

I cannot understand; the statements, of course, being that the management of the railways had been guilty of misappropriating moneys, and that the management had attempted to hoodwink the Audit Department. The least we could expect from the Premier would be that he should have caused an inquiry to be held; because I am perfectly certain that all of us know very well that the Premier, with his high sense of honour and with the regard he has for parliamentary dignity and Ministerial responsibility, would never permit himself to associate with a man who had been charged with misappropriating money, or who was capable, in a political sense, of hoodwinking anybody. But that is unfortunately the position. If a statement like this be made and remain uncontradicted by the officer affected, what can we expect? What can we think of that hon. gentleman's conduct? It is of course practically an attack upon the Administration generally, and it ought to be refuted: it ought not to be passed over lightly.

WANT OF QUORUM—ADJOURNMENT.

MR. LEAKE again called attention to the state of the House.

THE SPEAKER, after the bells had been rung and the usual interval had elapsed, finding there was not a quorum of members present, adjourned the House at 12:35 midnight, until Wednesday afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 1st November, 1899.

Motion—Permanent Military Force—Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Bill, third reading—Bank Note Protection Bill, third reading—Dentists Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Adjournment: Delay in Business.

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

PRAYERS.

MOTION—PERMANENT MILITARY FORCE.

HON. F. M. STONE (North) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, a permanent military force should be formed for the defence of the colony, and for this purpose the Government should consult the Commandant as to the advisability of doing so, and of what force it should consist.

He said: In moving the motion standing in my name, it has often occurred to me that it was desirable a permanent military force should be established in this colony; and, to my mind, the time has now arrived when we should form such a force, which would be a nucleus for a larger force for the defence of the colony.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: A standing army.

HON. F. M. STONE: A standing army, as the hon. member says. Of course it may be said we may go into federation, and that under federation there will be one standing army for Australia. Still, it seems to me that could be no objection to our forming the nucleus of a standing military force in this colony, because that force can then be handed over to the Federal Government, and there would be no objection to it. I am not going to say anything against the volunteer forces of this colony, which are useful in their way; but we know there is this difference between them and a permanent military force, that the volunteers can resign at any time, and perhaps in a case of emergency we would find we could not rely on having the number of volunteers at present on the roll. We have seen to-day what a permanent force would really mean; we have seen that we can find a fine body of men in this colony to form such a force; and it seems to me that when those men return to the colony,

they should be formed into part of that force which I wish to see established. There may be objection against a standing army, but I do not think any hon. member would have that objection, because we must look out for ourselves, and have a force that we can rely upon to defend us in times of emergency. The other colonies have had permanent forces for a considerable time, and I feel sure that, as Australians, we look upon those forces with pride. They have been to England, and have been second to none in the way they have, I will not say carried off prizes, but in the way they have carried themselves in the military displays in London.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What is the cost of the forces in the other colonies?

HON. F. M. STONE: That is a matter which I am afraid I cannot go into, because it would involve a money motion. What I say is that it is advisable to form a military force, and to consult the Commandant as to the numbers and probable cost. It would then be for another place to decide whether a force should be formed, and then for this House to consider the resolution there arrived at. The motion does not exactly bind this House to the formation of a permanent military force, but simply expresses the opinion that such a force is desirable.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Where is the money coming from?

HON. F. M. STONE: It is for another place to say where the money is to come from. I do not think any hon. member will object to the formation of a military force, which is desirable in many ways in this colony. The cost for the nucleus of such a force would not be very great, and the colony could well afford it.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The colony is accustomed to affording luxuries.

HON. F. M. STONE: The colony is not going to stand still, but will go ahead fast, notwithstanding what we have passed through. The nucleus of a force could be gradually increased, and we could then rely on our own military in case of emergency.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Is the garrison at Albany not a permanent force?

HON. F. M. STONE: Yes.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Then that is the nucleus of a military force.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The force at Albany is an Australasian force.

HON. F. M. STONE: That is so; but I am now speaking of a Western Australian force.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That is, a force strictly under our own control.

HON. F. M. STONE: I am speaking of a Western Australian force, while that at Albany is an Australasian force, the cost of which is borne partly by this colony and partly by the other colonies. We are proud of the body of men we have seen to-day, and who are going forward to fight for their Queen and their country.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: How many of the South African contingent are Western Australians?

HON. F. M. STONE: Whether they are Western Australians or not, they are British, as we all are British.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is against the hon. member's own proposition.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: A great many of the contingent are Western Australians.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Very few.

HON. F. M. STONE: My motion is not that the Western Australian force shall consist solely of Western Australians, and I myself like to sink this idea of Western Australians or South Australians, and believe that we are all British.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is against the hon. member's motion, which is that it is desirable to have a local force.

HON. F. M. STONE: A local force need not consist of Western Australians; and any motion to the effect that such a force should consist of Western Australians solely would be absurd.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Make it an Australian force, and you will be all right.

HON. F. M. STONE: Does Mr. Hackett say the military forces in the other colonies consist of Australians solely?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: No.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Mr. Hackett is going to move an amendment to include Chinese immigrants and others.

HON. F. M. STONE: I do not think I need furnish any further arguments to the House, and can only express the hope that hon. members will unanimously vote for the motion.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I quite agree that the time has arrived

when a permanent military force should be established in the colony, because in the event of any emergency arising, we would be in a very helpless position under present circumstances.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: We would be in an equally helpless position with a military force.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I do not see that. A body of good useful men could be formed, who, in times of necessity, would be of great service, whereas at present we are entirely at the mercy of any mob.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is another point.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (Central): Judging from the interjections of Mr. Hackett, who is one of the oldest members of the House, I quite expected he would have spoken on this subject. He apparently objects entirely to the motion, and does not see any virtue in a force unless it be recruited from outside native Western Australians, or persons brought up in similar circumstances to himself who think more of making money than of defending the country. Although not opposed to the formation of a permanent military force, I am opposed to it at the present time, because it would be futile for us to pass the motion when there is no possibility of seeing where the necessary expenditure for the force, no matter how small that force may be, is to come from. We know from what has transpired this session that there is no available money for any purposes outside those for which money has already been voted, and it would not be wise to suggest to a Government already too prone to spend money in any wasteful direction, which may bring a little honour but no profit to the colony, any other channel through which money might be thrown away. If we give the Government the slightest suggestion in that direction, they will jump at it, and have an ornamental force, useful perhaps, but not of the use commensurate with the necessary expenditure, which, so far as I can see, would not be less than £60,000 a year. It would be impossible to maintain a force of the slightest efficiency in an emergency, on a less cost than that, and even then, with the immensity of the country we have to defend, any force which we could maintain for £60,000 a

year or less would be of no practical value. The colony is stronger in its present defenceless position than it would be with an insufficient defence force such as could be provided with the funds at our disposal just now. I quite agree with Mr. Stone as to the merits of the body of men we have seen to-day, and although we know the majority of them are not Western Australians, they are here at the present time and have thrown in their applications for service with the Western Australian contingent, and are entitled to be credited as settlers in Western Australia.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: They are Western Australians.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They are Western Australians just as much as many of those who, it is suggested by certain hon. members, shall be asked to vote on a vastly important question in this colony. The members of the contingent are even more Western Australian than those other persons to whom I have referred, because the former have allied themselves to the colony, and go prepared to represent the colony in the army of the Empire. All the more honour to them, seeing that the immediate reward of going to South Africa is less than might be earned by staying here, where wages are high and other inducements are greater. But that is not the question. This House should not be carried away by what hon. members have seen to-day at the review of the splendid body of men, full of enthusiasm and ardour, and drilled in a short time into a state of great efficiency. There is no reason to pledge the country, or recommend to those who hold the purse strings, an expenditure of £60,000 a year or more for a picturesque and well-drilled force of a fine looking body of men, of no particular service except as an excellent addition to a pageant when a Governor comes or a retiring Governor leaves.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: A permanent force would be available whenever required.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East): While I have every sympathy with the motion, I regret I cannot give it my support, because I cannot help feeling that before very long the Federal Government will have to deal with this very question.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Not in Western Australia.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Yes; in Western Australia.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: No, no.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I hope Mr. Matheson will be disappointed.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I also agree with what has been said in respect to the financial aspect, if the motion is to be made effective. There is no doubt a large expenditure will be involved; and, seeing that the Federal Government will be obliged to consider the question of defence as soon as we enter the federal union, it seems to me that the motion is premature. Should the colony eventually decide not to federate, no one would be better pleased to support the motion than I.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The hon. member means when the colony decides not to federate.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I say exactly what I mean, and did not intend to say "when." This debate, however, has been a most valuable one, as it has enabled Mr. Hackett to throw a very great light on the mental attitude with which those gentlemen who have had the good fortune to reside for eight, ten, or fifteen years in the colony—I will not pin myself to a year—regard those newcomers who have assisted to a very large extent in placing the colony in the prosperous condition it is in to-day. We are aware, of course, that a number of the men who have joined the contingent for South Africa have not been born in the colony; but to any reasonable man or ordinary thinking man, that is not a subject which should be raised in derision. The fact that these men have come to the colony and cast in the lot here, and are prepared to join the contingent and fight in support of the good name of the colony, is a matter on which they should be congratulated. I say most emphatically that Mr. Hackett's remarks are valuable, as showing the mental attitude which prevails amongst those settlers who have been for some few years longer than others in the colony.

HON. C. P. DEMPSTER: No, no.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not mean settlers who have lived here the greater part of their lives, because I do not think they are influenced in that way.

I speak of the mental attitude of those who came here from the other colonies and elsewhere within the last fourteen or fifteen years, and who apparently do not like to see other people prospering. They take every opportunity, so far as I can see, of sneering at the more recent arrivals, and of suggesting that these latter are not entitled to the name of Western Australians. It seems to be lost sight of that every person who is qualified to be an elector in the colony is a Western Australian, and entitled to claim that name and have every consideration along with those who have lived fifty or fifteen years here. It would be well for hon. members to bear in mind that Western Australian citizenship is not confined to those who have lived for a certain number of years in the colony, but is shared equally by men who have been here for 18 months and are entitled to vote. I must again say it is a matter of regret to me that I cannot support the motion, but must unfortunately oppose it, because I think it is premature.

HON. D. MCKAY (North): I shall support the motion, because I think it is a commencement, at any rate, whether we join federation or not.

HON. S. J. HAYNES (South-East): I do not wish to give a silent vote. I shall support the motion, and I do not think the mover imagined or intended there should be a large expense, because in several instances in his speech he stated that the body referred to would be the nucleus of a force. If such a force is started, it will be a commencement in the right direction, and those men—

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Three officers and a boy.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: However few there may be, the movement will be a commencement, and as time goes on the number of the force will be increased, whilst in the meantime the men will be getting thoroughly trained. As to the volunteer forces, I give them every credit, but we all know they do not turn out the stamp of men required. In the case of regulars, military service is their full and whole duty, and they are under discipline; whereas the volunteers, as their name shows, volunteer their services, and the regulations that affect them are less stringent. I think that as time passes a force of this stamp may on occasions be

exceedingly useful, and in the protection of life and limb may certainly save far more than the few pounds the keep of the force would cost. I therefore have much pleasure in supporting the motion, and I repeat that I do not think the mover contemplates a very large force, but the nucleus of a force.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: To be stationed at Albany?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: No.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I do not care where the men are stationed, and I do not consider the hon. member is quite right in suggesting Albany. I do not represent Albany altogether, but the South-East Province in particular, and I hope the colony in general. I repeat that I do not care where the men are stationed. At present there is a small force at Albany, and that is a federal force.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That is a nucleus, is it not?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: That is not the nucleus suggested by Mr. Stone. It is an Australian force, towards which this colony is contributing a certain quota.

HON. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): At present it may not be altogether advisable for this matter to be pressed to a division one way or the other; but if Mr. Stone does press it to a division, I shall have pleasure in voting on the subject. I think it is hardly necessary for me to refer to the excursions into the clouds taken by my friend, Mr. Matheson, on whom an interjection by the senior member for the South-West Province seems to have the same effect as a red rag on a bull.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was an unfortunate interjection.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The interjection seems to have had the same effect as a red rag has on a very thick-headed bull, and apparently he thinks the rag a very red one. I shall support the motion largely on the ground that I believe the volunteer force has not done its work. It has been largely improved of late, and put on a footing of comparative efficiency, and it has been the recipient of considerable funds; but, although a great deal has been done, the force has by no means reached that position which we are entitled to say should be the position of a force to which we may look in the future, if not for

defence purposes, at all events for something that will show other bodies of men how they are to prepare themselves if they are to act in the defence of their country. I urge that point, because, as an interjection of mine pointed out, it must be remembered that one of the things about the present contingent is that it comprises so few West Australian natives.

HON. H. BRIGGS: About 14.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: My hon. friend says about 14; 14 out of 125. That is a very serious consideration, and it at once suggests that the volunteer movement has not taken a sufficiently deep root in this colony to attract native-born youths to it.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: They are all employed at home maintaining their families.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Perhaps so. The hon. member's interjection or reply only confirms the argument that we are not able to so popularise the volunteer force of Western Australia as to induce decent and respectable youths either employed at home or engaged elsewhere to join it. I do not wish to be diverted from the point in hand. The hon. member (Mr. Matheson) seldom rises to throw any light upon a subject, but he generally introduces a good deal of vitriol into it, and judging from most of his utterances in this House, I believe it is always more his desire to cause an irritation than to confer any benefit regarding the subject of which he is treating, or to put it in a favourable light for decision. I challenge any member of the House to say the hon. member has contributed anything whatever to the subject under discussion. His speech was a tirade about persons who had been here ten or fifteen years, and he displayed an animosity absolutely diabolical.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: He thinks that we have an animosity against those who are not West Australians.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It is one of the very many foolish ideas of the hon. member, of which no doubt he will gradually get rid in time, after a few more years' experience of reasonable men.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I can only judge by what you say.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member does not judge by what certain

persons say, but most carefully misjudges, for I never knew the hon. member to speak fairly of an opponent yet, whether on the platform or in this House, or in writing one of those absurd, long-winded productions. In regard to this question, Mr. Stone has spoken of what he seeks to give us in place of a volunteer force, which is certainly a force of efficiency to some extent. He seeks to give us something which may hold its own, I do not say with the regulars of the British Empire, for perhaps that is a long way beyond them at present, but at all events with the forces which are now being organised in the Eastern colonies, and which I venture to say are as far beyond anything Western Australia has produced, as the British army itself is beyond anything the Australian colonies have produced.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: You are a West Australian, evidently.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am, most thoroughly.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It sounds like it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am rather proud of it, the hon. member may be surprised to hear.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I am not surprised at any statement Mr. Hackett may make.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Nor would I be surprised if the hon. member were surprised at anything after the hour of eight o'clock in the evening. I desired to point out that what the hon. member was doubtless asking for was the establishment of a militia, or the nucleus of a militia, in place of or in addition to the present volunteer force, and in that movement I most entirely agree with him. I believe that until we reach that stage we shall not have done anything worthy of record as a contribution towards our own defence, or towards the defence of the British Empire. The obligation rests upon us just as much as it does upon those in the United Kingdom. As to the volunteers we have at present, it does not need any remarks from me or any other member of the House to point out their defects. It is simply impossible to suppose that under the system of organisation now prevailing we shall have a thoroughly efficient and satisfactory military force. One point alone is sufficient

to prove that, namely the few days or evenings devoted to military training. What the hon. member doubtless aims at is the creation of a force which will undergo military training for a substantial period of the year, and not merely for a few nights scattered through the months of the year, or at the Easter encampment. Members of the militia would probably undergo a month's training each year, and therefore the force would have this advantage, that it could be summoned at any moment, either for actual service or for the purpose of manœuvres. It would be bound to obey military law in its strictest points, and to conform in every respect to military discipline of the most severe order. If such a force could be introduced into this colony, we should, I believe, have good reason to congratulate ourselves. At present we are a long way from it. As regards the present motion, I must say that unless I considered it to a large extent an abstract one, pointing out the course the hon. member desires the Government to follow, I could not be quite sure whether I should be justified in committing myself to it; but as far as I can find, all the motion seeks to affirm is that in the opinion of this House a permanent military force should be formed for the defence of the colony. I take it that is the gist of the motion, and it is on those grounds I shall vote with my hon. friend. I presume that the advice, not only of the Commandant here, but of the Commandants of the other colonies, and also of Imperial officers, will be obtained before the Government come to a decision. But that is a mere question of detail. If those words had not been added, the Government themselves would have consulted established authorities outside as well as inside the colony, and as the bare motion stands, it says it is advisable we should have a permanent military force of some character or other in place of our floating, and to a great extent illusory, volunteer force. I do not use that term in any offensive sense, but in its proper meaning, and I shall be understood. I hope the hon. member, having taken up this cause, will press it forward, and not rest until we have a permanent force worthy of the colony, which will attract not only West Australians—although I hope there will be a

large proportion of West Australians—but citizens of the Empire as well. We only ask for a force which will serve as a nucleus of a force of the future, whose training and discipline will, at all events, serve as an object lesson to the volunteers of the colony, and enable us to say we have done something in a small way, but as much as lies in our power, in defence of the mother Empire to which in the last resort our lives and limbs belong.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randall): I would like to speak on this subject as a member for the Metropolitan Province, and not as a member of the Government; and I must say my sympathies are with the motion, which is couched in moderate language. The motion commits the country to nothing important, merely asking the Government to inquire into the matter and consult the Commandant with a view of forming a permanent force; and I think the time has come when it is very desirable we should have such a force in the colony. I remember talking with Colonel Wilson, the late Commandant here, who said he was strongly of opinion that the volunteer force of this colony would never be in an efficient state until there was a small permanent force, which would have a most beneficial effect on the volunteer system. Colonel Wilson, who was capable of giving an opinion, was here for some considerable time, and took a great interest in the volunteer movement, and I believe he instituted a cadet corps. His efforts were appreciated by the citizens and the Government, but did not result in any great success, on account of the changeable habits of many of the volunteers, who perhaps felt military discipline and control a little irksome. While the formation of a permanent defence force may be a serious matter, Mr. Whitcombe has, I think, exaggerated the cost. We are paying £13,000 per annum now for the volunteer force, and £2,000 per annum as our contribution for the maintenance of the garrison at Albany. I will not pretend to say, of course, how many the proposed force should consist of, because that is a matter to be decided afterwards, if the Government adopt the suggestion contained in the motion, which I feel sure will be carried in the House, and, I take it, transmitted to another place with a

message, asking the concurrence of hon. members there. It is a serious matter to withdraw a number of men from the ordinary pursuits of life, and to a large extent I share in the fear of militarism becoming rampant in the colony, to the injury, it may be, if it exceed proper bounds, of the best life of the colony; but a small force is, I think, essential and could be kept under proper control. Even 100 well-trained men under discipline, mingled with three hundred or four hundred volunteers, would be most useful in forming a respectable force in a very short time. This has been shown by the rapid way in which the contingent for South Africa has attained efficiency, judging from the accounts in the newspapers, which I take as correct. I support this motion most heartily, though, as I have already said, I am not a military man. I am one who would be very glad to see war abolished from one end of the world to the other, and all our differences and disputes settled by more peaceable means than a resort to force of arms. But we have to look facts in the face. We know that this colony, like the other colonies, may be subject at times to irruptions of force from outside, and the formation of a small permanent movable defence force here would be an assurance to a considerable extent that, in the event of invasion, we had a defence on which we could rely; and, moreover, we owe it to ourselves, because we cannot always expect the mother country to protect us, though she will, of course, continue to do so on the sea. It is very easy to understand that a force could be landed on any part of the coast, and if we had a small well disciplined permanent force of our own, it would have an advantage over a larger number which might be thrown on our shores. Looking at the question all round, we cannot be doing wrong in passing the motion which Mr. Stone has submitted. I cannot say, of course, in what light the Government will view the question. Although there may be differences of opinion in the colony, a very large number of people will cordially agree to the motion; and I certainly feel it my duty, as a member representing the Metropolitan Province, to give it my support.

Question put and passed.

Ordered, that the resolution be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly for their concurrence.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE MARKS BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

BANK NOTE PROTECTION BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by the **HON. F. M. STONE**, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

DENTISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

ADJOURNMENT—DELAY IN BUSINESS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, 14th November. There seemed to be a general wish that the House should adjourn over the next week, and so far as he could see, no business would come up from the Legislative Assembly for some considerable time. One of the two sitting days next week was a holiday, and the other two days would be occupied with festivities in a neighbouring town; and, under the circumstances, he did not want to drag hon. members here from distant homes when there might be no business to place before them.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: While not desiring to oppose the motion, yet the end of the session was at hand, and on the Notice Paper were the Constitution Acts Amendment Bill and the Electoral Bill, which would certainly afford material for two evenings' discussion. Anyone who closely scrutinised the Notice Paper of another place would see that in a fortnight it was quite probable the Notice Paper might be swept clean, especially as the Government had already taken in Monday as an ordinary sitting day, and he believed intended to appropriate Wednesday, at present devoted to private members' business, and might add Friday as another sitting day. The motion of the Colonial Secretary practically meant an adjournment for a fortnight, and if it were carried, the other House might be found waiting for the Council. Then in the week after next the Colonial Secretary would find himself in a similar predicament, owing to its being "Bunbury week." One must protest against these adjourn-

ments, and he was of opinion there was no necessity to adjourn over Wednesday next. No doubt on the Prince of Wales's birthday the House would, as a matter of loyalty, adjourn; but on the other days the Council could meet without any inconvenience or discourtesy to the Guildford Agricultural Society. The "Bunbury week" would commence on Monday morning and continue until the Saturday night, and it was quite certain several members of both Houses would have to make their appearance at Bunbury, so that practically there would be three weeks with possibly only two days' sittings of the Council.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If the Colonial Secretary would give an undertaking that the House would go on with business and sit on three nights in the week, there would be no objection to the motion; but he did not propose to sit on one night next week, and spend the rest of the time travelling, for the convenience of those who desired to go to Guildford, or to be so loyal as not to sit on the 9th November, or for the convenience of those who wished to go to Bunbury. If the majority of members were going to Bunbury, let the House be adjourned for three weeks. Two nights would be taken up by the Constitution Bill and the Electoral Bill, and if notice were given of the subjects transmitted from the other place, members would be ready to go on with them immediately. It was ridiculous that country members should be brought here, and be sent for specially in some cases, in order to get important measures through, and then be sent up country to wait for the convenience of those who wished these measures put through, or others. He had travelled up some ten times this session, and not one important measure had been passed up to the present time. It appeared to him that this was done either with the object of driving country members out of the representation, or to put them to a great deal of unnecessary expense and trouble. He was in accord with the proposal to adjourn, at any rate till next Tuesday week, and if there was going to be any difficulty about the Bunbury business, we should adjourn to next Tuesday fortnight.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: On the understanding that the Colonial Secretary

was prepared to go on with the business, he (Mr. Matheson) would be prepared to attend any day; but day after day members met, and important measures were postponed. The thing became a farce, and under the circumstances he thought the wisest thing would be for the House to adjourn till Tuesday week, as the Colonial Secretary suggested. He would be perfectly prepared, like Mr. Whitcombe, to attend any day next week, on the distinct understanding that both the Constitution Bill and the Electoral Bill were to be proceeded with.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply as mover): There was a good deal in what Mr. Hackett had said, but he (the Colonial Secretary) did not cherish the sanguine view of the hon. member that there would be a lot of business down here next week. He presumed the Assembly would adjourn on Thursday, though they might meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in the evenings only, and, so far as he could judge from the contentious matter before the Assembly, it was not likely the Assembly would get through any Bills to send down to the Council. It was true we had the Constitution Bill and the Electoral Bill, but members knew we must have an absolute majority to pass the Constitution Bill.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The Government would not get a majority of members in the Council if they played fast-and-loose.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was to be hoped the hon. member did not accuse him of playing fast-and-loose. The business of the House was controlled to a large extent by the Bills in another House.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There were Bills that could be proceeded with.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was rather doubtful. Yesterday there was the greatest difficulty in securing an absolute majority of the House. The hon. member knew that.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: There was a majority, but the trouble was that the Colonial Secretary did not know it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill referred to would not be jeopardised by him for the convenience of hon. members. He had a duty which he owed to the Government and the country, and he

would discharge that duty to the best of his ability. He was quite willing to meet next week, but he could give no guarantee that the House could meet each night and do business. He was very doubtful about it. He was afraid we would not get much more than a quorum each week. He was, as he had said, quite willing to go on with the business, but we could not proceed with the Constitution Bill unless we had a majority of members present.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 8.35 o'clock until Tuesday, 14th November.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 1st November, 1899.

Loan Bill, £750,000, first reading—Question: Boring for Subterranean Deposits of Alluvial Gold—Question: Causeway at Port Hedland—Motion: Metropolitan Waterworks Board and the Secretary—Motion: Police Department, Commission of Inquiry—Motion: Alluvial Trouble, Government to Refrain from Interference—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

On motion by the **PREMIER**, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair until half-past seven o'clock.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

LOAN BILL, £750,000.

MESSAGE, APPROPRIATION.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending an appropriation to be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, for the purpose of a Bill