

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 26th July, 1881.

Petition—Protection of Sandalwood—Barristers Admission Bill: first reading—Scab Act Amendment Bill, 1881: second reading—Address in Reply to the Governor's Speech: adjourned debate—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION *RE* EDUCATION ACT.

MR. STEERE presented a petition from the Swan District Board of Education, with reference to the Elementary Education Act. The hon. member said he did not intend to raise any discussion on the subject of the memorial, as no doubt a general debate on the education question would take place in the course of the Session.

The petition was received and read.

PROTECTION OF SANDALWOOD.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford), in accordance with notice, moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the necessity of legislating this Session, or adopting certain precautions, for the protection of sandalwood of immature growth." He thought that the desirability of legislating in this direction would be acknowledged by every hon. member of the House, though opinions might differ as to the best course to adopt for the attainment of the object in view. An attempt had been made last Session to pass a Bill, providing that no sandalwood should be cut of less than six inches in diameter, but that measure did not altogether meet with the approval of the House, as it was considered that the Bill would interfere unfairly with the owners of fee simple land; and another objection to that measure was that it would have prevented the removal of wood cut previous to the introduction of the Bill. It would probably be in the recollection of the House that the Bill in question was referred to a Select Committee, but up to the present time that Committee had never reported to the House. It was generally admitted throughout the Colony that the sandalwood trade had

proved of great service and profit, and been a source of great assistance, to the farming community, often providing employment for their teams which otherwise would have remained idle; and he thought it would be readily recognised that some steps ought to be taken to prevent an end being put to this trade, by reason of the wasteful destruction of immature wood. The most feasible plan which appeared to commend itself was to close certain acres where this destruction had been going on, in order to compel the cutters to go farther afield, and thus allow the immature wood time to grow. It might be said that this would press somewhat heavily upon those engaged in the trade, by reason of the increased expense which it would entail; but, on the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the wood then cut would be wood of larger dimensions than that to be obtained within areas which had been pretty well worked out, and would consequently be of great value. He was sure the House would be with him when he urged the necessity of taking some effectual steps, be they what they may, to prevent this valuable product becoming a thing of the past, and he hoped the Select Committee to which he proposed to refer the subject would be able to recommend such a measure as would prove acceptable to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) then moved, "That the Select Committee should consist of the Hon. M. Fraser, Messrs. Steere, Shenton, Hamersley, and Sir T. C. Campbell, with power to call for persons and papers."

Agreed to.

BARRISTERS ADMISSION BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) moved, The first reading of a Bill to regulate the Admission, in certain cases, of Barristers of the Supreme Court of Western Australia.

Motion agreed to, Bill read a first time, and second reading fixed for Wednesday, 27th July.

SCAB ACT AMENDMENT BILL, 1881.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford), in moving the second reading of a Bill to amend the law relating to

the prevention and extermination of scab-in-sheep, said he was sorry to have to commence the actual work of the Parliamentary Session with so unpleasant and so unsavoury a subject as scab; but the question of the eradication of this disease was really such an important one, not only to the sheep owners but to the Colony at large, that he thought he need offer no apology for making this Bill the initial item on the sessional programme. That House had passed a great number of measures dealing with the subject of scab within a very few years, and he now came forward, he hoped, with the last measure of the kind,—for some time to come at any rate. The present Bill proposed, in the first place, to repeal the 8th and 32nd sections of the Act passed in 1879, dealing respectively with the time within which notices of infection are to be given, and the date upon which the annual returns, showing the number of sheep kept and depastured, are to be sent in. Under the existing Act, the owners of sheep were required to send notice within three days after the presence of infection was discovered among their flocks; but the present Bill proposed that this time should be extended to ten days. According to the 32nd clause of the existing Act, sheep owners were required, on or within fourteen days before the 1st January, in each year—any time within that fortnight—to send in a return showing the number of sheep kept and depastured by them; but, in order to ensure greater uniformity and punctuality in the preparation of these returns, and also to make them more reliable sources of information, it was proposed in the Bill now before the House that these returns shall be made up on the same day throughout the whole Colony, namely, the last Saturday in the month of December in each year. The second clause of the Bill determined the interpretation to be placed, for the purposes of the Scab Act, upon the word “owner,”—which had given rise to some difficulty and misunderstanding. The negative construction which the present Bill proposed to put upon the word was this—that, wherever it occurred in the Act, it shall not be interpreted as including the shepherd, unless such shepherd shall also be the overseer, or the

bonâ fide owner of the sheep. The next clause of the Bill enacted that, in the event of a penalty being imposed upon any sheep owner for a breach of the Act, and any expenses incurred by an inspector in the performance of his duties in respect of such breach, it shall be lawful for the inspector, in every case where the penalty and the expenses are not duly paid, to sell, or cause to be sold at public auction, so many of the defaulting owner's sheep as in his (the inspector's) opinion may be necessary to cover the costs and the fine incurred. The next clause of the Bill was a very important one, and the Government sincerely hoped that they would have many opportunities of giving effect to its provisions. Hon. members were aware that, at present, sheep owners in every district of the Colony (with one solitary exception) were compelled to pay a yearly contribution for defraying the cost and expense of carrying the Scab Act into effect, whether the district was free from the disease or not. The one solitary exception referred to was the Roebourne district—an exemption which, however fair and just in its operation, was certainly in contravention of the Act as it now stood. The present Bill, however, proposed that when any district shall have been reported to have been “clean” during a period of three years, it shall be lawful for the Governor to exempt such district, so long as it continued free from disease, from paying any contribution towards defraying the cost of carrying out the provisions of the Scab Act. This was a provision which, he thought, should act as an incentive to sheep owners, to endeavor to stamp out the disease within their respective districts, so as to exempt themselves from the payment of this tax. These were the principal features of the measure which he asked the House now to read a second time. If there was any objection to the Bill being considered in Committee that evening, he had no wish to press its committal contrary to the wish of hon. members; but, on the part of the Government, he might say that they were perfectly willing and ready to go on with the business of the Session without any delay whatever.

MR. STEERE said he did not intend now to oppose the second reading of the Bill that evening, as the proper time to

have done so was when the proposal was made yesterday that the second reading should be taken so early after the first reading,—a proposal which ought to have been deprecated at the time. He thought it was a most objectionable practice, and one of which no other Legislative Assembly afforded a precedent, that the second reading of any Bill involving important considerations affecting a large section of the community, should be taken on the very next day after its introduction, before members had an opportunity of considering it. With regard to the present Bill, however, he might say that, as a member of the board appointed to advise and assist the Governor in the administration of the Scab Ordinance, he was conversant with its various provisions, and he believed they were such as would commend themselves to favorable consideration. He believed that no clause in the Bill would afford so much satisfaction to his noble friend opposite (the Colonial Secretary) as the fourth section, empowering the Governor to exempt any district, declared to have been clean for a certain period, from paying any contribution to the Act; for he knew it had always been a sore point with the right hon. gentleman that the Roebourne district should alone—and, as he very properly pointed out, illegally so—be exempted from this contribution. The clause was one which he believed would afford general satisfaction, and do much towards exterminating the disease. He hoped, however, the noble lord would postpone the committal of the Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford): Certainly.

The Bill was then read a second time, and ordered to be considered in Committee on Thursday, 28th July.

ADDRESS IN REPLY: ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. STEERE: I do not intend to detain the House at any great length while I make a few observations on the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor yesterday. I think that the country at large, as well as the members of this House, are to be congratulated upon the very satisfactory statement made by His Excellency with reference

to the financial state of the Colony at the present time. I think it must have taken most people by surprise to find to what a great extent the deficit had been reduced since the end of last year, and I hope that before our next annual Session, instead of having a deficiency in the revenue we shall have a credit balance. I must say, however, that I was somewhat surprised to find it stated that the estimated expenditure for next year was £20,000 in excess of the expenditure for the current year. With the reductions proposed to be made in the departmental expenditure by the Commission appointed to inquire into that question, I certainly entertained a hope and an expectation that there would be some reduction, if anything, next year. It is quite true that there will have to be a larger provision made on the Estimates for the upkeep and maintenance of roads—that is to say, presuming the Legislature is in accord with the views expressed on this subject by His Excellency—and of course an increased sum will be required to meet the interest and sinking fund on Loan account; but I apprehend that these two items will not increase the ordinary expenditure beyond £10,000, or one half the amount anticipated by the Government. Therefore, I await with considerable curiosity the production of the Estimates which provide for this largely increased expenditure. I notice that His Excellency, in the same paragraph of his Speech, remarks that "it is better to provide for each particular service an amount within which, except in extraordinary circumstances, the expenditure may fairly and properly be required to be kept, than to frame the estimates on an insufficient scale, and leave it to the Governor to issue on his own authority supplementary warrants, which have to be legalised by subsequent legislation." I also observe that in his despatch to Lord Kimberley, His Excellency states that it is true that estimates have been exceeded in the past, and unauthorised expenditure incurred, on the simple authority of supplementary warrants, issued in reliance on subsequent confirmation. Well, I hope the day has at last arrived when this practice of issuing supplementary warrants on the sole authority of the Governor will be

brought to an end. I think that, in face of the despatch presented to us yesterday from the Secretary of State, in which His Lordship distinctly acknowledges both the right and responsibility of this House in controlling the expenditure of public money—I think that after this acknowledgment of the supreme authority of the Legislature in regulating the public expenditure, we shall have no more supplementary warrants issued on the sole authority of the Governor. With reference to the loan which has just been floated, when I read the telegraphic summary indicating the result, I confess to having experienced a feeling of disappointment. On the first blush of the moment, the price which the loan realised did appear unsatisfactory. In common with every other person who takes an interest in the finances of the Colony, I had cherished a hope that the loan would have been floated somewhere about par, and it was somewhat disappointing to find that the average price realised was only £97. But I have had a memorandum placed in my hands this afternoon, drawn up by one of the most experienced financiers in this Colony at any rate, and I must confess that it has caused me to alter my opinion very considerably, and induced me to think that the loan, after all, has been very successfully floated, under the circumstances. It is pointed out in this memorandum that a 4 per cent. loan which realises £94 and a little over, is equal to a $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan at £106—the price at which our $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan now stands in the London market—and that we shall save £500 per annum interest, by a 4 per cent. instead of a $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan. That sum would actually be sufficient to provide the interest upon a loan of £12,000 more than the amount we have just raised, and therefore I think we may consider that the price realised is by no means unsatisfactory. It is quite true that it does not compare favorably with the prices realised in respect of loans raised in the other colonies, and more especially with the New South Wales loan recently floated. But we must bear in mind that that loan was for a very large amount—two millions—and we cannot expect capitalists to come forward to invest in a paltry loan like ours; in fact there are very few large capitalists who ever

trouble themselves about loans for such petty amounts as this Colony places by the market. And, so long as we remain a small community and are obliged to limit our borrowing transactions to small and comparatively insignificant amounts, we never can expect to float our loans at the same price as our more wealthy neighbours. I think it must have been satisfactory to the members of this House to have seen the despatch of the Secretary of State, in which His Lordship supported the action of the Legislature of this Colony with regard to Chinese immigration, and declined to interfere with our arrangements in this respect, notwithstanding the protest of our neighbours, formulated at the Inter-colonial Conference. I think that even those hon. members amongst us who were not in favor of Chinese immigration somewhat resented the interference of the other colonies in this matter, seeing that the objection raised was merely a sentimental one. The delegates at the Conference must have been as well aware as we are that no Chinese introduced into this Colony, under our limited system of immigration, are ever likely to “filter through” into the other colonies, and that the outcry raised was merely a bit of electioneering bunkum. I think therefore it must be satisfactory to the members of this House and to the public at large to find that the Secretary of State does not mean to allow our neighbours to over-ride us, and to dictate to us, on merely sentimental grounds, what line of policy we ought to adopt. I have to-day for the first time read the report of the proceedings of the Conference at which this Chinese question was discussed, and I must say that, so far as I can see, no arguments were put forward worth listening to at all. Another question which was discussed at the same Conference, and which was adverted to yesterday by the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham), was the erection of a lighthouse at Cape Leeuwin. Well, if the other colonies evince any particular desire to come forward and contribute liberally towards the construction of the proposed lighthouse, I see no objection to their doing so; but I certainly shall myself strongly oppose any large amount being appropriated out of the public funds of this Colony for

such an object. I have never visited Cape Leeuwin myself, and am therefore not personally acquainted with the dangers alleged to exist in its neighbourhood; but I do know that during the last twenty years only one vessel has been lost off it. Therefore it cannot be such a very dangerous locality, and if a lighthouse is wanted there, it must be more for the convenience and advantage of vessels and steamers plying with the other colonies than for our own shipping. We have had some experience here as to the cost of lighthouses. We know what they cost us at Champion Bay, and what their up-keep costs, and I certainly shall not be prepared myself to vote for the expenditure of any considerable sum for the erection of a lighthouse at the Leeuwin, which, so far as this Colony is concerned, I do not consider is very much wanted. I think we ought to do all we can to support the action of the Governor with reference to inducing the Messageries Maritimes company to allow their steamers to call at Fremantle, though I am afraid there is not very much chance of their doing so,—certainly not at present, and I doubt very much whether they ever will do so, as the inducements we could offer are not such as are likely to tempt any large Ocean Steam Company to allow their steamers to make Fremantle a port of call. If, however, there should be any probability of this being done, by the remission of port dues and of other charges, I am sure this House will be prepared to afford every assistance in its power in furtherance of such an arrangement, which could not fail to prove of great advantage to the Colony. I am sure that every country member, and probably many others who are not country members, will be glad to hear of the determination of His Excellency, after consultation with the Central Board, to hand over the control of the roads, after this year, to the Local Boards, and that the balance of the Road Loan is to be appropriated towards the repair of bridges. This unfortunate loan has been as a nightmare to this Colony, and I verily believe that the roads generally are now in a worse state than they were before the loan was ever raised, and that the utmost amount we shall be able to place at the disposal of the various District Boards out of

general revenue will be insufficient to restore our roads into a state of decent repair. It is, however, satisfactory to find, that whatever funds may be available for this purpose will in future be disbursed under the supervision of the Local Boards. I was surprised and disappointed to find that no reference whatever was made in His Excellency's Speech to the question of Immigration, which certainly is a question that seriously affects the Colony at the present moment. From all parts of the country we hear the cry of want of labor put forward, as one of the great drawbacks to the progress and development of the Colony, and I shall be very glad myself to see an increased vote placed on the Estimates for immigration purposes. I believe that the sum voted for that purpose for this year will all be expended in paying the passages to the Colony of nominated immigrants—than which we could not get a better and more desirable class, and one less expensive to the Colony, seeing that immediately upon their arrival they become chargeable to the persons who have nominated them. I notice in the next paragraph of his Speech that His Excellency announces his intention of immediately proceeding with the extension of the public offices at Perth, "for which," His Excellency states, "a sum of £5,000 was raised by the Loan Act of 1878." Considerable confusion prevails in the minds of many people as to the intended appropriation of this sum, for certainly there has never been any record of it that I can find; it is not alluded to in any debate, or in any Loan Bill, and there is only a kind of floating recollection in the minds of some members that this £5,000 should be devoted for the purpose specified by His Excellency in his Speech. It will therefore be for the House to decide whether such a large amount as this shall be appropriated to the extension of the public offices at Perth; I have a strong opinion myself that the outlying districts of the Colony ought to get some portion of it. His Excellency also proposes that a similar amount raised by the same Act for the purchase of a steam tug—but which was not made use of for that purpose—shall be expended on certain works which are urgently needed in some of the country

districts; and in the Bill presented to the House yesterday providing for the re-appropriation of this money, I find the works upon which it is proposed to expend it enumerated as follows: Roebourne buildings, £2,000; Albany sand patch, £700; Guildford foot or low-level bridge, £700; Fremantle court house, £800; crane for Albany jetty, £250; and extension of Bunbury jetty, £500. This, I think, is a proposal that will commend itself to the House, and I am not at all sure that a portion of the other £5,000 referred to should not also be appropriated towards supplying the wants of out-lying districts in the matter of public works of local utility. It was my intention to have alluded to the paragraph in His Excellency's Speech referring to his message of last Session with regard to the development of the Eastern Districts, but as the Commissioner of Crown Lands has given notice of his intention to move for the appointment of a Committee to deal with this question, I shall for the present abstain from commenting upon it. I do not know whether or not hon. members have thought much about the subject during the recess—I have done so, at times, and I really do not see that there is much which a commission would be able to do in the matter. I shall, however, be happy to support the action of the Government, for, if the proposed commission can tender any practical advice to the Legislature on the subject, it would no doubt prove of great advantage not only to the districts more immediately concerned but also to the Colony at large. I have now referred to most of the topics of interest dealt with in His Excellency's Speech, with one exception, namely, the announcement that a Bill is to be submitted for our consideration, embodying in a legal form the regulations of the Treasury and Audit departments, as regards the mode of keeping and auditing the public accounts. I do not know whether His Excellency thinks that this House will be satisfied with a measure that merely purports to do that. So far as I am concerned I do not care a bit whether these regulations are embodied in legal form or not, for, unaccompanied by any provisions to regulate the issue of money from the Treasury, they would be perfectly worthless, so far

as the object which the Legislature has in view is concerned. Who will be able to see that these regulations are carried out? Are we to appoint a commission every Session of Council to ascertain whether the officers of the departments in question have complied with the regulations? I say again, that unless the proposed measure, in addition to embodying these regulations in legal form, also provides some means for enabling the Legislature to exercise an efficient control over the issuing of public money out of the Treasury, the Bill will be utterly worthless, and so much waste paper, and I myself shall oppose it most strenuously. It will be in the recollection of hon. members that the Governor in his message to the House last year (dealing with the Audit Bill), and also in his despatch to the Secretary of State, mentioned that it was his intention to appoint a commission to compare the regulations contained in that Audit Bill with the regulations already in operation in the Treasury? Was that ever done by the commission? It was not. I intend therefore that this House shall have an opportunity of doing so. I intend myself to bring in an Audit Bill—a Bill, in fact, identical with the measure which I introduced last year, with those clauses struck out which the Secretary of State says he cannot permit to be enforced under the present constitution. With the leave of the House, I intend re-introducing that Bill (shorn of these clauses), and to pass it stage by stage with the Government Bill, and, in due course, to have it referred to a Select Committee, leaving it for that Committee to do what His Excellency said the Finance Commission was to do, namely, to compare the regulations which His Excellency wishes to embody in legal form, with the regulations which were contemplated in the Audit Bill. If by this means we cannot obtain the control over the public expenditure which we seek, and which the Secretary of State informs us is our right and privilege, as the representatives of the people—the Secretary of State, in fact, goes further, and requests the Governor to report what steps should be taken not only for regulating but also for “extending” the control of the Legislature over the public finances—I say, if we cannot obtain this control by means

of an Audit Bill, the only course open for us will be to introduce certain clauses into the Appropriation Act, in order to secure for this House its legitimate control over the public expenditure. That, certainly, would answer every purpose, for the Appropriation Act, at any rate, is a measure which is not likely to be vetoed. In conclusion, I can only say that, so far as I am concerned, I shall be prepared to give my utmost assistance to facilitate the passage through the House of all measures, whether emanating from the Government or otherwise, which in my opinion are calculated to advance the interests of the Colony, and I have no doubt, if the Government will only cordially co-operate with the Legislature in this direction, we shall be able to discharge our duty to the Colony with satisfaction to ourselves and also to the country at large.

The question was then put—That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor in reply to the Speech which he had been pleased to deliver to the Council.

The motion was affirmed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) then moved, That a Select Committee be appointed to prepare an Address, and that such Committee should consist of Mr. Higham, Mr. Stone, Mr. Steere, Mr. S. H. Parker, and the mover.

Agreed to.

The Committee withdrew to prepare the Address, and, after a short interval,

MR. HIGHAM brought up the Address which was read by the Clerk at the Table. (*Vide* p. 140, *ante*).

MR. HIGHAM moved, That the Address be now adopted.

MR. S. H. PARKER said that, in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address, he desired to say a few words with regard to the paragraph in the reply relating to the proposal to induce some ocean line of steamers to call at Fremantle. It was with very great satisfaction that he observed, from His Excellency's Speech, that some move had been made in this direction, but he noticed that reference was only made to one company, and that as regards that company the result of the Governor's efforts to induce them to call at our principal port had proved unsuccessful. But he had no doubt that if the Govern-

ment were to use its utmost endeavours, and the Legislature to promise a sufficient subsidy, we might be able to persuade some other company to include Fremantle in their itinerary. He looked upon this matter as one of the greatest importance to the Colony at large. It might be said that we had already one line of steamers calling at one of our ports, but they knew very well that calling at Albany was virtually calling at a place almost outside the limits of the Colony, so far as means of communication was concerned. Anybody who had travelled by the P. & O. steamers must know that passengers by those boats, when they arrived at Albany, laughed at the idea—perhaps he ought to say shuddered, rather than laughed—at the bare idea of travelling 250 miles overland, or of taking a passage by sea in the small steamers plying between Albany and Fremantle. When you told these people that, if they were to visit the other portions of the Colony, if they were to come as far as Fremantle, and the seat of Government, we could show them land and other attractions well worthy of their attention, they simply laughed at you; they looked upon Albany as virtually representing the capabilities and the condition of the Colony, and were under the impression that, if they were to visit any other part of the country, they would find nothing more attractive. Under these circumstances, the people who travelled by these mail steamers would no more think of taking a passage in the *Rob Roy* and visit Fremantle than they would of flying. But if these ocean steamers were to call periodically at our principal port, and the passengers by them could see that the Colony presented a fair field for enterprise, that we enjoyed the same facilities as regards telegraphic communication with the outside world as our neighbours do, and that we were not without other signs of advanced civilisation, the probability was—indeed he might say it was a certainty—that many a wealthy traveller would be inclined to embark his capital and to cast in his lot with us, to his own advantage as well as to the benefit of the Colony itself. Many of these people, although men of means, did not travel about with the idea of spending money, but of finding a profitable field for the investment of their

money, and if they were to see for themselves the field which this Colony offers for the profitable investment of capital, he had no doubt the result would be that we should gain a large number of the most desirable class of colonists, which the Colony stands in need of. But so long as the P. & O. steamers simply call at Albany, and no other ocean line can be induced to make Fremantle a port of call, we can never hope to persuade such people to give the Colony a trial. He looked upon this subject as one of such great importance that he would go so far as to suggest that the House should authorise the Government to offer a very large subsidy indeed—he, himself, would go so far as £10,000 a year—to induce any ocean line to allow their steamers to call monthly at Fremantle. In thus rising to support the adoption of the Address in Reply he had merely done so in order to enable him to give expression to his views on this particular subject, referred to in His Excellency's Speech, and he earnestly hoped the matter would not be lost sight of, for he regarded it as one of vital importance to the Colony.

The Address in Reply was then adopted, and it was resolved to present it to His Excellency the Governor on Thursday, 28th July.

The House adjourned at half-past eight o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 27th July, 1881.

Development of the Eastern Districts—Railway Refreshment Room, Perth—Tank Engines for the Eastern Railway—Barristers Admission Bill—Administration of Estates Bill, 1881—Leave of absence to the member for the Vasse—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EASTERN DISTRICTS.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser), in accordance with notice, moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to take into consideration and report on the question of further settlement and development of the natural resources of the Eastern Districts generally, together with the prospects of future success for the railway now in course of construction, or contemplated; which subjects have been placed before this Council by His Excellency the Governor, in Message No. 12 of last Session." The hon. gentleman said he felt there was no occasion for him to preface the motion with any lengthy harangue; the intention was plainly expressed on the face of it, and the subject had been brought to the notice of the House by message from His Excellency the Governor last Session. He was sure hon. members were generally satisfied—though doubtful of what might be the outcome of the deliberations and recommendations of the Committee—that much useful information might be obtained, and many valuable suggestions elicited, by the appointment of such a commission. The subject was a comprehensive one—more so, in fact, than was apparent by a glance at the motion itself. The Colony was now, he might say, concentrating its whole force in the construction and extension of this Eastern Railway, and he hoped sincerely it would be carried out to its destined terminus without any delay; but he was sure hon. members would agree with him that unless something were done, some active steps taken, to increase, and that very materially, the number of the population now living on the other side of the hills, the profits of the undertaking must necessarily be very limited. This was one of the main considerations which had induced His Excellency to communicate by message with the Council upon this subject at its last Session, and he thought hon. members would concur with him that the questions involved were very important ones, not only to the Eastern Districts but to the Colony at large. As he had already said, it was unnecessary for him on the present occasion to expatiate upon the importance of the object in view, and he would there-