

societies. I think this will be found a useful clause, as it provides several means of investment for the funds of these societies. Clause 19 is one of the most important, because it makes the Consolidated Revenue of the colony responsible for the payment of the principal and interest of depositors. Clause 20 deals with the investment of funds. Hon. members will notice that by Clause 21 the control of the funds deposited under this Bill is placed in the hands of the Governor, acting with the advice of the Executive Council. The funds of depositors, under this Bill, may be invested in the following ways:—they may be deposited in any Bank of the colony; they may be invested in Government securities, including Government debentures, Treasury bills, or any other security for which the Consolidated Revenue of the colony is responsible; they can also be invested in landed securities, on first mortgages of lands in the colony, provided that not more than £3,000 shall be lent on any one property, and that not more than one-third of the whole funds of the Savings Bank shall be invested in this class of security. Clause 22 provides that the surplus or profit, after allowing for all the expenses of working the Act, shall be carried to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund; and this seems to me to be a reasonable provision, because as that fund is made responsible for the payment of the principal and interest of all deposits, there can be no reason why any profit that is made on the business should not be carried at once to that fund. Clause 24 provides for power to make regulations; and this is an important clause, necessary in statutes of this sort, for the making of regulations to carry out the objects of the Bill. Clause 25 provides that the annual accounts shall be laid before Parliament; and clause 26 provides for the auditing of the accounts. These are the principal provisions of the Bill, which I believe will be found a most useful one, and they consolidate in one Act the provisions of four statutes. The Bill will provide a safe and certain way of lodging the deposits of persons of small means, and an investment for those who have small sums to deposit at interest; and I think altogether it will encourage thrift and economy in the community. I move the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 7-48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 17th July, 1893.

Message from the Governor: Treasury Bonds—Message from the Governor: Supply Bill—Appointment of Boiler Inspector—Public Selection of Land upon Jarrahdale Timber Company's Concession—Report *re* Water Supply upon Yilgarn Goldfields—Prevention of Incursion of Rabbits from South Australia—Appointment of Commission to Inquire into Working of Civil Service—Return showing Cost of Railway Stations on South-Western Line—Papers *re* Discovery of Murchison Goldfield—Treasury Bills Bill: third reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR: TREASURY BONDS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) presented the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—"In accordance with the requirements of section 67 of 'The Constitution Act, 1889,' the Governor recommends to the Legislative Assembly that an appropriation be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purposes of a Bill to authorise the issue of Treasury Bonds.—Government House, Perth, 17th July, 1893."

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR: SUPPLY BILL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) presented the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:—"In accordance with the provisions of section 67 of 'The Constitution Act, 1889,' the Governor recommends to the Legislative

Assembly that provision be made to the extent of £100,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the colony during the year ending the last day of June, 1894.—Government House, Perth, 17th July, 1893."

APPOINTMENT OF BOILER INSPECTOR.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether it was the intention of the Government to appoint some competent and responsible person to act as Boiler Inspector, with a view to the more efficient carrying out of the provisions of "The Boat Licensing Act, 1878" (42 Vic., No. 24), and thereby securing the better protection of life and property at sea.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that the Government had no power to appoint Boiler Inspectors under "The Boat Licensing Act, 1878," but the Boat Licensing Board under that Act were empowered to cause surveys to be held at any time on the engines, boilers, and fittings of any steamer plying for hire.

PUBLIC SELECTION OF LAND UPON JARRAHDAL TIMBER COMPANY'S CONCESSION.

MR. PATERSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether, under the agreement with the Jarrahdale Timber Company, the public had a right to select land on the company's concession.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: The agreement provides that the Crown may sell the fee simple of or demise the 250,000 acres comprised in the special timber concession, or any part thereof, to any person or persons, subject only to the rights intended to be created in favour of the Company by the agreement. A copy of the agreement is contained in the Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, 1891-2.

REPORT *RE* WATER SUPPLY UPON YILGARN GOLDFIELDS.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands when the Government proposed to lay on the table of the House the report of the gentleman appointed to inquire

into the question of a supply of water on the Yilgarn goldfields.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied that the report of the Superintendent of Water Supply would be laid upon the table of the House in a few days.

PREVENTION OF INCURSION OF RABBITS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

MR. HASSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the Government intended to take any steps to prevent the incursion of rabbits into this colony from South Australia.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied:—The Government has been in communication with the Government of South Australia upon the subject of the rumoured incursion of rabbits to this colony, and has received the following reply:—

To the Hon. the Premier.

Re Rabbits.—Our Surveyor General does not think any rabbits exist near our Western boundary. Our Eucla Stationmaster states that travellers report rabbits at Bight and telegraph line fifty miles further West, but doubts reliability of reports. Nullabor Station Manager and employes deny existence, and Clerk of Government Boreas, three years' residence different parts Nullabor Plains, neither saw nor heard anything of rabbits.

C. C. KINGSTON,

July 14, 1893.

Premier.

The Government will still continue to make inquiries.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO WORKING OF CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to appoint a commission to inquire into the working of the Civil Service, with a view to the economical and satisfactory administration of the affairs of the Colony." He said: If I had more experience in the rules of Parliamentary procedure, or if I had the right to demand more attention from hon. members of this House who have served this country so much longer than I have had the opportunity of doing, I might perhaps venture to trespass on their patience longer than I anticipate doing this evening. It has been impressed on me, not particularly

by my constituents in that important place which I have the honour to represent, but by requests from many places, that it is desirable, in the interest of the country's development, and in the interest of the economical administration of the revenue derived from the people, that an independent commission should be appointed to inquire into the working of our Civil Service, to see that those honourable and able men who are occupying responsible positions in it may be adequately remunerated; and, in addition to that, to see, as we most certainly should, that the people of the colony secure for their expenditure adequate labour and value from the servants they employ. In approaching so important a matter as the Civil Service of the colony, one should not do it in a light manner. We know that, in speaking of the Civil Service, we speak of what may be called the stable administration of the colony's Government. Ministries may come, and Ministries may go, but the practical, the administrative heads of departments are there through all changes, doing honourable, upright, and useful service to the country. Political differences may occur to throw a Ministry out of office, but the Civil Service remains. Therefore, if we are to obtain the highest security to the State, the most perfect development of the country, the most capable administration, and the greatest purity of affairs, these are to be arrived at by having an established Civil Service, beyond doubt as to its repute both as to character and ability. I am little inclined to imply that our Service is not as spotless as we can imagine; but I do say there is grave distrust in this country, not as to the integrity of the administrators, nor of the organisation, so far as it is known to the public, but as to whether the Civil Service, in certain departments, has not grown beyond the country's requirements. The constitution of the Civil Service, in a country such as ours, to my mind should be unimpeachable. Culture, character, and ability should secure the highest remuneration from those best able to pay for them. So far as I have seen the Civil Service, we have made some slight mistakes, easy of correction. Up to the present we have thought it more desirable to employ two or three second-rate

men instead of one good, able man, who should be paid a high salary. In mentioning high salaries, I mean that we should secure for our service cultured, able men, and pay them such salaries as would place them in a financially independent position, so that they might devote the whole of their time and ability to the service of the State. I was informed to-day—but I decline to believe it—that the Government were very much adverse to this motion. I should say, on the contrary, that the Government ought to welcome this motion; for if our Civil Service is, in their opinion, in a healthy condition—if it is giving twenty shillings in the pound value for every twenty shillings it receives from the State—the report of a commission will make the fact clear, and in that way do good. But I was informed to-day that the Government objected to this motion because they thought it was interfering with their administration. I can say now that I put this motion on the paper with no idea of trespassing on their privileges as administrators, and that I had no intention of implying that they were unequal to their administrative duties; but as to the details of administration, I do think they have got beyond the control of Ministers. Therefore, it has occurred to many people that it is desirable to suggest, in a fairly emphatic way, that the Civil Service of this colony is drawing too much out of the revenue, and is not quite supplying the services for which it is paid. The hon. the Premier has been connected, so far as my information goes, for very many years with the Civil Service of this country. Distinguished in all the details of his life, his information, his advice, on a question of this sort, is indeed valuable. But there are other departments of the Government, and I believe some of them have got beyond his sagacious ken. I believe the position of affairs to-day calls largely for retrenchment; and I do not speak in the attitude of one of those who are anxious to “go for” the Civil Service. I know the refuge of blatant politicians, as a rule, is to get up a cry of retrenchment in the Civil Service. I do not wish to speak in that way, but I do wish to tell the House that this colony, of some 60,000 people, is costing about £10 a

head to govern us, although 80 or 90 per cent. of the people do not want a shilling spent on them; and we are drawing too much out of the pockets of the people to govern them. I look on this large rate of expenditure as a gross idea. If we look round the continent of Australia—other hon. members may think differently, but I have my own opinions—I believe the greatest curse that has ever visited Australian Governments has been the giving to the Governments of the various colonies too much money to spend. I think we ought to reduce the money we place in the hands of our Government, and that we are taking too much out of the pockets of our people. I do believe the Civil Service of this colony has grown abnormally large; and I speak in the interest of the Civil servants themselves when I say that, in these early days of Responsible Government, we should try to avoid that terrible judgment day, a Black Wednesday. It is a terrible thing to induce men to take positions in the Civil Service, with the belief that they will have a permanency, and that through some political exigency they must then be dismissed, for no fault of theirs. What can such men do when dismissed? So far as I know occupants of positions in the Civil Service, they are unfit to go into the commercial world, unfit to go into any of the details of commercial industries and occupy positions which would secure them remuneration anything like that which they would obtain under a Government; and I think it is a dangerous thing to see the Civil Service assuming abnormal proportions, in a country so young as ours and with so small a population. Public opinion, I believe, is very strong on this point. I have heard it stated that public opinion is very inarticulate in Western Australia; but I have not taken up a newspaper, since the introduction of Responsible Government, which has not affirmed the opinion that the Civil Service of this colony is larger than the requirements call for. It would ill become me to suggest to this House the composition of the commission which I have proposed should be appointed. It would be rude impudence on my part to suggest the composition of this commission; but I do think, with the greatest respect for the

integrity of every member of this House, and with a high sense of their duty as representatives, that it would be a wise thing, in the interest of the colony, that an absolutely independent commission be appointed to examine into the services which the Civil servants render for the money they receive. If I were permitted, without trespassing on the patience of hon. members, I would suggest an able commercial man, an able banker——

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): To reconstruct the concern?

MR. SIMPSON: I wish the Government to be in a position that they will not require to be reconstructed. As I was saying, I would suggest an able commercial man, an able banker, and a gentleman selected by the Government as representative of the Civil Service, to sit on the commission and inquire into the duties of each member of the Civil Service as to his capability, and the remuneration he receives, whether he fulfils all the duties to the satisfaction of the Ministerial head, who is responsible to this House, and whether he is likely to be a credit to the colony. In seeking for this inquiry, I do not think any hon. member will say it is unwise. We are now in the infant days of Responsible Government, and we are here to-day in order that we may avoid the mistakes that have been made in other places; and I say distinctly that the history of Australia proves beyond question that the Civil Service is a menace to Responsible Government. I say the organisation of the Service in other colonies has become a menace to the proper administration of public affairs. I speak in the interest of a pure Administration, and a pure, capable, well organised, Civil Service; and I wish the House and the Government to take into consideration my views about this matter. They may be immature, but there is wisdom enough in this House, in connection with this commission, to accomplish what I am sure is the desire of every thinking man in this country, and that is that we shall not spend too much money on the work of government, that we shall not establish our Civil Service as a sort of parish in which we can set up a beadle occasionally, if we have sufficient political influence; but

that we shall put the Service in a position where ability, and character, and reputation shall be recognised and remunerated at their full value, and where men may know that they will be required to render in return the full value of every shilling they receive from the State. I have heard something lately about the Railways and Works Departments, and a motion, not in the least adverse to this one, was moved by the hon. member for Albany. But I think the present motion goes a good deal further, without interfering in any way with the limits of the motion proposed by the hon. member. I submit this motion in deference. I believe this country asks for this commission of inquiry. It wants to know where the revenue derived from the people is going to. It wishes to know the number of Civil servants it has got, and what they do for the money paid to them. It wishes to know whether promotion is due to merit or to political patronage. It wishes to know whether any higher principle may be hoped for, by capable men in the Service, and whether any greater advantage can be secured to the country we live in. I beg to submit the motion standing in my name.

MR. R. F. SHOLL formally seconded the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did suggest to the hon. member that he should end his motion in such a manner as would enable me to support it. It seems the principal object he has in view is the appointment of a commission for inquiring into the Civil Service. If that commission were appointed, I assume it would have full power to investigate into the circumstances of every single officer, and of every single department. I understood the hon. member would fall in with my view; but he still adheres to his own proposition, which I think is not altogether satisfactory, because there would be some reflection on the Government if the motion were passed in the form in which he has moved it. Of course I am not desirous of interpreting the hon. member's resolution in that light, if he does not desire it himself; but what I suggested to him was that the motion should read in this way:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to appoint a commission to inquire into the organisa-

tion of the Civil Service, with a view of ascertaining if it can be placed on a more satisfactory basis." That proposition would meet the views of the Government; at any rate, it would have the concurrence of the Government, because we are entirely in accord with the hon. member in desiring that the Civil Service should be administered on the most economical lines consistent with efficiency. I am not prepared to say, off-hand, that there may not be some cases that have grown to some small extent beyond what is actually required—I could not make so strong a statement as that—but I am prepared to say there is a desire, on the part of the Government, to have the administration conducted economically. Of course, as the hon. member has said, the Civil Service always comes in for attack by many politicians. It is a standing subject for attack by everyone who wishes to make himself prominent, or to take an active part in the debates of this House; and in attacking the Civil Service an hon. member will generally find a considerable amount of support, because by many persons the Civil servants are looked upon as a lazy lot of fellows, who crowd the Government offices, and do next to nothing for their salaries, and that they are three or four times more numerous than they ought to be. As far as the present Government are concerned, we have no Civil Service Act for regulating the Service, as they have in other colonies; and it has been my desire and that of the Government, as soon as possible, to introduce a Civil Service Bill, so as to place the Service on a firm and satisfactory basis, not only in the interest of the Government, but also of those employed, so that they may understand the position they are in, and have secured to them those rights and privileges which are given to all Civil servants in every part of the world. We have not been able to bring in this Bill up to the present time, and we have been working under the Colonial Office Regulations, which have existed in this colony a long time; and although the Executive have plenty of power, under the Constitution Act, to deal with any officers of the Civil Service, still the service is not placed on that basis that we would like. It is the intention of the Government, as

soon as we can find time—and I hope we shall do so before next session—to prepare a Bill which will define the positions in the Civil Service, and also deal with them in the same manner in which they are dealt with in all other parts of Australia. As the hon. member has mentioned, I have had considerable experience of the Civil Service in this colony, and I believe that, when this commission reports, it will be found that there are in the Civil Service a large number of highly honourable and able men, who are above reproach, men of the utmost honour, and who are in every way most trustworthy. I say this colony is to be congratulated on having men of this stamp in its service. I also feel sure the commissioners will be able to say there are many men in the Service who are thoroughly single-minded, and have no other idea than to carry out their duties and do what is just and right. Hon. members should recollect that this immense colony extends over three thousand miles of coast-line, and that it requires, for that reason, a greater number of officers to carry on the business, in proportion to the population. The hon. member was not quite clear when he stated that the administration of this colony is costing £10 a head per annum. It is quite true that the revenue is about £600,000, and that the population numbers about 60,000; but out of this expenditure £100,000 goes on the railways, to earn a similar amount of revenue; and does the hon. member call that Civil Service expenditure? There is the interest on loan expenditure, another £100,000—perhaps he will say that is for the Civil Service!

MR. SIMPSON: That is the Loan expenditure, which is at the rate of £600,000 a year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Loan interest comes out of the Consolidated Revenue. There is about £100,000 spent on buildings and various public works, which also comes out of the Consolidated Revenue—perhaps he will call that Civil Service expenditure! Perhaps the hon. member will call the expenditure on the Police throughout the colony a Civil Service expenditure; but I say the Police Service is not a part of the Civil Service. There is the Post Office carrying mails all over the country; then

there are the Medical officers spread over many parts of the colony, the Charitable Institutions, and the Prisons—are these the Civil Service? I think that when the hon. member looks through the annual estimates of expenditure, he will have to reduce by a long way his calculation of £10 a head as the cost of administering the colony. I am quite ready to admit, and no one more willingly, that in the Civil Service a great deal of supervision is necessary, to prevent the unnecessary multiplication of offices, and to see that the officers perform their duties properly. But I do not think that requirement is confined to the Civil Service; it is found necessary in every service where a large number of men are employed, for you will find that they need looking after, if you are to get as much as you ought from them. The Civil Service may be higher, but it is not altogether different from any other service. As a rule, the men are intelligent, and are willing to do what they think is fair and right. I can only assure the House that, as far as the Government are concerned, they are in no way adverse to this motion. In fact, we welcome it, for it will afford to the Government a large amount of information, which will be of use in framing the Bill which they intend to submit to the House. If the hon. member will alter his motion in the way I suggest, the change will not take away from its value, and the Government will be quite willing to agree with it; and when the time comes to appoint a commission, we shall have no other object than to appoint the most able, independent, and honourable men we can obtain for the work. But, as you will all know, it is difficult to get gentlemen to give up so much time and labour as is necessary to carry out this work efficiently. We will, however, do our best to obtain suitable commissioners; and if the hon. member will agree to my suggestion, the Government will have no objection to his motion.

MR. SIMPSON: Will the hon. the Premier move the alteration as an amendment?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think it would be well for me to move this, as the head of the Government. If some other hon. member will move it, the Government will have no objection.

MR. SOLOMON: I will move the amendment, as follows:—That all the words after the words “into the” be struck out, and that the following words be inserted in lieu thereof, “organisation of the Civil Service, with a view of ascertaining if it can be placed on a more satisfactory basis.”

MR. QUINLAN: I have pleasure in seconding the amendment, and, after the expressions which have fallen from the hon. the Premier, I think it is not necessary to say anything more on the question.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: As the head of the Government has fallen in with the views of the hon. member, to a great extent, and appears to court this inquiry, I do not think it is necessary to say a great deal on this question, but it would be satisfactory if an inquiry into the working of the Civil Service were held. We have heard it remarked, and seen it stated in the Press, and hon. members in this House have expressed the opinion, that the Civil Service is conducted on a most elaborate and extravagant scale. This may be true or may be untrue, but I think, in the interest of all concerned, and in the interest of the Government and the heads of the departments, it would be well that a full inquiry should be held, to ascertain whether the working of the Civil Service can be placed on a more satisfactory basis. I am prepared to say the remark is correct that there is a general opinion that the Civil Service is conducted in an extravagant manner. We must remember, however, that a great many Loan works are being carried on, which require a larger number of employés than would be required in ordinary circumstances. It would be satisfactory to ascertain whether the Service can be placed on a more satisfactory basis. I am pleased the Government have fallen in with the desire of the hon. member, and have suggested this amendment. I feel sure there was no intention on the part of the mover to reflect on the Government, but simply to have an inquiry into the working of the Civil Service.

MR. DEHAMEL: I do hope, as the Premier has fallen in with the views of the hon. member for Geraldton, and also of the great majority of members in this House, that when this commission is

appointed it will be empowered and instructed by the Government to consider one question, and that is whether it is in the interest of this country that there should be a Civil Service Board of Examiners for the filling up of all vacancies that occur, or for appointing any clerks that may become necessary hereafter. That is the rule in the old country, and it has been found to work uncommonly well. Every applicant is then on an equality, no matter who or what his parents may be, and every applicant must go before this board of examiners and must pass an examination, which is of course fitted for each department, to ascertain who is the most competent applicant for a particular post. In that way we can get over all questions of political patronage, we may secure those who are most qualified for the work, and we throw the Civil Service open to the sons of every settler in the colony. I do hope that this will be one of the points on which the commission will be asked to advise, because I believe it will give the greatest satisfaction to every taxpayer to know that his son, if he can come out on the top of the tree, has the certainty of getting the appointment that he seeks. By starting on an equal footing, no matter whether a candidate knows any member of the Ministry for the time being or not, he may know that he can get into the Service only through the examination of a practical and independent board; and I do hope that this commission will not be appointed without that important matter being referred to them.

MR. CLARKSON: It cannot be denied that there is a very wide-spread feeling of dissatisfaction expressed outside with regard to some branches of the Civil Service. It is said that some persons appoint their friends and relations to the best positions. It is also complained by persons in the departments that they are pestered with too much red-tape. It is said that in some branches there are far too many officers, and far too much of this red-tape, causing unnecessary trouble and labour, so that the men cannot get through their duties. I am pleased that the Government have not thrown any obstacle in the way of the appointment of a commission, as an in-

quiry will be more satisfactory to all parties concerned.

MR. CANNING: Some time ago I asked in this House if it was the intention of the Government to take up this question, and the answer I received was not altogether satisfactory, but I am glad to find it is now the intention to appoint a commission. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Albany, I should like to remind hon. members that the conditions of this colony are so widely different from those existing in England, that it would be quite impracticable to attain the end we have in view by the appointment of a permanent commission for considering the qualifications of candidates for the Civil Service. There are times when the Government, or the different heads of departments, might be seriously embarrassed in carrying on the work of their departments. We do not know what changes might come about, and, with the changes in a comparatively new community, we must allow the heads of departments a certain latitude, leaving them free to choose those who, in their opinion, are the best fitted to perform the duties that have to be done. If it were necessary to go through an examination for every appointment, it would be carrying red-tape to an extreme if the duties which had to be done must wait until the qualifications of candidates could be submitted to the permanent board of examiners, and until the examiners could report on them, before the persons whose services might be required could be employed. We all know there are times when we have far too many applicants for employment, but there are other times when it is difficult to find suitable men to perform particular duties required in carrying on the work of the Government. It would be premature, at the present time, to make it imperative that there should be a commission sitting to examine the qualifications of all candidates before appointment; the appointment of suitable persons must be left very much to the discretion of the responsible heads of departments, and of course this House must hold them responsible generally for the appointments that are made. I have no doubt that the appointment of a Civil Service Commission will do a great deal of good, and no harm can be done by thoroughly sift-

ing the question, and by making recommendations, some of which may be adopted by the Government, or may be considered by Parliament. With regard to what has been said about red-tape, people generally talk about red-tape very readily, and they object to rules and regulations when these happen to interfere with their own convenience; but when anything has to be done in connection with their own affairs, the very persons who are the foremost in objecting to red-tape in the Government service are themselves the most exacting in details where their own interests are concerned. They object when rules interfere with their own convenience, and they want everything brushed aside in order that their business may be done; but when dealing with others, they are quite prepared to oppose rules and regulations for impeding those persons who are anxious to get through matters as soon as possible. I think the term "red-tape" is very often used inconsiderately. There are many present here, and among the public, who would be the first to exclaim against any departure from the recognised rules for the conduct of business on the part of the Government or of any head of a department. Therefore, I should strongly recommend that hon. members who use the term "red-tape" very freely and inconsiderately, should consider the necessity for rules and regulations being observed.

Amendment put and passed, and the resolution as amended agreed to.

RETURN SHOWING COST OF RAILWAY STATIONS ON SOUTH-WESTERN LINE.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid on the table showing the Government estimate of the cost of all the railway stations and platforms on the South-Western Railway line, and the approaches thereto; such return to show, under separate head, the cost of each station or platform.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS *RE* DISCOVERY OF MURCHISON GOLDFIELD.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, moved that there be laid upon the table of the House all papers and

correspondence in connection with the reward for the discovery of the Murchison goldfield.

Question put and passed.

TREASURY BILLS BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: On the 21st of November last I had the honour of moving, in this House, the second reading of a Bill almost identical with the present Bill. Hon. members will recollect that, in a House consisting of 26 members, on that evening, only six were found opposed to the second reading; and I hope and believe that during the six or eight months which have passed since then, with the further consideration which has been given to this question, and seeing that this House has not changed its *personnel*, except in one instance, I shall to-night receive, on behalf of the Government, as strong a support as was accorded to us when I moved the second reading of the Bill last session. As you are all aware, the reason I have again to address myself to this subject is that the Bill did not become law last session, and because it did not find that favour and support in another place which we had expected it to receive. It is a gratifying fact that the rejection of the measure in another place was accepted by the people of the colony, I think I may say, in a proper and constitutional way. So proper and so constitutional has been the attitude of the people, that it has led many persons—especially those who are opposed to the principles embodied in the Bill—to say the people of the colony are indifferent to it, and are content without any change in the Constitution. The Government, however, think altogether differently. We ascribe what may be considered the indifference, or what has been termed the indifference, on the part of the people on this question, to a feeling that they have confidence in the Government of the colony, and also confidence in the Parliament. They have confidence that we are doing our very best to promote the

liberalisation of the franchise, and they are unwilling that they should seem to try and force us to do what we are already doing willingly, and of our own accord. Besides that, I do not think that we, as representing the people of this colony, require or should expect to be reminded of what is our duty. I am sure there is no one in this House who wants to be reminded of what he considers to be his duty. No member wants to have justice demanded from him at the point of the bayonet. I think it is in times of peace, and when everything is working harmoniously, that we should set about to make necessary reforms, rather than that we should wait until times of excitement and difficulty come upon us, when—depend upon it—we would be less able to do what is right. The Government, during the past six months, have again very carefully considered this matter. They have further considered the Bill which passed the second reading in the last session, and have decided to ask hon. members to approve again of this Bill, as nothing whatever has happened in the interval which should make us change the opinions we then held. As hon. members will have seen on the Notice Paper, it is intended by my hon. friend the member for Beverley, to-night, to move as an amendment that this Bill should be divided into two parts. I shall be glad and anxious to learn the reasons that have actuated my friend in desiring this change in the Bill; for the only reason I can imagine is that one part of the Bill may become the law of the land, and that the other may be thrown out, or at any rate dealt with in some other way, either in this House or in another place. Now, if that is the object, and it is the only object I can see in the hon. member's amendment, I would ask him whether what he desires cannot be left to the hon. members in another place, rather than that we ourselves should deal with the Bill in that way. It seems to me that by following the course he proposes to take, we in this House would not gain anything whatever; nor can I see any just reason or any cause whatever why the step which my hon. friend proposes should be taken by us. I would ask hon. members to do their duty, in regard to this

Bill, fearlessly and properly; leaving others to do their duty in the way that they think is due to them. Whatever decision is arrived at, I can only say I shall not be one of those who will speak in any way disrespectfully. I have no doubt others have their responsibilities, and feel them in the same way as members in this House feel their responsibilities. In regard to the Bill that I now ask you to read a second time, it is grafted on the Constitution Act of 1889. That Act will still remain in force, so far as this Bill does not interfere with it. The only material difference between this Bill and that of last year is that this Bill proposes to make the Legislative Council consist of 21 members instead of the previous proposal of 17 members; and it proposes to give three members to each of the seven electoral divisions shown on the map. In every other particular the provisions of the former Bill have not been changed. I think I may safely say that the Bill of last year has met with the approval of the people of the colony.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: How do you know?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): During the past six months we have not had any intimation from any section of the community that the principles of the Bill were not in accord with the wishes of the majority of the people; and I think I am justified in saying the people of the colony have approved, so far as we can judge their approval, of the principles of the Bill. There are, of course, a few in every community who consider that everything is right as it is, and that nothing more is required. I do not think that even those persons will refuse to admit that the present Bill enfranchises the people to an extent that is reasonable. There are about 60,000 persons at present in the colony, and only 5,900 voters; and looking at the vast extent of this colony, and the large proportionate number of statute males, it seems to me that 5,900 should not be the whole number of the voters in this immense colony. I hope that even the hon. member for the Gascoyne will admit that something needs mending in this respect, and that there should be a greater proportion of the adult males upon our electoral rolls. The main features of the Bill are, first, the increase of members of the Legislative

Council from 15, as at present, to 21, there being three members for each of the seven divisions; the second principle is the abolition of the property qualification for members of both Houses; and the third is the liberalisation, extension, and simplifying of the franchise for the election of members to both Houses. These are the three principal provisions of the Bill, and to a large extent the remaining provisions are details which can be dealt with in committee, and are not what may be termed principles of the Bill. The Government consider that the present number of 15 members for the Upper House is too small. Last session they proposed 17, but there was a difficulty in distributing that number among the seven electoral divisions of the colony, as some would have to retire after two years, and others retire after three years; and, upon re-consideration, it has seemed to the Government better to have the same number for each division, so that they might all have the same length of term, and that for this purpose the whole number should be increased to 21 rather than to 17. The larger number will make the Upper House more useful, and far more likely to exercise a good and moderating influence, than if the number were only 15 or 17, because in a House of 21 members one or two active persons will be less likely to exercise so great an influence as they can do in a smaller number. With regard to the property qualification of members, last session—very much to my surprise—this House was practically divided as to whether there should be a property qualification for members of the Upper House, and in the division 14 voted for a property qualification, and 15 against it. Considering the feeling that has been so generally expressed throughout the colony, that members of the Legislature should not have a property qualification, I must confess that I was very much surprised at that division. I hope, however, that the time which has intervened will induce hon. members to more carefully consider the matter, and that in committee they will pass the clause as it appears in the Bill. The opinion of the Government is that the qualification for election to the Upper House should be that of the voter and not that of the candidate. Besides that, if a property

qualification were required, it would be practically a dead letter; for if you look at the working of the property qualification in other colonies, where a member of the Upper House is required to have so many hundreds or thousands of pounds worth of property, free of encumbrance, you know the provision is evaded.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Not here, surely.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It seems to me far better to have no property qualification, leaving to the voter the duty of electing whom he thinks will best represent him, and allowing the qualification for election to the Upper House to rest on the voter. In regard to the qualification for members of the Lower House, it was generally agreed, last session, that there should be none, and Clause 16 of the Bill passed without any comment; so I have no doubt that in this session the same views will be held by hon. members, and that this clause will pass without comment again. The last main feature, and the most important, is the qualification of voters for both Houses. In regard to the Upper House, it was generally agreed, last session, that the clause was satisfactory, and it has not been altered in any way in the present Bill. It was passed without a division last session, although I believe there was a disposition on the part of some few members to increase the qualification—the hon. member for the Gascoyne wished to increase it from £100 freehold to £200, but he did not get any support, and the clause passed without amendment. With regard to the qualification for electors of the Assembly, the only point contested last session was whether the term of residence should be twelve or six months. No objection was taken to the main provision of the clause, namely, that a residence of six months within the same electoral district should entitle a man to vote, if he had been a year in the colony. That provision is one of the main features of the Bill. This House, in the last session, supported the proposition of the Government, that twelve months should be the term, and I then pointed out that this was the same term of residence as was required in the advanced colony of Victoria. I do not know whether any hon. member is going to try and reduce the term for qualifying a man to exercise a vote in this colony, but

assuming that some such proposal may be made, I will offer a few observations. From the remarks of some hon. members who spoke on this question in the last session, it seemed as if the principal object a man had in coming to this colony was in order that he might be placed on the electoral roll, and vote for some member of Parliament. That seemed to be set forth as his principal duty. But hon. members who spoke in that way seemed to forget that this Parliament has existed nearly three years, and, with the exception of a few bye-elections, those persons who have come over here, and are said to be in such a hurry to get on the electoral roll, have not yet had an opportunity to exercise the great privilege which they came from other parts of the world to exercise, although this was represented to be their principal object in coming here. Hon. members should bear in mind, also, that an election under the present Constitution comes only once in four years, and therefore, unless voters came here exactly in time to qualify for an election, they would probably have to wait four years, in ordinary course, before they could vote at a general election. There is such a thing as being unreasonable; and I think the arguments of those hon. members who wished, last session, to reduce the term of residence within the colony from twelve to six months, are what I call unreasonable. We must remember, too, that it is only in the interest of those who are coming here, and not of those already here, that these hon. members are so magnanimous and so liberal-minded; and they are not content to represent the people already in the colony—those who sent them to this House—but are more interested in persons who have yet to come here. It cannot affect anyone here at present, or to a very small extent, whether the term of residence is to be twelve or six months, in reference to the next general election.

MR. SIMPSON: I knew a person who shifted from one side of the street to the other, and he could not vote at the next election.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In Victoria, at any rate, a man has to wait twelve months before he is allowed the privilege of voting. All this apparently great sympathy with those who are to come here bye and bye—people

they don't yet know—is a little too transparent to be seriously regarded by this House. There is another point, and an important one, which is that many of those new-comers whom we are so anxious to see here, and are willing to give votes to, have probably never had a vote in the country they came from, because even in the other colonies a large number of people who are entitled to be on the electoral roll do not take the trouble to get there, and do not vote in the elections. But, at any rate, if they will come here and stay twelve months, and after residing six months in one electoral district, they may not only have the privilege of voting for a member to represent them in Parliament, but may become members themselves. I do not believe, however, that these conditions as to voting will influence any man for or against coming to this colony. If a man desires to come here and find a home, and be a useful citizen, he will not be at all deterred by the condition that he must wait twelve months before he can obtain a vote. As to the point raised by the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy), and the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson), that a man may lose his vote by changing from one side of a street to the other, I am aware that is a defect, and we are trying to cure it in the Electoral Bill which is in preparation. But I may tell those hon. members that in the colony of Queensland, where the Government tried to overcome the difficulty about removals, they have not yet succeeded in doing so, for in that colony the persons who change from one electoral district to another are not yet able to exercise a vote. Sir Samuel Griffith sent me a letter recently, saying that they have found it quite impracticable in Queensland to have a system of transfers. If the transfers are made too easy, a number of persons might, at a bye election in Perth, for instance, shift from one electoral district to another, and, after carrying the election by a transfer of 50 or 60 votes, they might change back to their former district.

MR. SIMPSON: They would not do it. They are too honourable.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If the means were available, it might be done. However, it will be seen that there is considerable difficulty in arrang-

ing a system of transfers. I have not said much with reference to the details of this Bill, because they are so well known to hon. members; but, having dealt with the main provisions, I may say the object of the Government is to liberalise the franchise, and make every man in the colony feel that he has an interest in its affairs, and is responsible for its welfare; and if he does not feel it so, I wish him to realise that it must be so. You cannot expect men all in a moment to take a great interest in these matters, but after a little while they may begin to feel their responsibility as electors and take a considerable interest in the affairs of the colony. We wish to make them feel their responsibility to the Government and to Parliament. We do not wish the people to think that the Government and Parliament are restricted to a few, but we wish to make them understand that the Government and Parliament are exactly what the people make them. If the electors are actuated by high, honourable, and worthy motives, and by a patriotic desire to make the colony prosperous and the people happy, the Parliament and the Government then will be a reflection of the views of the people. If, on the other hand, the people are selfish and careless, or are actuated by unworthy motives, then all I can say is that a bad day and a sad day it must be for the future of this colony and for the Parliament elected by them. Above all things, the present Government desire to be moderate. We do not want to go in for anything revolutionary. In this Bill there is not one single provision that is in any way revolutionary. We do not take away anything from anyone, but we give a good deal to those who have not got it; and I believe this Bill will be the means of enfranchising the whole mass of the people, and will give to the whole mass an interest in the concerns of the State. To all those who are opposed to this Bill—such as my hon. friend the member for the Gascoyne—I say to night: "Give freely now that which you will have to give very soon; give freely now, rather than give grudgingly, because it is said the man who gives freely gives twice." I have a word to say to those who think this Bill is not liberal enough; and to them I would say they are totally unreasonable, and I do

not consider they are fair, because this Constitution Bill is more liberal than the Constitution of the mother country, and more liberal than that of the colony of Victoria. I say to all: take what is offered now, and which I believe we can obtain, rather than strive for something more, which we may have to wait years for, and probably never get at all. I say this Bill is as liberal as—indeed more liberal than—the provisions which exist in most parts of the British Empire; and I say, further, that the present Bill is quite liberal enough for all our requirements. As for those who think that, by extending the franchise, more persons would be allowed to vote—persons who are said to be without a stake in the country—I believe, myself, that there is wisdom in the majority. I have had opportunities, in this colony, of witnessing things taking place which I thought at the time were perfectly dreadful, and I feared the end of the colony was coming speedily, and that something disastrous must happen; but, after further experience, I have come to think that, after all, those things were quite wise, that the minority was wrong, and that I was wrong. You may depend upon it that when any large number of people have views in accord, there must be some considerable wisdom in them. In fact, an idea has gone abroad that there is wisdom in numbers, and this idea is expressed in the saying, "*Vox populi vox Dei*"—the voice of the people is the voice of God. That saying has become a proverb, and I am not so sure but that there is a great deal of truth in it. We must not think that all the wisdom and all the honour and uprightness are centred in a few. We must give to the mass of the people, to the people as a whole, credit for as much honour and unselfishness as we claim for ourselves, and we must remember that in this world every one tries to do the best he can for himself. We must expect that people will not act contrary to their own interest, as a rule; and I feel certain that very few of us in this House act, as a rule, contrary to our own interest, in private life. There is another point, and an important one, namely, that we desire to bring our institutions into accord with the institutions of other parts of Australia. We are nearly altogether dependent for the in-

crease of our population and the development of our resources upon persons coming from the Eastern colonies to Western Australia; and we wish to make the new-comers feel that they come to a land which has a Government similar to that to which they have been accustomed; that the laws are not dissimilar, and that the privileges which they exercised in the former place they can also exercise here, and this the Bill will allow them to do. I hope this Bill will pass, if not without a division, at any rate by a large majority; and I ask all those hon. members who desire this change in the Constitution—that is, the widening of the franchise—to rally round the Government and support us as much as they can. It has been said more than once, in different parts of the colony, that the Government have not been earnest in this matter—that the Government did not intend to carry this Bill, but merely brought it forward, and had no heart in it. In fact it was said by someone that the Bill was lost in the Upper House because the Government did not bring sufficient pressure to bear on those members—as if they were puppets to be knocked down or put up whenever the Government might desire. That complaint was simply monstrous. Well, as to the sincerity of the Government in bringing forward that Bill last session, they must be judged by their words and their actions. You cannot penetrate the inner recesses of a man's mind: you must judge the Government by their actions and words, and it will be seen that we have been in earnest in bringing forward a Bill which we consider will meet the requirements of the colony. And I may say we did it in the first instance freely, without any great pressure, and we have done it again this session, without any pressure whatever being brought on us by any person or section of the community. So that I cannot understand anyone having the cool effrontery to say the Government have been acting a double part in this matter, and have not been earnest in their endeavours to carry this Bill. I hope that when the vote is taken, those hon. members who vote for this Bill will never regret the course taken. It will be said probably by some that they will regret doing so, but I only hope that we who will vote for the Bill will never regret the course we are taking. I

believe myself that we shall never regret it. I believe there will always be found a sufficient amount of good sense and honesty in the community to do what is just and right. I feel we may put our trust in the honesty and integrity of our fellow colonists. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. HARPER moved, as an amendment, that all the words after "That" be struck out, and that the following words be inserted in lieu thereof—"in the opinion of this House it is expedient that the Bill be divided, and that such portion of it as relates to the Legislative Council shall be enacted in one measure, and that those of its provisions which deal with the Legislative Assembly be enacted in a separate Bill." He said: I have no intention, in moving this amendment, to offer any opposition to the principles of the Bill. I supported it last session, and I shall support it again this session. The object I have in moving this amendment is to avoid what appears to me to be a complication which may ensue when this Bill is sent to another place, and to put the members in another place in a fair position for dealing with it independently. When this Bill passed this House last session, and was sent to another place, it was not a matter that could cause any complication by its being there rejected; but the conditions in the present session appear to me to be altogether altered. The present condition is that the time will shortly have arrived when, as provided in the Constitution Act, the present Upper House will cease to be nominative; and, if I am right in my surmise, six months after that date the present Upper House must expire. Therefore, it is necessary, within that time, that certain provisions should be made for the election of members to constitute that House. It appears to me that if those in another place were to follow the course indicated by their action in the last session, a great deal of complication might arise; for were they to reject one portion of the Bill, as an amendment, and return it to this House, there would at once be a collision between the two Houses. I have no doubt this House would reinstate those portions which had been removed in the other House, and the Bill would be sent up again, so that the position would then be al-

together undesirable. I may be wrong in my surmise on this point. It seems to me also that if the members of that other House considered they were put in a position in which this complication would arise, if they took the course they desired, it would put them in a rather unfair position; and I think it should be the object and desire of this House to remove any such difficulty. I think those members are far more likely to be won over to adopting the wishes of this House, by our giving them that latitude which we, in their position, would desire. There have been some alterations in the *personnel* of the Upper House since last session, and it may be said that those who have been or may be appointed to fill the vacancies would unite with the Government in endeavouring to carry this measure; but if those other members remain of the same opinion as last session, the division would be the same as last session, and a casting vote would be allowed to the President, who, following the custom, which I believe is absolutely a custom and never departed from, would necessarily give his vote in a way which would be in accordance with the result of last session. So I think it would be only fair and generous of this House if it were to follow the course I suggest, and leave the matter an open question, so that there may be no doubt about the Government carrying the essential part with regard to the alteration of the Upper House. I move this amendment for the sake of calling attention to what appears to me a matter of importance; but I have not endeavoured to solicit support from hon. members, and have not even asked anyone to second it.

MR. DEHAMEL: I should be very sorry to see the amendment carried in this House. For my part, I am in earnest in my desire to see this Bill carried, and I cannot see that we should gain anything at all by adopting the amendment which has been proposed; for I would like to point out to hon. members in another place that they could not possibly frame a measure which would be more conservative in regard to the election of themselves than this Bill provides. I do not see, myself, that it is possible to frame anything more favourable to themselves, though they might

frame something more liberal. That being the case, I cannot see that we should gain anything more by this amendment than delay, and delay is one of the things we should be foolish in seeking to obtain at present, for we then might bring about that agitation which has been spoken about, whereas if we go steadily on with the Bill before us, we should satisfy the public that we are determined to give them the extended franchise to which they are entitled.

MR. CANNING: I do not wish to reflect on the hon. member for Beverley, who has moved this amendment, but as I have been somewhat earnest in support of the main principles of the Bill before the House, I wish to offer a few observations. The proposal of the hon. member is a very ingenious and plausible one, but I cannot help looking on it with some doubt and suspicion. I am reminded of the story of two nations which had long been at war, many years ago, and one of the nations having besieged a city, and failing to force an entrance, at length drew off its forces, as if abandoning the siege as an unsuccessful one. But before going away, the besiegers offered to make a friendly gift to those whom they had been besieging; they offered a present of a large wooden horse. One of the wise men among the besieged people advised his brethren not to accept the present which was offered, saying, "I fear the Greeks, and all the gifts they bring." In like manner, I am afraid there is in this amendment something not only dangerous, but detrimental to the Bill itself; and that, at the best, it would very considerably delay the passing of the measure. I therefore feel constrained to oppose it. I feel that the measure submitted by the Government really embodies the principles I have been advocating since I had the honour of a seat in this House. There are certain matters of detail in the measure that may be, and probably will be, modified very considerably, but the main principles are really embodied in section 16 and the first part of 19, down to sub-section 6; and I shall be perfectly satisfied—whatever may be done with regard to the details of the measure—if those principles are preserved intact when the measure passes this House. Something was said by the Premier as to

sympathy with the people who are yet to come to the colony; but although I agree with the hon. gentleman in a great deal of what he said in support of the measure, yet in portions of his speech he made observations I did not agree with. Our sympathy is not so much with the people who have to come to the colony, or with those who have arrived here, as with the great principle, both as it affects the people who are here and those who may come here in the future. It is pushing the matter a little too far to say the people have been influenced by a desire to vote, in coming to this colony. That is not the question. They may not have been influenced by that, but they may be greatly influenced in remaining in this colony by the consideration that they would enjoy here the same rights as they had enjoyed in the Eastern colonies from which they came. And those who might become the most desirable colonists are the men who would think a great deal of that. We know there is a general and widespread feeling in favour of the reform that is proposed by this measure. Those who come in contact with the young men of the colony, and with the recent arrivals, know there is a strong desire to enjoy the political privileges that would be conferred upon them by this measure. Those who say the people coming here are indifferent about it say so from their own point of view, and without having properly gauged public opinion. I shall not have an opportunity of speaking on the details of this measure in committee, and, therefore, I confine myself to saying that, although with regard to the term of residence I would like to take a shorter period, yet rather than jeopardise the measure I would say to those who are earnest in desiring to see it pass, "Accept it as it is rather than jeopardise it." And so with regard to the other portions of the measure in which the principles are involved, I should be quite prepared to accept the Bill as it is submitted to the House, without any modifications, so long as the main principles are preserved.

MR. COOKWORTHY: As this is the second time this Bill has been brought before the House, it is as well that this matter should be settled, and I shall certainly not vote for the amendment. At the same time, I am not convinced as to

the advisability of the measure. I recollect in one of Froude's Essays, speaking of democracy, he asks: "What shipowner would send a ship to sea under a Republican form of Government?" And I may ask, "What banker or man of business would call in the first half-dozen larrikins he happens to see in the street, and entrust to them the management of his bank or his business?" But, as Froude says, we must make the best of democracy; and I am glad to see that the Government have promised to bring in a Bill this session which will, I hope, improve the education of those who have to govern us, and, as Robert Lowe said, "We must educate our future masters." But I do not consider this Bill, according to the logic of those members who believe in it, goes far enough, and the Bill might be very easily altered by the change of a single word. We are told that every person who contributes to the revenue, and obeys the law of the land, should have a vote. Then what about the ladies? Don't they contribute to the revenue? Perhaps they do not consume so much tobacco as the larrikins, but if milliners' bills were produced, those who have to pay for the silks and satins, so attractively described in the letters of "Cora," will know that the ladies are large contributors to the revenue. Then why should not the ladies be allowed to vote? I have never heard any reason why they should not. And by the alteration of the word "man" to "person," the Bill would give them the franchise, and then we might have ladies in this House. Hon. members laugh, but we must recollect that there are lots of ladies who take a very high stand in education. I saw by the last Cambridge list of examinations that a lady stood fifth on the roll of Wranglers, and last year a lady was higher than the first. I believe, sir, if it was a matter of competitive examination, which the hon. member for Albany seemed to think so necessary for the Civil Service, there are many ladies who might give us odds and beat us by chalks. Still, considering that this House now has this Bill under consideration for the second time, I have thought, after what the Premier has said, that it is better to give, in time of peace, that which must be given, than have it snatched from us; and I only hope we

shall have no reason to regret the Bill being passed.

MR. SIMPSON: I cannot express—words fail me to describe—my feeling of satisfaction at the action of the Government in again introducing this Bill. I say now, and I believe I echo the feelings of the manhood of the country when I say, the Government are fighting the battle of freedom and liberty for the men of this colony. I remember well the expression of the hon. the Premier—and I know he is full of all the instincts connected with this great country, that his ideas are big, his hopes are large for this great portion of Australia—when he said: "Put your trust in the people." Years ago, the hon. the Attorney General said: "Why not give the people what they ask for? Give them a vote; give them a voice in the deliberations of the affairs of the country." The Commissioner of Crown Lands used words to this effect: "I believe in the principle that where a man pays taxation he should be represented." Sir, the atmosphere of this colony is instinct with the independent idea that where a man contributes to the cost of government, he should have a right to elect the men who govern him. This Bill proposes to place on the Statute-book that principle. It does not gild with the golden letters sought by wealth, by capital; and I am the last man in the world to endeavour to give vitality to that wretched, creeping, crawling thing that some people are trying to designate as the battle between capital and labour. There is no such thing in the world. Capital and labour are associated; they are connected; they are part of one another. The idea is this, that the noblest thing this country will ever do will be to induce men from other countries to realise that when they step on this Western shore of Australia, on this part nearest Europe, on this part nearest great old England, they touch there the full freeman's rights, and that there they have the right to vote for the men who are to spend the taxes to which they contribute. When the hon. the Premier said, "I have confidence in the people," he never in his life voiced an Australian sentiment more truly; and if he lives to be more largely honoured than he has been in Australia, than he has been also in the old country, he will never

achieve a higher sentiment or a more honourable utterance than when he said, "I have confidence in the people." Sir, my faith in a sound public opinion is unlimited. There may be incidents of fortune; political accidents may and do occur, and some of them are very funny. I have heard public expressions of opinion, and some of them are remarkably funny. But take a sound public expression of opinion—what we may call an Anglo-Saxon expression of public opinion—it is honest, it is true, it is manly, and it is in the interests of democracy. I agree entirely with the expression that fell from one hon. member—perhaps a younger member than myself in this House—that if we could get the government of a pure aristocracy, we should have the best government in the world. But we know very well it has been tried in Europe, and those who tried could not get it. We know—looking through the history of the Anglo-Saxon race—that the era of democracy in the Anglo-Saxon annals describes the happiest condition of the human race. I was reading, last night, the speech of a man we all respect—I mean the present Chief Justice of Queensland (Sir S. Griffith)—in which he said that the great strength of the British Constitution was that it was connected with, it was native to, the evolution of the sentiments of the Anglo-Saxon race. I describe it in my own language, but, so far as I remember his words, he said we have reached no ultimate form of government yet; that it might be arrived at later on; but to endeavour to lay down an exact form of government at the present time was simply unwise, indiscreet, and not running parallel with the traditions of our race. Sir, I honour the present Government of this colony; I honour the Premier for putting this Bill before the House to-night. I shall honour them more when they send it to another place, and when, in the event of its failing to pass there, they will say to the people of this colony: "Have we done right or wrong? We ask you to endorse our action, or condemn us." If they ask me, as an elector, to endorse their action, I shall vote early and vote often, if it is possible.

MR. MOLLOY: I rise with pleasure on this occasion to support the Bill now placed before us, for the second time, and

to vote against the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Beverley. I think it is well that we should allow every person in the colony to have a voice in the government of its affairs, and we should remove every obstruction towards that end; that we should give every facility for a man to record his opinion as to who is best fitted to represent him for securing the good government of the colony. It has been said to-night that we should not anticipate the voters coming to this colony, and that we should not be too ready to give facilities for persons to vote who would have to wait here perhaps four years before they would have an opportunity of registering that vote. But it may be that the persons who come here at a particular time may require that they should give effect to their opinion upon a question which may be then before the country, and that they should give their vote so as to elect a representative House in accord with their views, before the four years expire; and it may be that they would be precluded from giving effect to their opinion just at the time when this might determine their staying in the country or not. I say it is necessary, if we wish to have good government, that we should have the opportunity of obtaining an expression of the opinion of the multitude. I consider that every man—be he rich or poor—is equally interested in the good government of the country. I consider he has as good a reason to wish it may be well governed as the man who may have a greater proportion of wealth at his command. It is as necessary for a man who may be labouring for his thirty or thirty-six shillings a week to have an opinion on the government of the country as it may be for a man who has a thousand a year coming in. His all depends upon it; and surely it is unwise in us to restrict the public expression of opinion on this matter to those who have a certain qualification of riches. I trust the measure, when in committee, will be made as liberal as possible. I trust that every obstruction may be removed, and that opportunities may be afforded to every person in the country for giving an expression of opinion in the election of representatives. I take it that the qualification should not be hampered by restrictions, such as

six months residence in a district. It is necessary that we should increase the facilities for allowing persons to record their votes, and we know this six months residence in a district is a great hindrance to these persons in the expression of their opinion. It may be that persons who have been resident in the country thirty or forty years are not, up to the present, on the electoral roll, and this is occasioned by the clause which compels them to reside six months in one electoral district. I think this is a hardship which can be removed, and that the present is an opportunity for removing it. I have known instances, even within the last six months, of persons who have been hindered by others in authority from getting their names placed on the roll, because their qualification being that of a lodger, it was objected that they had not been residing successively in the same house. That is a very great hardship. I conceive there is no virtue in a qualification in this respect, and that it matters not whether a lodger remains in one house or in half-a-dozen, within the same electoral district; but there are persons in authority—the Electoral Registrars of this colony—who hold that view, and therefore it is necessary to make the conditions as explicit as possible, so that officers shall not make mistakes in carrying out the provisions of the law. It is necessary that we should give every facility for persons recording their votes; and I think that every man who comes into the country should, at the end of six months, be entitled to a vote, whether he resides continuously in one district or not. If he has only one vote, and that is all I claim for every man, then it matters not how much he moves about so long as he qualifies by six months' residence within the colony; and I say he should not be precluded from voting, and should not be harassed with a condition that he must remain six months in one district before getting a vote. It has been pointed out by the Premier that there is considerable difficulty in this direction, and that he has had it under consideration. I trust he may be able to overcome the difficulty before this Bill passes through committee. The danger, he says, is that in a bye-election some of the residents in one district might move into another district in which

the election was coming off, remaining just long enough to carry the election in a particular way, and then moving back again. But I say that if a man is confined to one vote, that restriction would hinder him from voting in any other district during the term of another six months, and that would remedy the difficulty which the Premier has pointed out. Reference has been made to the obstruction which occurred, last session, when this Bill was sent up to another place. I trust that the members who occupy seats in that other place may have so considered this subject during the recess that they will have altered their views; but if the Bill meets with the same fate on this occasion, I trust there may be some other means of giving effect to the wishes of the country. It is the wish of the country that this Bill should pass into law. I think no hon. member here will deny that. There have been a few interjections to-night from one hon. member, who says the people do not care twopence whether the Bill passes or not. I deny that most emphatically. While I am speaking I fancy I can hear the sounds proceeding from another place, which is the largest hall in this colony, and where a multitude were assembled while this House was deliberating on this very Bill, last session; and I fancy I can hear the sounds again to-night as they come from there, and the voice of the people as expressed by that vast multitude, eager in their desire to give support to the measure which was before this House, and to record their opinion that it was necessary for the country's good that the Bill should pass into law. I think hon. members will know that the opinion of the country, as there expressed, was most emphatic that this Bill, which is now before us for the second time, was necessary to amend the Constitution Act. I hope that on this occasion the Bill will become law, and that the multitude will be enabled to express their opinion, and not, as at present, only some five or six thousand persons being able to vote, to the exclusion of the other 55,000. I trust this Bill will be passed, and it will have my heartiest support. I will vote against the amendment.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: On the last occasion when this measure was before the House, I expressed my opinion on it, and

I think I moved that the Bill be read that day six months. Well, since that date I have not altered my opinion with respect to the desirability of changing the present Constitution or extending the franchise. I said then that I did not think the country was in any way desirous for the change; and I think so still. Hon. members will recollect, when this Bill was rejected in another place, how quietly and calmly that decision was accepted by the public. There was no excitement. And I still think the rejection is not a grievance with the general public; that this Bill is not the wish of the people, as stated by the hon. member who has just sat down, and who spoke as if the wish of the public in this colony was expressed only by the meeting held in the Perth Town Hall. A very small minority of the people may desire the Bill, and certainly a majority of members in this House are determined to carry this measure; and for my part I am not prepared to ask for a division on this occasion. When this Bill goes into committee, I hope that members will fairly consider the details, and see if they can improve them. I regret that, when this Bill was brought in, an Electoral Bill was not tabled at the same time, so that some provision might be made whereby persons could register their names as voters if they desired a vote. I will go this far, now: I would give to every man a vote on condition that he should personally apply to have his name registered on the roll as a voter, and sign his name, and pay a registration fee, if ever so small. That process would prove who takes an interest in politics; it would show that only those who took the trouble to register their names would be likely to take the trouble to go to the poll at an election. The people of the colony take very little interest in an election, and unless they are worked up by someone going round and working on their feelings, I do not think one-half would go to the poll. A so-called ballot on a municipal question has taken place in the Perth Town Hall to-day, where an important matter affecting the ratepayers had to be decided; and I will guarantee that not fifty people have recorded their votes. It is the same with the constitution of the colony. I do not think a majority of the people care two-

pence whether they have a vote or not, and I do not believe one-fourth would record their votes at an election. There are several matters in this Bill I should like to see amended. One is with regard to naturalisation. I notice that a person claiming to be registered as a naturalised subject of Her Majesty must have been resident in the colony five years before he can have a vote. I do not know how long an alien has to remain before he can claim to be naturalised. I do not think twelve months would be long enough in such a case. We will have Chinamen becoming naturalised, and claiming to be registered, and voting for the member for Geraldton. I am sure we would not like that. With reference to increasing the number of members for the Legislative Council, I do not know that this was not a wise move on the part of the Government; but I am still of opinion that there should be a qualification for members of the Upper House; and when this Bill is in committee I probably may move—I do not take the same interest in this matter as I did the last time it was before the House—or if some member will move in this direction, I think I will support him. The Premier said he wanted the people to take an interest in the affairs of the country, by giving them every facility for recording their votes, by doing away with the property qualification, and so on; but I think it will take some working up to induce most people to take an interest in politics. The Government have been accused of not being earnest in this matter. I think it was rather an unjust accusation, for I think the Government have been very earnest in this matter, and I regret that they have been so earnest, for if they had not been so, this Bill might have been deferred for some years to come. I agree with the hon. member for Sussex (Mr. Cookworthy) when he says ladies should have votes. I do think, in all seriousness, that women holding property in their own right have just as much right to the franchise as a man walking the street without any probable or visible means of support. Women who are carrying on business, who support a family by their own energy and ability, have a better right to exercise the franchise than many of the men who want this alteration of the Constitution and

will be entitled to vote under this Bill. I only hope that, when this Bill goes to another place, it will meet the same fate as its predecessor.

MR. CLARKSON: When this Bill was before the House last session, I objected strongly to some of the clauses. Clause 19 I am very much opposed to. I said then, and I say now, that a man should have some more substantial qualification than a six or twelve months' residence in the colony to entitle him to a vote. And I should like to know who it is who really wants this Bill. I have heard several hon. members to-night say the country is crying out for it; but, with the exception of the meeting to which the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Molloy) alluded to-night—and it is pretty well known how that meeting was got together—I would like to ask, "Has there been any demonstration on the part of the people, calling for this change in the Constitution?" I say, No. I have never heard a single opinion expressed on this subject, outside of this House. That is a very significant fact. The great cry for this alteration in the franchise comes from a very few. I really do not know what they expect to gain by it, but they seem to expect, in some mysterious way, to receive some great benefit from it. The cry, if there is one, does not come from that section of the community who are expecting to be benefited by this Bill, for, if so, there would be public meetings in different parts of the colony, on the question. When men want a thing, they are not content with one refusal, but ask again and again. I am quite aware I shall be in the minority, in this case; but when the Bill goes into committee I will have another try to alter one or two of its clauses, and I hope some hon. members in this House will support me.

MR. QUINLAN: I have recently referred to the *Hansard* report of last session to see if there is anything new I can say on this important question. I find that my views have not altered since that occasion; and, sooner than jeopardise the passing of this Bill in another place, I would vote for it in its entirety. The Bill is certainly very liberal, in comparison with the present Constitution—it is almost needless to say that—but in regard to Clause 19, from my experience, when assisting in getting

persons to place their names on the electoral roll, I think this clause might be expunged entirely. If the franchise were "one-man-one-vote," I believe it would not affect the *personnel* of this House one iota. I cannot agree with the last speaker when he says this matter is not causing any agitation in the public mind. I think that the public meeting, which was held in Perth during the last session of Parliament, was a most representative one, and it unanimously expressed an opinion in favour of the extension of the franchise as proposed in the Bill. The hon. member for Toodyay (Mr. Clarkson) is most fortunate in occupying a unique position, by representing a district which shows so little interest in politics that it seems to be under a chronic dose of chloroform. The people there are always asleep. No hon. member is less questioned by his constituents than the hon. member for Toodyay. His word is law, and they leave him to vote as he thinks proper. Having nothing new to say on the Bill, I can only express the satisfaction which the Government have given in again introducing it.

MR. LOTON: Most hon. members apparently hold somewhat the same opinions on this question as they did during the last session. It is a little refreshing to find sometimes, amongst our community, a man who has formed an opinion and sticks to it. We live in an age of great change, and I am sure members here must have been refreshed in hearing the hon. member for the Gascoyne say he is of the same opinion as he was last year. I am a little inclined that way, myself; but still I desire to move on, if I can do it in a right direction. This is a Bill on similar lines to the one we had before us last session. The Bill is to liberalise the franchise in order to bring it within the reach of the working man. Well, I believe in that principle—I was in favour of it last session—and when we consider the question of liberalising the franchise, this point arises: that if we wish to liberalise it so as to bring in all those, at all events, who are fit to vote, and should vote, how much can we hold short of saying that every man in Western Australia of the age of 21 years is fit to vote? With the advantages of education, and the rapid progress that has been going on for years, if the people

who are living here and are 21 years of age have not sufficient knowledge to vote in a right direction, I say they ought to have, as their advantages are great enough. If men were left to themselves, I believe they would vote right, as a rule; but, unfortunately, they are not left to themselves. That applies particularly to large communities, the mass of voters being led away by a few leaders, who lead them in a wrong direction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who are they?

MR. LOTON: Yes, who are they who lead in a wrong direction? I am not afraid of trusting the people, myself. If they are wrong, the leaders should endeavour to lead them in the right path, instead of the wrong one. I rose to say a word on the question of the amendment. I endeavoured to follow the hon. member for Beverley, in his reasoning. We have two Houses of Parliament, and when we are dealing with the alteration of the Constitution Act, I cannot see any reason why we should not deal with the Act in connection with both Houses in the one Bill. I endeavoured to grasp the hon. member's reasons for not dealing with both Houses in the same Bill, but the hon. member seemed to fear that a measure referring to both Houses might pass in this Assembly, and would not pass in another place, if it were in one Bill, whereas if it were in two Bills they might both pass in this Assembly, but the one referring to the other House might not pass in that other House. It occurs to me at once to ask, "How is that other place constituted?" It is constituted under an existing Act, which we are here to amend. The hon. members of that other House have been nominated to seats in it, and it seems to me that those hon. members are quite justified in exercising the privilege of voting on the question of amending the Constitution Act, for although they are nominated representatives, they are equally as justified in exercising their right of judgment as if they were elected. In amending the Constitution Act, let us deal with it in one Bill, and let the members in another place be responsible for their actions in reviewing the actions of this Assembly. I do not intend, on the present occasion, except briefly, to allude to the principles of this Bill. I am quite in favour, almost in de-

tail, of the proposed changes as they affect this Assembly; and with regard to the other House, as I have before stated, and as I lately told my constituents, I am of opinion that it is desirable that persons who sit as members in the Upper House should have a property qualification. I am quite aware that persons who hold views of this kind are considered to be somewhat behind the age. It is thought, I suppose, in the present day that every one should have equal rights, and it is thought also by a great many that every one should have equal shares. I am not opposed to everyone having equal shares, so long as they earn and look after their shares; but if we are going to divide up the whole country to-day, in order that those who have nothing should share with those who have something, then I say we should have to repeat the process of re-division to-morrow. We are sometimes told of the laws that are in existence in the more advanced Eastern colonies. Well, take Victoria on this particular question. Members of the Legislative Council there have a property qualification; so that even in this respect we should not be following some of the Eastern colonies if we say we will not retain a property qualification for members of the Upper House. That is one of the main objections I have to this Bill. We have heard to-night, as well as on other occasions, as to the time it is intended that new-comers or people already here shall reside in an electoral district before they shall be entitled to vote; and in listening to the arguments of those who press for shortening the period, one would imagine that people came here mainly to exercise a vote. We must know that politics don't trouble the million. They have the more serious matter of their daily living to look after, which is of more concern to them than politics. I should like to see every person in the colony taking an interest in politics, even the ladies, though on this latter subject I cannot say I am in accord either with the hon. member for Sussex or the hon. member for the Gascoyne. If women are to exercise a privilege which the other sex does not want, and if to give them this privilege would exalt the tone of Parliament, would raise the honesty of the members of Parliament, then I would at once say I would vote

with both hands for ladies to have seats in Parliament. But I am afraid that if we did admit these gentle and noble creatures into our midst, the result would rather be in another direction, for instead of these virtuous persons raising the tone of the present Parliament, I am afraid that the members who now occupy seats here would be more likely to draw them down from their higher standard. I am afraid the ladies would only have to take one other step, and that would be to get access to the various stock exchanges of the country. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill to a very considerable extent. In one or two minor details I shall take exception to it in committee.

MR. SOLOMON: It has been stated by the hon. member for Toodyay that there has been no demonstration of the feeling of the country on this Bill. It will be recollected that last session, as we have been told by the Premier, out of 26 members who voted on the second reading, only six were opposed to the Bill; consequently the other 20, according to the hon. member's reasoning, must have voted for it without being in any way advised by their constituents, and no doubt those 20 represent a far greater majority of the population than did the six who voted on the other side. Again, it has been said that no demonstration was made in the country on the Bill being thrown out by the Legislative Council; but I may say the people of the colony have shown their good sense by abiding their time, and have preferred to not make any demonstration, knowing that it was only a matter of a very little time before they would gain their ends. That, I think, is a complete answer to both those objections. On the last occasion I gave my cordial support to the Bill, and I shall do the same in this instance. There is no material difference that I can see in the present Bill, and I will give it the same support as I did last session.

MR. LEFROY: No matter what may have been said outside the walls of this House, I am sure the hon. members who have heard the Premier's speech, in moving the second reading, must feel that he is in earnest on the question. It is not necessary to say much on the question now, as it has all been threshed out before. It is a pity there is not a little

more difference of opinion, because if there was the question might be more fully discussed than it has been. Some people are always wanting change, but I am not one of them, for I consider that while a thing is working well it is wise to let it remain so. Some people are always wanting to get right down to the root of the tree, and chop it down; they are not satisfied with trimming the overgrown branches. I am not one of those persons, but am conservative in my views to a certain extent, and also, I hope, liberal. It is very evident, to anyone who thinks on this Constitution question, and seriously considers it, that now is the proper time to extend the franchise in the way proposed in this Bill. The notions of people are undergoing evolution; we are always in a condition of change; and I think the proper course is to grasp the situation as it exists, and not wait till pressure is brought to bear for forcing us to give away that which we might have given away gracefully beforehand. Something has been said with regard to the people not being very anxious on this question. I must bear out those expressions; and the fact that the people do not take an interest in the question is the very reason why I think we ought to make this alteration in the Constitution. We have now altered our form of government to what is called Responsible Government, because it was considered that the old form could not stand any longer; but Responsible Government can scarcely be such as we desire without an extension of the franchise in the direction proposed in this Bill. We all look forward to the time when we will be one great federated Australia, if not also one great federated empire. This may be only a dream, at present, but I think it is a noble feeling for every man to have in his breast—the feeling that, as a Britisher, he may look forward to the time when Australia may become federated with the British Empire. We can scarcely take our position amongst the other countries of Australia, without existing under the same franchise that they do; and there is not the slightest doubt that our present Constitution is unfair in many ways. It does not give a vote to every man who deserves a vote. There are a great many men of intelligence and honesty—not men who go about

and don't work, but men who want work and will do it—who are just as capable of exercising a vote, and should be entrusted with it, as many of the men who are entrusted with a vote at present. There are many I know who have accumulated a little money, and have had it in a bank or have been waiting to invest it in land; and I think these men are just as entitled to a vote as the men who possess a piece of the soil. I want to see more life and vitality in the politics of this colony. I quite admit we have been, in a great measure, in a state of lethargy in regard to political matters; and I hope this widening of the franchise will give new life, and will give votes to many who have not exercised them hitherto; and if we are afraid of these new voters, the effect will be to make us try and prevent them from taking the rule of government. I believe that when the people are once admitted within the Constitution, they will protect that Constitution, and I have a better opinion of my race than to think they will do otherwise. The hon. member for Beverley has moved an amendment, but I do not feel inclined to agree with it. My reason is chiefly this: our Constitution, like that of other parts of Australia, and like that of England, from which we all obtained it, is three parts in one—*trina in uno*—we have two Chambers and one head; and our Constitution should be comprised in one statute alone, and be dealt with in one Bill, when necessary. I cannot see how that Constitution can be separated and made into two statutes. That is the reason I cannot give my vote in support of my hon. friend's amendment. It is well to let people know that one does not change one's opinions quickly. I believe this measure is not likely to go to a division on the second reading. There is no necessity to supplicate or appeal to hon. members, or to urge them in this matter; therefore, if I had any powers of that sort, like my hon. friend the member for Geraldton has, I could not on this occasion fly to those heights of oratory that he does, nor bring some hon. members round to my opinion, so readily. But there is no necessity, on this occasion, to exercise such powers, which may remain dormant in many of us; therefore I need say no more in support of this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I hope the hon. member for Beverley, after hearing the expression of opinion from hon. members, will see fit to withdraw his amendment. The hon. member's intention is most excellent, I have no doubt, in desiring to avoid any possible difficulty between the two Houses of Parliament, and proposing that the Bill should be sent forward in two divisions, so that it may be more easily dealt with in another place; but I think he overlooks the fact that this would simply be an invitation to those in another place to deal with this Bill in the way he suggests they might like to do. To adopt his amendment would be a move, on our part, almost inviting opposition, and I do not think that view will commend itself to hon. members in this House. The best course for us to pursue is to do our duty in the way we think best, leaving others to do theirs; and we should not anticipate difficulties, but meet them when they arise. I ask the hon. member for Beverley whether, after the expression of opinion from hon. members of this House, he does not think it desirable to withdraw his amendment and to vote for the second reading of this Bill.

MR. HARPER: In bringing forward this amendment, I only wished to call attention to the matter. I have now much pleasure in acceding to the request of the Premier, and will ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn, and the motion for the second reading put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:35 p.m.
