service, and apparently the amount had been exceeded by £459. The receipts from the same source were only £1,071, so that the Government were losing £1,500 a year.

He did not know who was responsible for looking after this matter, but it seemed to him that the receipts ought to be more than they were, or the expenditure ought to be correspondingly less.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the Government intended bringing in a Bill to regulate this question of the Fremantle water service. The extra expenditure had been caused mainly by the cost of a high pressure engine and the erection of new pumps. At present, undoubtedly, these works were not returning what they ought to do. The Government were placed to no end of expenditure in connection with them, and the profits were in no way commensurate with the outlay. They had no power at present to levy a rate, but it was intended, he believed, to bring in a Bill dealing with the subject, and placing the Government in a better position; and he hoped that next year he should be able to give a better account of this service. He had hoped that the municipality would have taken it over, and paid for it.

Item passed.

Schedule agreed to.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at seven minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.

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## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 1st August, 1893.*

New Member—Scab in the Swan District—Assent to Bills—Destructive Birds and Animals Bill: third reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

#### NEW MEMBER.

The Hon. JOHN F. T. HASSELL, having been introduced, took and subscribed

the oath of allegiance as required by the twenty-second section of "The Constitution Act, 1889."

#### SCAB IN THE SWAN DISTRICT.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I beg to ask the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, without notice, if it be true that scab has broken out in the Swan district, and if so, what steps have been taken by the Government to eradicate it?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I have no objection to answering the hon. member without notice. I regret to say that it is quite true that scab has broken out in the Swan district. It was reported on Saturday at the Colonial Secretary's Office by Messrs. Dempster Brothers, that they believed scab to be existing in a flock of theirs, which was depasturing about eighteen miles from Guildford. I believe the stock is located at a farm known as Warren's, which is situate about eight miles from the Upper Swan bridge. In consequence of the report, the services of Mr. Mortimer New were engaged, and he proceeded to inspect the flock, and reported that scab did exist. The Government then appointed Mr. New an assistant inspector of stock, with instructions to place the sheep in quarantine. For the information of the hon. member I may, perhaps, read the instructions I gave to Mr. New. They were as follows:—"I shall be glad if you will at once place Mr. C. E. Dempster's infected sheep in strict quarantine, and then proceed to track up and examine all sheep which have been in contact with the infected sheep during the last six months. I understand that Mr. Dempster's sheep travelled up from Rockingham recently, through Fremantle, Perth, and Guildford, and probably some of the butchers' and other flocks now depasturing on the lands they passed over have become infected. It will be necessary, therefore, it seems to me, to examine all sheep in the vicinity and the route of Mr. Dempster's sheep. I am also informed that Mr. Andrew Dempster recently travelled sheep from Rockingham to his place near Spencer's Brook, and these probably are also infected. I think it highly important that all Mr. Andrew Dempster's sheep and runs should be inspected without delay, as a spread of scab in the Avon district would be most