

Legislative Assembly,
Friday, 6th January, 1893.

Aboriginal Offenders Act Amendment Bill: first reading
—Advances from Revenue, &c., of funds for various
Loan Works—Introduction of Municipal Acts Con-
solidation and Amendment Bill—Estimates, 1893:
further considered in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, and read a first time.

ADVANCES FROM REVENUE, &c., OF FUNDS FOR VARIOUS LOAN WORKS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole, to consider the following Resolution:—

'That in the opinion of this Committee it is advisable that the Government be authorised to expend the following sums, to be advanced, in the first instance, from current Revenue, and afterwards to be provided from Loan funds to be hereafter raised, viz.:—

	£
1. Proposed deviations to improve the Grades between Fremantle and Beverley, and relaying the same with 60lb. rails	111,742
2. Purchase of land for Perth Railway Station, and erection and completion of Perth Railway Station and Yards, Buildings, &c., and estimated to cost £75,916, less a sum of £25,000 contributed from the South-Western Railway	50,916
3. Additional Rolling Stock for the Eastern Railway	48,566
4. Miscellaneous	18,776
Total	£230,000

Question—put and passed.

MR. SPEAKER left the chair.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The motion I have to ask the committee to agree to to-day is one that has not been very usual with us in the past, although last session I asked the House

to affirm a similar resolution in regard to the Mullewa Railway. In that case the House was good enough to assent to the proposal I placed before it, namely, that in the event of the contract for that railway amounting to a greater sum than was available for it on the Loan Estimates, the Government should be authorised to accept the contract, so long as the sum in excess did not exceed £50,000 more than provided by the Loan. Although this is a somewhat unusual resolution in this House, it is not an unusual resolution in the Legislatures of the other colonies of Australia; in fact, all the Governments of Australia find themselves at times compelled to ask the Assembly to authorise them to spend moneys in the way I now ask this House to authorise this Government to spend. Under ordinary circumstances, of course, the Government would have come forward with a Loan Bill, and asked the House to assent to it, for the purpose of raising the money to undertake these works; but, at the present time, the Government consider it undesirable to take that course, for the simple reason that we have already a Loan in existence which has not been all raised; and, in the second place, there is no particular necessity for us to raise this money at the present time, because it will not be expended at once. It will take some time to expend it, and we will be able to provide the money that is necessary to carry out these works from the loan funds already at our disposal, and also (in the event of our not having sufficient loan funds) out of ordinary revenue. In the resolution that I have the honor of now placing before the committee, I wish to strike out the words "from current revenue," because what is purposed to be done is this: that this money be provided by the Government, not necessarily from current revenue, but from any funds that may be at their disposal. In the other colonies it is usual to charge these amounts, which are treated as advances pending the issue of fresh loans, against any loan funds in the hands of the Government (if there are any), and then to recoup the loan funds afterwards when the fresh loan is raised. In the present case I have no doubt we shall be able to follow something of the same course—advance this money out of the

loan funds at our disposal, and, if that is not enough, we will be able to provide the money from any other service that the Government has at its command, which will be current revenue. The object the Government have in moving this resolution is that these works may be proceeded with at once. I am very sorry indeed we should be under obligation to spend this money on some of these works, and for a long time I tried to withstand the appeals made to me by my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways; in fact, I think I put him off a good many times, saying I could not do it. But at last it was brought home to me that it was imperative we should do something to improve the grades on our Eastern Railway. For some months past this had been forcibly brought before the Government by the Engineer-in-Chief, and we took one step in advance towards it: we ordered 130 miles of 60lb. rails, in order to re-rail the whole of the line between Fremantle and Beverley. In doing that we intended that the present rails should be taken up and utilised for the Yilgarn Railway, the difference in the cost between the 60lb. rails and the 46lb. rails being of course charged against the Eastern Railway. That step we took some time ago, on the most pressing representations of the Engineer-in-Chief; and I think if members will think over the matter they will find that was a wise course for us to pursue. Even under the most favorable circumstances, I believe it is admitted that a 46lb. rail is a very light one, either for heavy haulage or quick travelling. Except in very easy country, all admit that a 46lb. rail is very inferior to a 60lb. rail; and, considering that the line between here and Albany is the main mail line of the colony, and that quick speed is necessary, and considering also that there are very heavy grades on that line, and that it is necessary to use heavy engines, there is no doubt that this line will be greatly improved by having these 60lb. rails substituted in lieu of the present 46lb. rails. The same difficulty will not occur with these light rails on the Yilgarn line,—

MR. RICHARDSON: Will the same sleepers stand it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The same sleepers will stand it. I say the same difficulty will not occur on the

Yilgarn line because that is a very easy line, and the rate of speed need not be so fast as on the main mail line. Having taken that step some months ago, we are now placed in this difficulty: these 46lb. rails are now required for the Yilgarn railway, and we have either to take them up or use the 60lb. rails for that line—which would be really a waste. We therefore propose to take up the existing rails between here and Beverley, and commence at once to lay down the 60lb. rails. It seems to me that if we have to take the present rails up, we had better put them down where they are to remain. We have had a careful survey made of the line up the Darling Range, and we find that a gradient of 1 in 50 can be obtained. Therefore, by putting down these 60lb. rails, and also improving the grades so that there will be no gradient worse than 1 in 50, we shall have an excellent line, equal to all the requirements of the service. I am almost afraid to say how much we are now losing—my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways will tell you the great loss we are sustaining—by reason of the present heavy grades. It is something enormous. I believe we are losing something like £15,000 a year at the present time, and it is estimated that in a few years we shall be losing about £40,000 a year by reason of these heavy grades. With these facts brought home to us, we felt there was no longer any good reason why we should not deal with this matter, which is most pressing and most urgent. Though I resisted it for a considerable time, I had at last to give way, and I now come to this House to ask it to approve of this resolution. I do not think I need say anything more with regard to the first item. I have no doubt members are as much aware of the circumstance as I am, in regard to the unsafety of the present grades, and the loss they involve. There can be no question about it, we must at all hazards alter these grades, and place this railway in a position to be worked not only with profit, but also with safety. The next item is a sum of £50,916 for the purchase of land for the Perth railway station, and the necessary yards and buildings. Members will notice that we have taken £25,000 from the South-Western Railway as its contribution towards this very

important and necessary work. That is as much—so I am informed by the Engineer-in-Chief and my hon. friend the Commissioner—as this vote will stand; and I think, perhaps, considering the low rate per mile which was provided in the Loan Bill for this railway—which, although running through level country, is still country intersected by water-courses—this contribution of £25,000 is about as much as anyone could expect that vote to stand towards the purchase of land and the construction of the new railway station at Perth. My hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways has just reminded me that when the Government brought forward their Loan Bill it was generally thought that the amount set down for this line would not be sufficient to complete it; but I am glad to say that it has proved sufficient, and not only that, but we hope that the sum of £25,000 will be available out of the vote for this purpose. I have no doubt that members are quite as well aware as the Government that the cost of land in Perth has far exceeded what we expected it would cost. I thought about £15,000 was all we expected the land would cost, whereas it has cost something like four times that amount. There is this to be said, however, that a larger area has been resumed than was intended in the first instance; and I think members will agree that the Government have done wisely in that respect, for, whatever price we have to pay for land in Perth now, we may depend upon it the value of land will not decrease as time goes on, and it would be a very unwise policy to pursue only to resume just sufficient land for this important station, the central station of the railway system of the colony, as would meet present requirements. I believe that the land we have resumed now will meet our requirements for many years to come; and I believe it is in every way suitable for a central station, which will be commodious and in every respect worthy of the colony, and of the chief city of the colony. The next item is a sum of £48,566 for additional rolling stock for the Eastern Railway. I suppose the fact that we require additional rolling stock should be a subject for congratulation rather than otherwise, because it shows that the colony is progressing and that our railway traffic is

increasing, necessitating this additional rolling stock. I am very glad to be able to say here to-day that which practically convinces me of that fact—and I think the statement, if it does not astonish members, certainly was unanticipated by many I see around me, and it is this: that the very high estimate (as it was thought) of my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways as to the earnings of our railways during the year just closed—not the earnings, but the actual amount paid into the Treasury from railway receipts—which my friend estimated at £91,000, has been realised, and a little more than realised. I think that is a subject for great congratulation, when we bear in mind that the railways of the colony are, I may say, yet in their infancy. I think we may honestly congratulate ourselves that our railways in these early days of their existence are contributing so much towards the revenue of the colony. With the exception of the Customs, the railways of the colony at the present time are the largest revenue-producing item on our Estimates; and, every year, we know it will increase. Therefore, I say this announcement that I am able to make must be a subject of congratulation to all of us. The next item “Miscellaneous, £18,776,” I will leave to my friend the Commissioner to explain, but I take it that it means all sorts of works connected with the railways of the colony.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The Fremantle workshops?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In connection with that I may say that the Engineer-in-Chief has impressed upon the Government most urgently that something should be done in regard to those workshops. Either we shall have to spend money on the present workshops—which he does not recommend—or we must remove them to somewhere else. He has urged in the strongest manner that something should be done, either on the present site or some other site. This money, of course, will be available for this purpose, whichever way the Government decide to spend it. As I said in the beginning, this is a motion that I do not care to have to submit to this House; I would have preferred to have asked the House to sanction a Loan Bill for the purpose of rais-

ing this money. But I could not recommend that course at the present moment, when we have nearly half a million to raise of our last Loan. I think we must wait a little longer before we proceed to pass another Loan Bill, until at any rate next session, or until there is an absolute necessity for us to go into the Loan market again. That being so, this is the only course for us to pursue. I very much regret indeed having to place it before the House; but it is absolutely necessary, in the interests of the colony, absolutely necessary in the interests of the revenue of the colony that I should do so, because we cannot go on in the way we have been going on, losing some £15,000 a year, by reason of these heavy grades up this Eastern Railway. Besides that, we have these 60lb. rails on their way to the colony to be laid down on this line of railway, and I think the cheapest and best course for us to pursue will be at once to commence the deviation, and lay these rails down in the place we intend them always to remain. I do not think members need be afraid of this expenditure. It is not a very big item after all; £230,000 at 4 per cent. will only be about £9,000, or a little more with the sinking fund. I strongly urge its acceptance. The only objection I think that anyone can make to it is that the method of raising it may not commend itself to them. But we did the same thing last year, with reference to the additional sum of £50,000 in connection with the Mullewa Railway, and I see no reason to think that it is more wrong for us to do this now than it was to do that last year. It would have been possible of course to have brought in a Loan Bill, but I think it is unnecessary and inexpedient. Moreover, we are not adopting a course that is unknown in the other colonies. The Under Treasurer showed me this morning some Loan Estimates in which such items as these figure in all of them,—advances made pending the issue of a fresh loan. It is a well-known thing in all the other colonies; and, although it is not a plan that they adopt, or that we adopt, from choice, still it is a plan that is found to work well. At any rate it is a plan that they all adopt, in the same way as we feel we have to adopt it at the present time. I beg to move the resolution standing in my name, except that

in line 2 I wish to strike out the words “from current revenue,” in order that the Government may have a free hand in making these advances out of whatever funds they may have available, whether current revenue or loan funds.

The words “from current revenue” were then struck out, and the resolution moved, as amended.

MR. DEHAMEL: I have very great pleasure on this occasion in supporting the Government in the resolution they have put before this House. Neither do I think in any way that the plan they suggest is one that any member of this House will take the slightest objection to. It seems to me that to go in for another Loan Bill at the present time would be not only inexpedient, as the Premier says, but absolutely disastrous. It seems also clear, when we find that on our main line of railway we are suffering this terrible loss through these heavy grades, that it is absolutely necessary that something should be done to rectify this blunder, and to reduce these losses. But what I would like to ask the Government to do is this: not to fix definitely upon the route they will take, until they have considered two other alternative proposals in regard to it. There are two other routes which might be completed for the same, or even a less, amount of money than what it is estimated it will cost to make this deviation, and the same end (so I am informed) would be attained. The first is the Helena Valley route, with regard to which I intend to read a portion of a report issued on the 17th June, 1876, and the other is the Chittering Valley route. The great advantage of that is that we should get rid of those two spurs, the Northam spur and the Newcastle spur; and, if we did that, we should get rid of portions of our railway system which must always be attended with loss, for, wherever you have a spur attached to a line of railway you have a loss. You cannot help it. If these two spurs can be avoided by adopting the Chittering Valley route, for anything like the same amount of money as the proposed deviation, I think we should not hesitate to adopt it. With regard to the Helena Valley route, a report was issued as far back as the year 1876. I have it here; it is signed “T. H. J. Browne, C.E.”

AN HON. MEMBER: "Satan" Browne; and laughter.

MR. DEHAMEL: Members may laugh. I do not know anything about Mr. T. H. J. Browne myself, but I will read the material part of his report. (*Reads.*) It will be seen that the estimated total cost of this line, *via* Chittering, is £105,000, including rolling stock and everything else. Of course we would not require rolling stock now; it is only a question of making the line.

AN HON. MEMBER: With 23lb. rails?

MR. DEHAMEL: Of course that is absurd. Probably in those days it was considered by Mr. Browne that 23lb. rails would answer our requirements. As I have said, I know nothing of this Mr. Browne; I am reading from an old newspaper, and that is what he said. At any rate, I think it would be worth while for the Government, before they make the proposed deviation, to consider the advisability of adopting that Chittering Valley route, and see whether, by adopting that route, we might not avoid the cost to the colony of those two spurs—the Northam spur and the Newcastle spur. That is all I wish to suggest to the Government. On this occasion I am thoroughly in accord with the Premier and the Government, in regard to this resolution, and it gives me great pleasure in supporting it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I may at this stage tell the hon. member that the Government have already taken this in hand, and had surveys made by a most competent man, the gentlemen who came here from the Victorian Government to advise us with regard to this Eastern Railway deviation. I was in hopes of being able to lay the reports on this subject on the table of the House to-day, but we have not yet got them from the Printer. When the hon. member sees the papers, he will see that what he suggests would be beyond our means altogether. The Engineer-in-Chief has also considered this matter, and he advises the Government to proceed with the deviations recommended on the Eastern Railway. With regard to these proposed deviations to improve the grades between Fremantle and Beverley, and relaying the same with 60lbs. rails, estimated to

cost £111,742, this is part of a sum of £125,000, of which £13,000 has already been charged to the existing appropriations for improvements to the Eastern Railway. There cannot, I think, be in the mind of anyone the slightest doubt as to the necessity, not to mention the expediency, of improving the Greenmount grades (which is estimated to cost in all £85,000), as the annual loss on goods traffic alone, on the basis of the volume of business at present existing, is already about £8,000 per annum, equivalent to about £200,000, if capitalised at 4 per cent.; and, if the traffic goes on increasing in the next three or four years at anything like the same ratio as it has been increasing during the last three years, then the loss in working expenses, by reason of the exceptionally severe grades at Greenmount, will by that time at the very least amount to £20,000 per annum, which is equivalent to the interest, at 4 per cent., on £500,000. It seems to me, therefore, scarcely a debatable question as to whether or not the colony should undertake this work, or whether it can afford to undertake it, as I apprehend that as a matter of fact it cannot afford to suffer a loss of £20,000 a year, which can be stopped by the expenditure of £85,000. As regards the other portion of this item, namely, the relaying of the Eastern Railway with 60lbs. rails, this is a step in the same direction as the improvement of the grades. It is done with the object of saving working expenses by enabling heavier trains to be hauled. The present rails are altogether too light for heavy goods traffic, and this is one of the items tending to the result that our train mileage is so enormous as compared with our receipts, and with the train mileage for corresponding receipts on railways in other places. With regard to the next item, "Purchase of land for Perth Railway Station, &c.," I presume this item scarcely requires any explanation. A new station at Perth is an actual necessity. The inconveniences and loss of time to the public by the present cramped and inadequate arrangements is a serious impediment to the progress of the colony generally. It has a distinct effect on the price of almost everything which goes or comes by rail. It is to be regretted that the land required for this was not acquired many

years ago. A little foresight in that way would have saved much money now, but so much the more reason was there for our not delaying any longer. The longer it got delayed the worse the case would get. We have in fact been very fortunate in having had to buy so few buildings. It is seldom that a site so centrally situated could be got in the metropolis of a colony with so few houses on it. This was due to its being soft ground, supposed to be a bad foundation to build upon, but that would not have continued to bar buildings for any great length of time. As to the item "Additional Rolling Stock for Eastern Railway, £48,566,"—that this should be necessary is a subject of congratulation. It is clearly one of the signs of progress. If our traffic had not doubled itself within a short period, we should not have had to double our rolling stock within the same period. I think it will not be contended that we have overdone it. If we have erred it has been in the other direction. Vigorous complaints have continued to be made until quite recently that we were not meeting public requirements, and that the railways were not doing the work of the country. We are better in that respect now, by dint of putting on the Eastern Railway some £70,000 worth of rolling stock in addition to what it had a year ago. This we were able to do by anticipating the requirements of the new railways, and allowing the Eastern Railway to have the use of the vehicles in the meantime; but we must now provide for the Eastern Railway itself, so as to be able to make restitution to the new railways when they are opened. As to the item "Miscellaneous, £18,776,"—this is for the many things that become absolutely necessary on a developing railway system, such as improvements at wayside stations, signalling and interlocking gear, fencing land as settlement progresses and the necessity of the case requires it. It is also the intention of the Government to expend a certain sum for the improvement or alteration of the workshops at Fremantle. Whether they remain there or are removed elsewhere, it is imperative that something must be done to increase their conveniences. The Government have a large amount of machinery that require erecting, and, to do this and improve the

workshops, the Engineer-in-Chief estimates will cost about £10,000.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Unpleasant as it may be to the Government to have to come forward to ask for such large sums as these, it is satisfactory to know that they realise the necessity of doing something to improve the gradients on our Eastern Railway. When we are told that we are losing such a large sum of money every year by reason of these heavy gradients, it must be apparent to every member that the sooner the better something is done to remedy this state of things, and that the money spent on this work will be recouped to the revenue in a very short time indeed. I think the Premier, a few nights ago, accused some members of pulling long faces when the large sum required for this purpose was first mentioned. I think, if he was alluding to members on this side of the House, he ought to be satisfied now that there is no objection on the part of members sitting on these benches to the proposed expenditure. Of course it is to be regretted that the Government of the colony have only now realised what ought to have been foreseen by those responsible for the construction of this Eastern Railway, with its heavy grades. It is evident that the original surveys did not receive that consideration which the colony had a right to expect they would receive, and that there was most culpable neglect on the part of those responsible for those surveys. But, as I have said, it is satisfactory to find the Government at last realising the serious mistake that was then made. With regard to the item "Miscellaneous, £18,776," out of which it appears that a sum of £10,000 is proposed to be spent in altering the present railway workshops in Fremantle, I understand the Engineer-in-Chief to say that the money will be completely thrown away upon the present workshops, for that in two years' time the shops will have to be shifted somewhere else. I think the Government ought really to consider whether it is worth while, for the sake of two years, to waste £10,000 on the present workshops. It bears out what Mr. Allison Smith said in his report, that any money expended on these workshops, on the present site, would be money thrown away. I think the Government should listen to the advice that has been given them by this gentleman, and also

by their own Engineer-in-Chief. I think we are very fortunate indeed in having a gentleman like Mr. O'Connor over our railways, to advise the Government in these matters. I feel sure the Government will do what they consider best in this matter. I understand it is proposed to fence the railway along Greenmount, but, if we are going to make this deviation, it seems to me it will be hardly necessary to fence that portion of the line. I also notice that the North Fremantle station has been shifted. The first intimation I received of its having been removed was in a newspaper paragraph. I do not think the Government in this matter have treated those who have settled in that neighborhood, or who have property in the neighborhood, very fairly, seeing that many of them now will have to wade through sand to reach the station. I think the least the Government should do is to provide a good road for these people to reach the station. I have very much pleasure in supporting these resolutions.

MR. RICHARDSON: There is one point upon which we have not had any explanation. I believe the proposed deviation will extend a distance of about 11 miles, and I should like to know whether it is intended to abandon the existing loop, or whether it is to be still kept in working order. There are certain vested interests concerned, as in the case of timber stations and others who have frontages to the existing line, and who will suffer if, when the deviation is made, the present line is abandoned. It is a matter of no personal interest to me, or possibly to other members, but it is a matter of some importance to those who have frontages along the present line. I am very glad indeed that the Premier is going to erase the words "from current revenue," for I think some of this money might come from some other source than current revenue. For instance, there was a sum of £40,000 belonging to the Immigration Vote which the other day we were on the brink of devoting to another purpose, but which I am very glad we escaped—and no doubt the Government are now glad—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, no.

MR. RICHARDSON: I think that money might be very usefully employed

for the purpose of this railway expenditure; it would certainly return us a great deal more revenue than if it had been appropriated for that other purpose. I think the hon. member for Albany, to-day, has not only confirmed the reputation he bears as being an expert in railway matters, but has even increased it, when he coolly suggested to this House, on the recommendation of an authority whom he did not know, that we should adopt 23lb. rails over a difficult country. The hon. member is evidently improving as a railway expert. It seems to me, with regard to this large expenditure contemplated by the Government, there is nothing left for us to do but to swallow this little pill with as little of a wry face as possible. As the Premier has explained, there is no help for it, and I think the sooner the work is undertaken the less injury will accrue to the colony. For this reason, I have much pleasure in supporting the proposition.

MR. A. FORREST: The question raised just now by the hon. member for the DeGrey is a very serious matter for those engaged in trade along the present line of railway, in the vicinity of the Darling Range, where the proposed deviations are going to be made. Speaking for myself and others who have large timber mills in these ranges, and who have acquired certain conveniences in the shape of sidings, it would be a most serious thing for us if the present line were to be abandoned altogether, and I hope that the Commissioner of Railways will state to the House that he has no intention of depriving those people who have expended a large amount of capital in saw mills and vineyards and other industries along the present line,—that he has no intention of depriving them of the conveniences they at present have, and of entirely cutting them off from railway communication. If we have that assurance, I think these proposals must command the support of every member of this House. We all know that with the present gradients it is impossible to work our railways satisfactorily or economically.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I may say, on behalf of my hon. friend the Commissioner, that the Government

do not intend to take up the rails at the deviation on the present line,—at any rate for the present, and I think I may say on behalf of the Government that before they do so, at any time, they will first consult this House in regard to the matter. Our present intention is not to interfere with the existing line, so that it may still serve those persons who use it and who may be said to have a certain amount of vested interest in it; and if hereafter we should find it desirable to close the line in the vicinity of this deviation, probably an Act of Parliament would be required for that purpose. At any rate, the House will have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the matter. While on my legs, I am very glad to inform the House that I have just received an intimation from the Under Treasurer to the effect that, from the vouchers he has received to date, the revenue of the colony for last year amounted to £543,422 12s. 1d., being £4,647 above the estimate, and there is a little more yet to be accounted for.

Motion put and passed.

Ordered—That the Resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council, and their concurrence desired therein.

INTRODUCTION OF MUNICIPAL ACTS CONSOLIDATION AND AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. QUINLAN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That the Government should, during the recess, undertake the drafting of a Bill to consolidate and amend the Municipal Act and the amendments thereto." He said he felt some diffidence in moving the resolution now, as he had noticed in a newspaper a day or two ago that the hon. member for South Fremantle had announced that the Government intended to take this matter in hand during the recess. If that was the case, it would be hardly necessary for him to move this motion. But he did so with the view of eliciting an expression of opinion from other members, who had had some experience in municipal matters, and with the object of having some of the many anomalies of the present cumbrous Act removed. He might state that a Bill having this object in view had been prepared, at the expense of the Municipality of Perth, at a cost of about £150, of

which £100 was paid for drafting alone, irrespective of the cost of advertising, and of the enormous number of meetings which the Council held from time to time to consider the Bill. That Bill was subsequently rejected by the House, because there were clauses in it which made it a measure that could only be introduced as a Government Bill. His object now was to get the Government to take the matter in hand, and to have an Act drafted that would be worthy of the colony. He thought the most important matter requiring attention was the present system of rating. He considered the present system most unjust—in fact that word was hardly strong enough for it. As members were aware the system was this: 10 per cent. on the rateable value of unimproved properties, and the rental value of improved properties. The result was this: a person could hold a block of ground worth £6,000, and he would be rated at £600, and, as the rates at present amounted to 2s. 8½d. in the pound, that would mean 600 times 2s. 8½d. But if this same person who owned this valuable grant chose to erect a house on it, that would bring him in a rental of only £10 a year, he would only be rated in respect of that rental value, which would be 10 times 2s. 8½d. instead of 600 times 2s. 8½d., less all outgoings. That was one of the anomalies of the present system. He knew of another instance, in which a person held 54 acres, and upon this large block there was a house built of the rental value of £50. One could easily imagine that the cost of making and maintaining footpaths or roads about that block of 54 acres would be very considerable; yet, because there was a house on it of the rental value of £50, all the City Council received in respect of that property was 50 times 1s. 8½d.—the difference between 1s. 8½d. and 2s. 8½d. being accounted for by reason of there being no water rate to pay in this instance. The House would see how unfair such a system of rating operated. The system he would favor was to rate the value of the land irrespective of improvements. By that means we should compel owners, instead of holding vacant blocks worth a considerable amount of money, and by merely placing a shanty upon them thus defrauding the municipal

revenue—we should compel these owners to pay a fair rate. If this system of capital valuation were adopted it would compel these owners to improve their properties or sell them, and in this way we should have the appearance of the city improved. It would certainly be a more equitable system of rating than the present one. It was the system in force in South Australia, and he believed it had worked admirably in that colony. He might point out another instance of the unjust way in which the present system operated here. At Fremantle there was a piece of ground on which there were two houses; one was let to the brother of the owner at £90 a year, and the other was let to a stranger at £230 a year. Both these places were on the same block, and were worth about the same; yet, because one was let as a favor at £90 a year, the Town Council was defrauded of the rates on the difference between that amount and £230. That showed how the present system was worked. It was amusing to think how property was rated, under this system. The proceedings were simply a farce. The committee appointed for the purpose would sit round a table, with the Town Clerk and the Collector, and they would go over the rate-book, and if they come to Mr. Jones, who was a good mark, they would say, "Let us put Jones down at £50." When they came to Mr. Brown, who perhaps was more prompt in his payments, they would say, "Oh, let us reduce Brown's rates," and so on, in that haphazard way, until they went through the rate-book. Another instance of the way in which the present system worked was to be seen in connection with a property owned by his Honor the Speaker, who had spent a considerable amount of money in improving it, in increasing the accommodation by adding another story to it, and so improving the general appearance of the street. For doing this he was handicapped, by having his rates increased. He thought it must be apparent, from what he had said, that there was a necessity for amending the present Act, and more especially so as regards the system of voting. It was also very desirable that the present Acts should be consolidated. There were at present no less than nine amendments of the

Municipalities Act of 1876, besides amendments of the Building Act, and of the Public Health Act. The Building Act certainly wanted amending as well as the Municipalities Act, and he trusted the subject would receive the attention of the Government. There was another difficulty in connection with the present law, with regard to owners and occupiers who were ineligible to be placed on the Electoral Roll, by reason of their not having occupied the same tenement for nine months. Several persons were rejected for this reason when the roll was revised the other day. Then as to the by-laws; he admitted that the present Act gave certain powers with regard to the framing of by-laws, but not all the powers that were required, especially with regard to the registration of owners. It was very necessary that the Act should be amended in this respect, so that the Municipality should not be deprived of its rates by reason of the difficulty of proving who the owners of property were. The revenue of the city had suffered to the tune of some thousands of pounds in this way. He hoped he had said enough to show the necessity there was for amending the present law, and he trusted that the Government during the recess would undertake the drafting of a Bill, that would better serve our requirements. He noticed there was a small sum set apart on the Estimates this year for a draftsman, and he hoped, whoever this gentleman might be, he would be able, with the assistance of the Attorney General, to draft a really good Act, worthy of the colony.

MR. SOLOMON said he had much pleasure in supporting the motion, and he would further suggest that, should the Government agree to undertake the drafting of an Amendment and Consolidation Bill, that copies of the draft Bill should be forwarded to the various Municipalities, before next session, so that they might have an opportunity of perusing it, and of properly digesting its various clauses. So far as Fremantle and Perth were concerned, possibly they might require a different Bill from the other Municipalities, to meet their requirements. He could fully bear out what had fallen from the hon. member for West Perth as to the difficulties and anomalies of the present Act. It was an

Act that had been prepared many years ago, when our population was considerably less than it is at the present time; and although the Act, when framed, and for some years afterwards, had done its duty, yet at the present time, with our altered circumstances, everyone concerned in municipal matters admitted that the Act required amending in many respects, so as to bring it more into harmony with our present requirements. He did not think it necessary at this stage to say any more, beyond giving his cordial support to the motion, and stating that any assistance he could give to the Government in the matter, with his twenty years' experience in municipal matters, he would be only too glad to give. He thought it was extremely desirable we should not only have an amending Act, but also a consolidating Act, instead of having to wade through half a dozen different enactments.

MR. MOLLOY said it must be well known to members that the Municipality of Perth had taken a great deal of trouble and a great deal of interest in this subject, and, at their own expense, had employed the best professional skill to prepare a Bill, which was fully discussed by the City Council, and also by the Press, and which met with the general approval of the general body of ratepayers. The difficulty which arose in introducing this Bill into Parliament was because the time was too short to do so last session, and, through some delay, sufficient notice was not given to admit of its being introduced this session, the Speaker having ruled that it was a private Bill. He believed the Attorney General perused that Bill, and approved of it, with certain recommendations which he made to the committee of the Council appointed to deal with the matter. He thought this Bill, which had been prepared under the guidance of the Attorney General himself, and met with the approval of the Municipality, would answer every purpose, without asking the Government to draft another Bill, which would necessitate the draft being again submitted for the consideration of the various Municipalities. It might be that another Bill, if drafted on different lines, might not be in accord with the wishes of the ratepayers, whereas the Bill already prepared had received their

imprimatur, and all that was required was that it should be introduced into Parliament by the Government. The Bill had been prepared with such care that abuses such as those pointed out by the hon. member for West Perth would not occur under it; and he thought he might say that if that Bill became law it would give general satisfaction. Therefore, he saw no necessity for having a fresh Bill drafted by the Government during the recess. All that was necessary was that the Bill already prepared should be introduced under the auspices of the Government.

MR. PEARSE said, as the representative of a large portion of the town of Fremantle, he was quite in accord with this motion of the hon. member for West Perth. He thought it was very desirable that a new Bill should be introduced, as speedily as possible, to do away with some of the evils and anomalies referred to, and to consolidate the present laws. He had much pleasure in supporting the motion for that reason.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that three hon. members who had spoken on the subject had taken up three different lines. The hon. member for West Perth, apparently, would like a new Bill altogether, and not only a consolidation Bill but also a Bill entirely altering the present principle of rating, and providing for a new system which the hon. member favored. Then the hon. member for Perth pointed out, accurately enough, that the Municipality of Perth had already prepared a Bill, which was in print and had been approved by the ratepayers, and the hon. member wanted that Bill introduced and no other. The last member who spoke, the hon. member for North Fremantle, spoke of the necessity of a consolidating Bill. All these three things were very different, and the question was—what did members really require? It would be very easy to consolidate the existing Acts, but that would not suit the hon. member for West Perth, who wanted the system of rating changed. He (the Attorney General) did not know that if the Government did provide a Bill altering the system of rating it would be done on the lines suggested by the hon. member and on the lines of the Bill prepared by the Perth City Council; and that might not suit the hon. member for

Perth. If the Government prepared a Bill it would be a Bill suitable to the requirements of the whole colony, and not to the requirements of Perth alone. If the hon. member wanted a distinct system of rating for Perth, which would not apply to other Municipalities throughout the colony, he should get a separate Bill dealing with Perth, which would be a private measure. It had been said that the Bill framed by the City Council had been approved by him. That was not quite accurate. The fact was he "settled" that Bill some two or three years ago, but he understood it had been very much altered since, which alterations he had never seen. Of course he only approved of the Bill so far as he had himself settled it. It was not his duty, when settling a Bill, to strike out one system of rating and substitute another; and it must not be thought that because he settled that Bill that he approved of the system of rating which it provided. With regard to the present motion, he could only say that if the motion was passed the Government would, during the recess, consider this question, and see whether it would be feasible. No doubt it would be feasible to bring in a Consolidation Bill, but whether a new system of rating—a system that would have to be applicable to the whole colony—should be introduced was a question that he would have to consider. He might say this with regard to the existing Act—and he hoped he might say it without giving offence—he did not think that the Municipality of Perth and the other Municipalities of the colony had ever actually tested the value of the Act which they had got. Some instances had been given by the hon. member for West Perth, and amongst them was the case of two houses lying together, one being let to the brother of the owner for £90 and the other let to a stranger for £230. Whose fault was that? Why should such a glaring anomaly as that exist? It was not the fault of the Act. The Act provided that the rates should be levied on the fair rateable value of the property, and not on what one brother chose to charge another brother in the way of rent. If the Municipality found the occupier of one house rated at £230 a year, surely they could not suppose that £90 a year was the fair rateable value of

the other house on the same lot. It was for the Municipality to decide what was the rateable value. It was absurd to think that the Municipal Council was bound by any fictitious value which one brother chose to place upon his property while in the occupation of another brother, or that they were bound to accept any rateable value which the tenant himself chose to put upon his house. As to the best system of rating, that was a question that required a great deal of consideration, and he did not think that was the time for arguing it. He did not know of any system of rating that was likely to give satisfaction all round.

MR. R. F. SHOLL hoped that if the Government were going to draft a new Bill during the recess they would forward copies of it to the different Municipalities of the colony, and also place it in the hands of members in good time.

MR. QUINLAN said, with regard to the Bill that had been framed by the City Council, it had been altered considerably since it had been approved by the Council and the ratepayers, and it could not be said that in its present form it had been generally approved. It had been altered in regard to the mode of electing the Mayor, for one thing, and there were other alterations. As to the best system of rating, he submitted that the system he had suggested was the most desirable one to adopt, and the most equitable one all round; and he believed that a majority of the City Council were of the same view as he was on that point. No doubt the Bill which had been prepared by the City Council would be useful in the framing of the new Bill which the Government were asked to prepare, but he did not suppose the Government would be inclined to adopt it altogether.

Motion—put and passed.

ESTIMATES, 1893.

The House went into Committee of Supply for the further consideration of the Estimates for the half-year ending 30th June, 1893.

Office of Colonial Secretary, £759 :

Put and passed.

Audit Department, £947 10s. :

Put and passed.

Medical, £7,962 10s.:

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item "Williams, Resident Medical Officer, £50," said he understood last year that the Government were going to do away with this vote.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was never intended to do away with the medical officer at the Williams, but the Resident Magistrate had been removed to Katanning. The Government had not yet been fortunate enough to get a medical officer to go to the Williams, but they hoped to get one some day, and this vote would be required for that purpose. The Government considered it was a duty they owed to all country districts to make this small allowance for a resident medical officer, so as to induce medical men to go and live in these country places.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he agreed with that, but he thought the time had arrived when we should cease to subsidise medical men in our larger towns, where they had a lucrative private practice.

Vote—put and passed.

Police, £28,942 15s.:

Put and passed.

Gaols, £7,672:

Put and passed.

Rottnest Native Prison, £1,567 10s.:

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he noticed this vote was still increasing, and he thought it was worthy of consideration whether they should be asked to contribute so much towards this native establishment when we had a Board receiving a vote of £5,000 a year out of the revenues of the colony for looking after the natives. He should like to see this native prison supported out of that vote. He did not see why the colony should be called upon to pay that £5,000 a year, and also provide the natives of Rottnest with a medical officer, a school-teacher, warders, a hospital, and so on. He thought a certain proportion of the expenditure at any rate should be contributed by the Aborigines Board, who did not seem to know what to do with their money.

MR. SOLOMON had much pleasure in endorsing the views of the hon. member for the Gascoyne. He thought a certain proportion of the expense of maintaining this native prison should be borne by the Aborigines Protection Board. He thought

it was a disgrace and a slur upon the colony that it should be compelled to support that Board at an annual expense of £5,000, and not even know what became of the money, while at the same time the country had to support this native establishment.

MR. DEHAMEL would like to see the whole of this vote charged to the Aborigines Protection Board.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They might not pay it.

MR. DEHAMEL thought the committee ought to strike out a portion of this vote, and let the responsibility rest with the Board of maintaining this establishment, which was simply and solely kept up for the natives.

MR. R. F. SHOLL would only be too happy to move to strike out the vote, but he was afraid the Board would not contribute. They had no control over the Board nor its money, otherwise he would not have hesitated to move to strike out this item, and let the Board look after these natives.

MR. MOLLOY objected to Rottnest being utilised for a native prison at all. He thought a place of such value as a residential retreat should be utilised for other purposes than confining a few native prisoners, and turned to some better value, and made the means of contributing a considerable revenue to the colony. There was plenty of room at the Fremantle prison for the few natives sent to Rottnest, and they might be kept there, without the expense of maintaining two establishments.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) was not sorry to find that members generally appeared to be in accord with him as to trying to show the inutility of the Aborigines Board; but, as to doing away with Rottnest, that was another matter. It was an institution which the present Government found in existence when they came into office, and they had not yet had an opportunity of considering what was best to be done with it. There were many things which the natives did over there besides what appeared on these Estimates; £400, he believed, was the estimated revenue from the island for six months, in addition to which they supplied wood and did other work in connection with the Harbor Department and the Lighthouse, all of

which would cost some money if the work were not done by the native prisoners. He himself should like to see some saving made in this vote if possible, and he would look into the matter as soon as he had time. As to the Aborigines Board, it was part and parcel of the Constitution Act, and it would require the assent of Her Majesty before we could get rid of it. It was no use reducing this Rottneest vote in the hope that the Board would make up the difference. Even if the Board were willing to take over this establishment, he did not think he should like to hand over Rottneest to the Board. He would rather get rid of the Board itself than hand over the island to them, and so perpetuate this native prison establishment. He thought the House might leave it to the Government to see what could be done in the matter.

Vote—put and passed.

Printing, £4,003:

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he noticed that this vote was increasing year after year, and he supposed it would continue to do so. At the same time he did think the Government Printing Office might be relieved of a great deal of unnecessary work now thrown upon it. He thought a great deal of the work might be done outside, though it might not be done so well.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Nor do I think it would be done cheaper.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it would at any rate relieve this department, which at present seemed overworked altogether. Even that House could not get the papers it wanted printed. There was the report of the Government Geologist, for instance, which they had been waiting for since the session opened, but which they had not got yet, simply because the office was overworked. While saying this, he did not wish to reflect in any way upon the head of this department, because he thought every one would agree he was a most excellent officer; and he was very pleased indeed to see the Government recognising his long service by giving him an increase of pay.

Vote—put and passed.

Inspection of Stock, £1,375:

MR. MONGER regretted that it was contrary to the forms of the House for a private member to move an increase in these Estimates, otherwise he should

certainly move that the salary of the Chief Inspector of Stock should be increased. He considered that this officer was not at all sufficiently well paid, considering the duties he had to perform; and he hoped that the Government, when framing their Estimates for the next half-year, would bear the claims of this officer in mind, and make a substantial increase in the amount of pay he was now receiving.

MR. RICHARDSON had very much pleasure in supporting the remarks of the hon. member for York. When they considered the very responsible, and he might say, disagreeable duties, that devolved upon this officer it would be recognised that a first-class man was required for the position. He thought most of them were agreed that the present Chief Inspector fulfilled his duties conscientiously at any rate. It was true he had not succeeded in getting rid of scab, but whether that was his fault or not was another question. Possibly he did not receive that support he was entitled to from the owners of sheep; but there could be no doubt that we had a good man in the billet, and it certainly seemed to him that the salary we were paying him was not sufficient for the post.

MR. A. FORREST said he quite agreed with what had been said about the salary of this officer. Of course they must not forget the fact that the sheepowners themselves were taxed for this vote, and, perhaps if the Government increased the vote by increasing the salaries of the inspectors, they would have to impose a higher tax than at present upon sheepowners. He did not suppose they would like that. But there was no doubt that the salary of the Chief Inspector was a very small one indeed for the work done.

Vote—put and passed.

Educational, £8,637 10s.:

MR. R. F. SHOLL said this vote was also increasing year after year. As he stated once before, he thought we should do one of two things: either do away with the Assisted Schools or the Government Schools, and not have one class of schools working in competition with the other, particularly in country districts, where the number of children was small. He did not care much himself

which class of school we dispensed with, though he thought it would be better to do away with the Government Schools, for this reason: the colony was put to the expense of putting up buildings for these schools, whereas the other class of schools provided their own buildings. It seemed to him absurd that the Government should go to the expense of building schools and then subsidising other schools to compete with their own schools, when there was not a sufficient number of children to support the two schools. This was the reason why there was not sufficient inducement for really good men to become teachers, under the payment by result system. It was not his intention to move to reduce the vote, but the time must soon arrive when this question must be considered.

MR. QUINLAN said he was pleased to hear from the hon. member for the Gascoyne that he would prefer to see the Government Schools done away with than the Assisted Schools. There could be no doubt that the Assisted Schools were a great saving to the colony, and, being available to all sections of the community, were entitled to the support they received from the State. The Government were spending some thousands of pounds unnecessarily in this way. As to reducing the vote for Education, he would prefer to see it increased; he believed the result would be beneficial to the community in many ways.

Vote—put and passed.

Registry, £380 10s.:

Put and passed.

Charitable Institutions, £4,633:

Put and passed.

Government Gardens, £321 10s.:

MR. DEHAMEL called attention to the increase under the head of "Incidental Expenses," which were put down at £125 for the half-year, as compared with £50 for the whole of last year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was proposed to lay water on this year, which accounted for the increase.

MR. A. FORREST thought that, so far from reducing this vote, it ought to be increased. In all other places they would find great attention paid to improving and beautifying the public gardens, and he thought the least the Government could do here was to put up a decent fence around this garden. The

present fence was a disgrace to the city. It had been there long before he went to school, and it was about time we had something better. He hoped the head of the department would take steps to have an ornamental fence put around this garden.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it had always been a marvel to him how these gardens had been kept up as they had for such a small sum of money. The grounds, of late years, had been a credit to whoever was responsible for their upkeep, looking at the small cost of the gardens.

Vote—put and passed.

Defences, £12,864 10s. 11d.:

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked the Premier what agreement had been entered into by the Government with the new Commandant?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought the term was five years, which was the ordinary term in the case of officers lent by the Imperial Government. This officer received a salary of £500 a year, and he believed he had received an allowance of £100 for his passage to the colony, and he thought he was to receive a return passage when his term expired.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether he was to receive forage allowance?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was no actual promise of any forage allowance in the agreement, and therefore that House had complete control over that question. When this officer arrived here he represented to the Government that he thought he ought to be allowed forage for a horse, pointing out that he had certain duties to perform which necessitated his having a horse, and that it was not quite the correct thing for the Commandant of the forces of the colony to have to hire a horse whenever he had to appear on parade. The Government felt that an officer in the position of Commandant ought to have a horse, and for that reason they now asked the House to vote the ordinary forage allowance of £50 for this officer. He believed the Agent General told this officer before he left England that he had no doubt he would get forage allowance; but there was nothing in the agreement about it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said no doubt it was necessary, on field days, that this officer should have a horse of some kind

to ride, but he thought it would be cheaper for the Government to hire a horse for him. He thought that when an agreement was entered into with any official, whether he be Commandant or any other person, that agreement should be adhered to.

MR. DEHAMEL was very glad to find that it was proposed to give this officer a forage allowance. His salary, after all, was not a large one; possibly he might be some day receiving very nearly as much pay in England. Coming here as Commandant, he would naturally expect to find quarters provided for him, and the least we could do was to give him a forage allowance.

MR. A. FORREST said that, personally, he did not think we required such an officer, and that this item should not appear on the Estimates at all. Our last Commandant only received £100 a year, and he had nothing to do for that; and he did not see what there was for this one to do, at £500 a year. We had no soldiers here. As for forage allowance, he thought the Government should certainly find the Commander-in-Chief with a decent horse, and not have this officer riding about on an old moke with its ribs through.

MR. DEHAMEL said it was understood when General Edwards was here, and also Major Hannay, that the Government were to organise a force of 150 men for defence purposes; but, so far as he was aware, the Government had done nothing in the matter. It was absolutely necessary there should be such a force at Albany, to protect the forts there, otherwise, if an enemy came, they would simply land and seize these forts in the rear, and use them against ourselves. There ought to be at Albany a force of at least 150 paid men, who would be prepared to repel any attempt at landing by boat. He was perfectly certain that the Government would never be able to raise a purely voluntary force at Albany. He considered that the present capitation grant was money thrown away. At Perth, Fremantle, and possibly Geraldton, they might be able to keep up a force without a capitation grant; but at Albany it was different. There was no town in the colony in such a depressed state, and the result was that the young men of the place had to go elsewhere to

seek work. As we were going to spend this large amount of money on our defences, he thought the Government should introduce some scheme for organising a partially paid force, and he should like to know whether there was any intention of doing anything in that direction.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said, as the Minister of Defence did not sit in that House, he might say that he believed the same idea that had struck the hon. member for Albany had also struck the Minister of Defence—the possibility of our forts being taken in the rear; and there was a Bill now in the hands of the Government Printer providing for the raising of a local force at Albany. Next session, probably, the Government would have to ask for a vote for the upkeep of this force.

MR. RICHARDSON said he noticed a tremendous increase in the item "Small Arms Ammunition." Last year the vote was only £300; but for the next half-year it was proposed to expend £2,870 under this head. Was this to be an annual increase?

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

MR. RICHARDSON said he also noticed it was proposed to increase the vote under the head of "Field Day Expenses and State Ceremonial." Why was this?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not exactly know why the vote was increased by £50. The Minister had asked for it. He could not explain why it was wanted, unless the colony was going to have a real good time of it next year. Although they asked for £125 for the half-year, it did not follow that they were going to spend that amount. There was £200 voted last year, and only £87 17s. 8d. of it was spent.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), referring to the "Fortifications at Albany, Final portion of contribution to, £3,000," said he found, on inquiry, that this was not to be our final contribution, and he therefore wished to strike out the word "Final." As a matter of fact we had paid no contribution yet, and he might have to move for an additional sum hereafter.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item "Incidental Expenses, including

travelling expenses of Commandant, £140," asked if it was proposed to allow this officer all this sum for travelling expenses?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said certainly not. There was a regular scale fixed for the travelling expenses of officials, and this officer would be paid according to that scale. The amount included "incidental expenses," as well as travelling expenses of the Commandant.

MR. HASSELL pointed out the necessity of some provision being made for making a road leading to the fortifications at Albany.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that application to that end had been made to the Government by the officer in charge of the construction of these forts, but his reply was, as this colony was contributing £5,000 towards the construction of the forts and one-fourth the cost of their upkeep, and as we would not require this road except for purposes of fortification, it struck him that the road should not be made at the expense of this colony alone, but come out of the general vote contributed by all the colonies for the construction of the forts. He had not had a reply to that letter yet.

Vote put and passed.

Central Board of Health, £100:

Put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 9th January, 1893.

Sandalwood: prohibition of cutting of—Public Health Act, 1886, Further Amendment Bill: report of select committee—Aboriginal Offenders Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Transfer of Land Bill: committee's report—Officers of Parliament Bill: second reading: committee—Fremantle Harbor Works and Tramway Bill: second reading: committee—Companies Bill, 1892: Legislative Assembly's amendment—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. G. Shenton) took the chair at 8 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SANDALWOOD—PROHIBITION OF CUTTING OF.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I do not wish to weary the House, or take up any great amount of time in proposing the resolution standing in my name. I wish, however, before proceeding with it to so amend it as to bring it more in accord with a similar resolution which is to be brought forward in another place.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. G. Shenton): I think the hon. member will have to give notice. The better plan to adopt will be to withdraw the present motion, and give notice of the amended one for to-morrow.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I thought I might amend it now by leave of the House.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. G. Shenton): If every hon. member is present that might be done.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: The difficulty can be got over by an amendment being moved.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: I will move an amendment.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: Then, understanding that an amendment will be moved, I now propose, "That in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that the cutting of sandalwood be prohibited within the colony for a period of four years." My reason for moving in this direction is simply to prevent, so far as this colony is concerned, the killing of the goose that lays the golden eggs. At the present time the sandalwood market in China and Singapore has become very depressed, and one of the reasons of it is