

herence to, and he felt bound to move, as an amendment upon the motion for the second reading, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. He thought hon. members would see that, short as the Bill was, it presented two very objectionable features, one of them being a policy which that House had of late resolutely set its face against, namely, the granting of pensions to public servants. He did not think we had arrived at that high state of civilisation that our Municipal Councils should be called upon and empowered to grant retiring allowances to their officers, out of the ratepayers' money. Another objectionable feature embodied in the Bill was that it was retrospective in its operation. The hon. member who introduced it was candid enough to state that it had been brought forward for the purpose of indemnifying the City Council in respect of an illegal act of unauthorised expenditure. That was not the kind of legislation which that House ought to encourage. There were other objectionable principles involved in the Bill, to which he need not now refer; but he protested against it mainly on the two grounds he had already mentioned.

Mr. BURT said hon. members would observe that the first part of the Bill was designed as a cloak to cover the latter part. He was glad to find that the hon. member in charge of the Bill had been straightforward enough to tell them that it was a Bill of indemnity,—nothing more nor less. Under the Municipal Institutions Act, of 1876, it was expressly provided that the expenditure incurred by Municipal Councils beyond that in respect of public works and improvements shall not exceed three per cent. of the ordinary income of the Municipality, and a very wise provision it was. The Municipality of Perth, however, had thought proper to exceed this limit, and the auditors had very properly refused to pass the item. He thought it would be an inconvenient principle for that House to adopt if they passed this Bill, and that it would be a very mischievous precedent to establish. If the City Council wanted to grant any of their servants a gratuity, they should have had the Act altered before doing so, and not come to that House to indemnify them in respect of a proceeding which

was clearly illegal. It was his intention to vote for the amendment.

Mr. STEERE said he also would support the amendment, for in doing so he would only be acting consistently with his principle with reference to granting gratuities and pensions to public servants, which he had always been opposed to. The present Bill actually went beyond anything provided for in the Superannuation Act; it not only proposed to empower Municipal Councils to give gratuities to their officers, but also to their relatives, and that, too, without any limit. If this Bill were to pass, there would be nothing to prevent these corporations from spending the whole of the rates in pensions and gratuities. The measure was a most objectionable one, rendered still more so by reason of its retrospective character.

Mr. SHENTON said the same principle as was proposed to be introduced by this Bill was already in operation in the Colony of Victoria, where the same power as was here contemplated was vested in the Municipal and Shire Councils.

Mr. STONE moved the adjournment of the debate until Thursday, 25th August, which was agreed to.

EXCESS BILL, 1879.

This Bill was passed through Committee *sub silentio*.

The House adjourned at a quarter past eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 23rd August, 1881.

Excess Bill, 1880: referred to a Select Committee—Pension to Mr. Sholl, G.R., for past services—Message (No. 17), re Ocean Steamers calling at Fremantle—Message (No. 18), re Legislative control over Loan Monies—Excess Bill, 1879: third reading—Estimates: Consideration of—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

EXCESS BILL, 1880.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford), in moving the second reading of a Bill to confirm the expenditure of the sum of £28,600 13s. 1d. for the services of the year 1880, beyond the grant for that year, assured the House that the task which had fallen to him was not a pleasant one to himself, and he knew it was equally distasteful to the hon. members of that House to enter into the consideration of Bills of this nature. At the same time, the task was one that he could not shirk, and it was lightened by the belief that he would be able to show to the satisfaction of the House that every item of over-expenditure embraced in the Bill had been unavoidable, and that there had been no wilful or lavish excess in respect of any item. Most of the charges, he might say, consisted of items of unforeseen expenditure, and the whole of them were easy of explanation. The first item which he had to ask the House to confirm was an overdraft of £204 12s., in connection with the Works and Railways Department, which had been occasioned by reason of the working expenses on the Northern Railway having been in excess of the Estimate. The next item was a sum of £1028 18s. 7d., in connection with the Medical Department, chiefly on account of the Lunatic Asylum at Fremantle. This overdraft had been caused by reason of the vote for this service having proved insufficient to cover the expenditure which it had been found necessary to incur, and which, he might say, was beyond the power of any Government to control, as the expenditure in connection with such institutions as these must necessarily depend upon the number of patients under treatment during the year. Included in this item was a sum of £231, which ought to have been paid in the previous year, and which should have been debited to the Imperial Government for the maintenance of Imperial lunatics. There was also an excess in the item of provisions, caused by an increase in the price of some of the articles which it had been found necessary to purchase. There was a small overdraft of £66 16s. 10d., in connection with the Harbor and Light Department, chiefly on account of incidental expenses, which were unavoidable.

In the vote for the Police Department there was an excess £1171 11s. 4d., occasioned by the item "Travelling Expenses of Police" having been overdrawn (£408 18s. 4d.); shoeing and saddlery, £391 2s. 3d.; and incidental expenses, £371 4s. 9d. In the latter amount was included a sum of £50, which had to be paid for a police boat at Cossack, owing to the boat belonging to the department having been run down by a schooner. There was a considerable over-expenditure under the item of "Goals," chiefly occasioned in consequence of large supplies of clothing demanded in 1879 not having been forwarded by the Crown Agents in time to be included in the expenditure for that year. The next overdraft was in connection with the Government Printing Department, owing to the importation of machinery for steam printing from England. Under the head of Roads and Bridges, there was an excess of £584 12s. 11d., which had been occasioned by reason of a large number of Roads Boards, in 1879, not having sent in their claims against the Government until 1880. There was also an overdraft of £291 11s. 1d. under the head of Pensions, owing to several pensions having been inadvertently omitted from the Estimates for the year, and to the fact that a small gratuity had been granted to a light-keeper, who had retired from the service in consequence of ill-health. The next item he came to was a very heavy one, namely, a sum of £22,581 19s. 7d., under the head of "Miscellaneous Services." The item, heavy as it appeared, was easily capable of explanation. The greater part of it consisted of a sum of £15,535 16s., being the amount paid over and above the £17,000 provided by "The Loan Act, 1878," for the completion of the Northern Railway, and particulars of which had already been furnished to the House. The transaction, in reality, belonged to the year 1879, and should have been included in the Excess Bill for that year, but, owing to an oversight, it was omitted. The remainder of the overdraft consisted of the expenses of the railway arbitration *re* Palmer (£4,776 9s. 1d.), and other smaller items, particulars of which appeared in the Auditor General's remarks on the expenditure statement, already in the

hands of hon. members. The last item provided for in the Bill was under the head of "Refunds," chiefly occasioned on account of land rents and drawback on imported goods. He had now briefly referred to the various items constituting the Bill, and he hoped the House was satisfied that the over-expenditure in each case had been unforeseen or unavoidable. Possibly it would be the wish of hon. members that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee; if so, there would be no opposition on the part of the Government to that course being adopted, for he felt assured that the more the items were inquired into the more satisfied would the House be that no blame attached to the Government in the matter. In the meantime, he begged to formally move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. STEERE said they had often had very large Excess Bills, but he did not think they ever had such a heavy one as this. At the same time, he was aware that a great deal of it in reality belonged to the previous year, and that a very small proportion was chargeable to the year 1880. But why the items of over-expenditure incurred in 1879 were not included in the Excess Bill for that year was more than he could understand. He proposed to follow the same course on this occasion as had been adopted in past years with reference to these Excess Bills, namely, to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, before agreeing to the motion for its second reading. He would therefore, without further remark, move, That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, consisting of Lord Gifford, Mr. Brown, Mr. Venn, Mr. Randell, Mr. Shenton, Mr. S. H. Parker, and the Mover.

MR. SHENTON pointed out that several of the members named were already engaged on other Select Committees, and required that the Committee be elected by ballot, which was done, the result of the voting being the appointment of the following members to serve on it: Lord Gifford, Mr. Grant, Mr. Higham, Mr. S. H. Parker, Mr. Randell, Mr. Shenton, and Mr. Venn.

PENSION FOR PAST SERVICES TO
MR. SHOLL, G.R.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.—IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord

Gifford) said that when the debate on the motion to increase Mr. Sholl's pension was adjourned, he promised the House that he would, after consultation with His Excellency the Governor, bring forward some definite proposal for giving Mr. Sholl a more substantial recognition of his valuable services than the strict letter of the law provided in computing the ordinary retiring allowances of public servants. A suggestion was made the other evening that Mr. Sholl's pension should be capitalised, but the Government found that this proposal would involve the investment of so large a sum that it would only leave a very small margin on the year's Estimates. But the Government, anxious to do all within their power to meet the wishes of the House in this matter, and fully recognising Mr. Sholl's exceptional claims, had, on a full consideration of the circumstances of the case, resolved to increase Mr. Sholl's pension from £110 13s. 4d., the amount originally fixed (in accordance with the provisions of the Superannuation Act), to £179 16s. 8d. The basis upon which this additional sum of £69 3s. 4d. had been arrived at was this: the Government had added ten years to the number of years which Mr. Sholl had actually served, and computed his pension accordingly. This had been done under the 8th section of the Superannuation Act, which empowered the Governor in Executive Council to grant an extra allowance in respect of special services rendered by any public officer. The grounds upon which the increase in Mr. Sholl's case had been approved had, as required by the Act, been stated in a minute of the Governor-in-Council, and he now begged to lay that minute before the House for its confirmation. (The minute set forth the great hardships which Mr. Sholl had undergone at Camden Harbour, the gratuitous services he had rendered to the settlers at Roebourne as their doctor, and the fact that on more than one occasion he had sustained heavy losses by hurricane during his tenure of office at the North-West.) He would now move, in accordance with His Excellency's minute, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency, praying that he will be pleased to increase Mr. Sholl's pension from £110 13s. 4d. to £179 16s. 8d., on

"account of the exceptional services of that officer."

MR. S. H. PARKER, with leave, withdrew the amendment he had proposed on 17th August (suggesting that Mr. Sholl's pension should be increased from £110 13s. 4d. to £150), and said he was not aware that the House had ever yet been informed whether that gentleman had resigned, retired from the service, or been dismissed. The Council was simply asked to vote a pension for him; but he thought they ought to be informed of the circumstances which had led to the necessity of any pension at all being asked for. Hon. members were led to understand that Mr. Sholl was still in full possession of his faculties, and that he was perfectly competent to discharge the duties of his office. His past services were admitted both by the Government and the public (a most unusual circumstance) to have been exceptionally valuable,—so much so, in fact, as to entitle him to special reward; and he (Mr. Parker) certainly thought, under these circumstances, that the House had a right to be informed why the Government had thought proper to retire such an officer from a position which he was so thoroughly competent to fill. From inquiries which he had been able to make, he gathered that Mr. Sholl had never resigned his appointment, but that another gentleman was appointed to occupy his post without in any way consulting his wishes in the matter—that, in fact, he was virtually told he must either come to Perth and accept the Police Magistracy here, or retire from the service altogether. If such was the case, he could not help thinking that was not the proper way to treat any public officer, much less so deserving an officer as Mr. Sholl was pronounced to be on all sides; and he thought it was the bounden duty of the House, before it voted any pension at all, to ascertain, from some member of the Government, what were the circumstances which led to this officer's compulsory retirement.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow): It will be in the recollection of the House that on the occasion of the removal of the Police Magistrate from Perth to Albany, a variety of magisterial changes were necessarily made, and the Government considered—

and I think quite rightly—that it would be a very good promotion for Mr. Sholl to be appointed to the post of Chief Magistrate at Perth. It did not enter into his Excellency's mind for one moment to doubt but that Mr. Sholl would be delighted to accept the promotion offered to him, and the Government, feeling satisfied that the offer *would* be accepted, made the requisite arrangements with other gentlemen to fill the vacancies that were necessarily caused by the transfer to Albany of the Perth Police Magistrate. These vacancies were not only offered, but were at once accepted, and arrangements were made with several gentlemen which could not possibly now be set aside. But Mr. Sholl, most unexpectedly, declined the promotion offered to him, and the fact of his so declining rendered it impossible for the Governor to do otherwise than to say to Mr. Sholl: "We have nothing else for you—every other post is filled up—we are extremely sorry it does not suit your convenience to come to Perth, but nothing remains for you but to accept the promotion offered to you, or to retire." That, briefly, is an account of the transaction between the Government and Mr. Sholl. I may add that His Excellency the Governor regrets as much as any hon. member of this House that Mr. Sholl has been so situated. His services, I believe, have not been one whit exaggerated, and we have done all we could possibly do for him. It was impossible for the Governor—as it would have been impossible for any member of this House—to have thought that Mr. Sholl would have preferred to live in the tropics of Roebourne, instead of accepting the office of Police Magistrate at Perth. I understand that he even wrote to the effect that he would rather take a pension than do anything else.

MR. S. H. PARKER: Do I understand the hon. gentleman to say that Mr. Sholl wrote to that effect?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow): Yes,—that sooner than come to Perth he would retire on a pension.

MR. S. H. PARKER thought that, when the Government, without consulting Mr. Sholl in any way, appointed another gentleman to fill his post, they acted most unwisely. The hon. the

Attorney General spoke of the offer made to Mr. Sholl as a promotion, but, in reality, it would have been no promotion at all. Not only was the post of Government Resident a higher position than that of Police Magistrate, but the salary and emoluments attached to the office held by Mr. Sholl were higher, if anything, than he would have received at Perth. Under these circumstances, it could not be said that Mr. Sholl was offered any promotion. In any case, if he had been offered a promotion, the Government might certainly have consulted him before they filled up his office and put him in the position in which he is now placed. The hon. gentleman said there was nothing else for the Government to do, except what they did do. But it appeared to him that, having filled up Mr. Sholl's post without in any way consulting him before doing so, they might have acted on the same principle with regard to the officer whom they appointed to succeed him. They might have ousted Mr. Laurence without consulting him, in the same way as they ousted Mr. Sholl, and put the latter back in his former position. He thought, with all due deference to Mr. Laurence, that Mr. Sholl, one of the oldest, most capable, and most deserving officers in the service, was entitled to more consideration in this respect than his successor was. He might also point out that, at the time when the Government learnt that Mr. Sholl would not accept the vacancy at Perth, that vacancy was still open, and they might have replaced Mr. Sholl and brought Mr. Laurence here. For aught he knew, that course was still open to them.

MR. BROWN said that, as the Government had stated that the arrangements which had been made precluded them altogether from doing otherwise than what they had done, he felt bound to vote in favour of the granting of a liberal pension to Mr. Sholl—much more liberal than was here proposed. He exceedingly regretted, however, that the House was placed in the position in which it now found itself; for, according to their own showing, if the Government had exercised a little more caution, the House would not have been called upon to provide this pension, in addition to the salary attached to the office, now

filled by another gentleman. Mr. Sholl was, admittedly, perfectly competent to continue to discharge his duties at Roebourne, and, had he been allowed to do so, the country would have been saved this pension. But he did not think the amount proposed to be given to Mr. Sholl was at all sufficient to meet the case, which was an exceptional one in every respect. They had a duty to perform towards Mr. Sholl, and he did not think they would be doing justice to him by voting him such a small pension as this. He did not consider that anything less than £250 ought to be offered to him. At the same time, should it be in the power of the Government to give Mr. Sholl any other office which he would be inclined to accept, he trusted that the Government would do so, and thus save the Colony the pension which, otherwise, he (Mr. Brown) would desire to vote for him.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) hoped the Committee would recollect that, with the very best intentions on their part, it was impossible for the Government to go outside the limits of the Superannuation Act. The provisions of that Act absolutely precluded them from giving Mr. Sholl any more than they proposed to do now. The original amount of the pension proposed to be given him had been calculated upon the strict letter of the Act, but they had now, acting upon the recommendation of the House, added to that amount all that the law enabled them to do, the computation of the pension being now based upon ten years further service than Mr. Sholl had actually given. The Act enabled the Governor to do this, in consideration of the special services performed by this most excellent officer. More than that the Governor could not do. As for offering him any lump sum, commensurate with the value of his services, it was universally admitted that the financial condition of the Colony would not allow of their doing so; and, as they could not possibly meet the difficulty in that way, it only remained for them to do what they had done—give him the largest possible pension which, by putting the most liberal construction they could upon the Act, they were entitled to give him. That they had done.

MR. BROWN thought the 8th section of the Superannuation Act gave the House and the Government full power to carry out all they wished in this matter—provided the Governor was prepared to fall in with their views. The section referred to rendered it lawful for the Governor in Executive Council to grant, to any person, any superannuation, compensation, gratuity, or other allowance, of greater amount than the amount which might be ordinarily awarded to him under the Act,—when any special services rendered by such person, requiring special reward, shall appear to His Excellency to justify such increase, and provided that allowance shall in no case exceed the salary and emoluments enjoyed by the grantee at the time of his retirement. He reckoned that Mr. Sholl's salary and emoluments when he retired were certainly not less than £500 a year, so that—without at all wishing to dispute the Attorney General's law—it appeared to him there was nothing to prevent the Government from granting Mr. Sholl a pension of £250, or even £500, so long as the amount did not exceed the salary and emoluments enjoyed by that officer at the date of his retirement.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said the Government in this case had acted in accordance with what they regarded as a wise precedent, and computed the increase upon the basis provided in the 6th clause of the Act, namely, the addition of ten years to the period actually served by the grantee. Unless the Government adopted some such basis as a precedent, there was no knowing what claims might hereafter be made upon them. As to removing Mr. Sholl, without consulting him in the matter, hon. members seemed to lose sight of the fact that the Government in all cases reserved to themselves the right to make any changes which the exigencies of the Public Service might to them appear desirable in the public interests. This fact had been overlooked by hon. members. The Government had been guilty of no sharp practice in this case. The House should bear in mind the distance which intervened between head quarters and Roebourne, and the difficulty in the way of communicating with Mr. Sholl. And not only that—

they should also recollect that Mr. Sholl himself at once said he would rather retire on a pension.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow): I may point out in two words that the section referred to by the hon. member for Geraldton in no way refers to a pension at all, but to a gratuity—a lump sum paid down once and for all; and that such lump sum shall in no case exceed the salary and emoluments enjoyed by the individual officer in question at the time of his retirement. I say again, it is not competent for the Governor to give Mr. Sholl one penny more in the way of pension than he has done. The Committee may vote him £250 or £500 this Session, but next year he would be in exactly the same position, and the House would have to make annual provision to meet the case. That, I say without fear of contradiction, would be an unfortunate precedent; nor is it the proper way to deal with a public officer's claims. I defy hon. members to prove that a better course could have been taken than that adopted by the Government, in giving Mr. Sholl the largest possible pension which the law would allow us to give him. Had the state of our finances permitted it, we should have been delighted to have paid down a lump sum at once, and let him make the best use of it he could; but, unfortunately, our exchequer is not in that flourishing condition, and we have done all we could in the matter—unless we break the law, and I am sure hon. members would not wish us to do that.

MR. BURT: I think every member of this Committee must regret that we should be wasting time in haggling over a question of this sort, and that the Government, from want of foresight on their part, have landed us in this difficulty. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, no.] I say, yes, yes. It cannot be denied that, through their bungling and want of foresight, the Government have landed us in this position—that we have to provide out of the public funds towards paying a pension to a public officer, who, but for this want of foresight on the part of the Government, would still be an ornament to the public service of the Colony. What right had the Government to jump at the conclusion that Mr. Sholl would have accepted this so-

called promotion? In the first place, it is no promotion at all, and I do not think the Government themselves could have regarded it in that light. It cannot be denied for a moment that it is lowering a man to remove him from the position of a Government Resident to that of a Police Magistrate; and, in the case of Mr. Sholl, it is notorious that his salary and emoluments at Roebourne were more than he would have received at Perth. Apart from this, what right had the Government to assume that he would have been "delighted" to have come to Perth, and to make their arrangements upon such an assumption? I should like to know if the other magistrates concerned were not consulted before they were removed? No doubt they were. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was because there was time, in their case, to do so.] Well, I say, it discloses a want of foresight on the part of the Government that Mr. Sholl was not consulted; and, I say again that, in assuming what they did, they have landed us in this difficulty—they have thrown upon our hands a public servant, spoken of in the highest terms both by the Government and the public, with nothing to do. Why should not his services be continued to the country, and the country saved this sum, which, through the bungling of the Government, the House is asked to provide? I am afraid there is a great deal behind the curtain in this case, and I should very much like to see it come out. I should like to know why this officer was compelled to retire from the position which he occupied, and the Colony be called upon, at present, to provide him with a pension at all. The Attorney General said the Government would have been delighted to have granted Mr. Sholl a large lump sum, if the state of our finances had permitted their doing so; for my own part, I regret that we should have to vote a sixpence, and, if all hon. members were of my opinion, they would not do so, but let this splendid officer, who has discharged his duties so admirably, be reinstated, and let the Colony be saved from having to provide a pension for him out of our already impoverished exchequer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said the hon. member had

hinted that there was something behind the curtain in this case. He assured the hon. member that, so far as the Government were concerned, there was nothing to conceal. If the hon. member had been as much behind the scenes as he (the noble lord) was, he would have known that the Government regarded the offer made to Mr. Sholl in the light of a promotion, and believed that that gentleman would only have been too glad to exchange the trying climate of our northern territory for the more agreeable temperature of this part of the Colony, and that he would only have been too pleased to exchange the discomforts of a residence in that remote settlement for the comforts and enjoyments of a city life. He would again remind the House that the Government assumed for itself the right of removing any public servant, if his removal is considered desirable in the interests of the service. When an officer has been stationed at one place for a long time, it may sometimes be considered advisable to remove him—he did not say that this was the case here, but he did say that the Government had acted in the best possible way they could in this matter.

MR. BURT asked the Colonial Secretary whether it was not a fact that the present Resident Magistrate at the Vasse was offered the Residency at Roebourne, and was given the option of accepting or declining the offer, and that, as a matter of fact, he did decline it? If that was so—and there was a very prevalent impression that such was the case—why should not the same option have been offered to Mr. Sholl?

There being no response to the question,

MR. BURT said he would formally call the attention of the Government to the matter on another occasion. Before the resolution was put to the House, he would suggest that they should adopt an address to the Governor asking him to reinstate Mr. Sholl in his former position, and save the country this amount. Should His Excellency say that the exigencies of the service precluded him from doing so, it would be then time enough to vote the pension now asked for.

MR. GRANT supported this proposal, and said he knew Mr. Sholl would be quite willing to resume his duties.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said it seemed to him that hon. members still wished it to go forth that there was something more behind the scenes in this case than had been brought to light. He denied that such was the case. He had told them everything that was to be told, and he thought it was a great pity that the impression should go forth that there was anything behind the curtain, which the Government had not disclosed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow): I do trust the House will not consume any more time in discussing this matter. We have honestly, frankly, and in the most unrestrained manner possible, extolled this gentleman's services to the very utmost, and dealt with his claims in no niggard spirit. Mr. Sholl is a gentleman whom I have not the pleasure of knowing personally, but I am prepared to believe all the good things I hear about him, and I do ask hon. members to consider whether they think it advisable, in the interests of Mr. Sholl himself, to further prolong this discussion. Will it not go abroad that there is really something in the minds of hon. members—that there is some reason why Mr. Sholl should be treated in this way? Is it not sufficient for the House and the country that the Government should say that they are aware of nothing, that they frankly acknowledge the excellent services rendered by Mr. Sholl, that they regret losing those services, but that the exigencies of the public service demand that the changes which have been made should be made? I put it to the House again, in the interests of Mr. Sholl himself, whether it is wise to continue this discussion, or whether it is desirable that this Committee should, of its own free will and accord, and without a dissentient voice, give this most excellent public servant what the Government ask it to give him.

The resolution was then agreed to.

MESSAGE (No. 17): *RE OCEAN STEAMERS CALLING AT FREMANTLE.*

MR. SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:

"The Governor informs Your Honorable Council that it is not impossible that the Netherlands India Steam

"Navigation Company, or some other line of Ocean Steamers, might be induced to allow their boats to call at Fremantle, if supported by the Government of Western Australia. The Governor is not in a position to place any definite proposals before Your Honorable House, but as it would be highly desirable to induce any company running their steamers between Singapore and the Eastern Colonies to touch at Fremantle, the Governor suggests that Your Honorable Council should authorise him to offer any such Company a reasonable subsidy, not exceeding £2,000, as also the remission of Port charges; and on learning that you acquiesce in this proposal, the Governor will lose no time in entering into communication with certain Companies in the matter.

"Government House, Perth, 23rd August, 1881."

On the motion of the Colonial Secretary, it was resolved to take the Message into consideration on Wednesday, August 24th.

MESSAGE (No. 18): *LEGISLATIVE CONTROL OVER EXPENDITURE OF LOANS.*

MR. SPEAKER also announced the receipt of the following Message from His Excellency the Governor:

"The Governor has had under his further consideration your Address No. 2, of the 28th July, to which a provisional reply was forwarded by the Governor on the 8th August.

"Your Honorable House asks that a separate measure may be introduced to give the Legislature control over the expenditure of Loan Moneys 'in accordance with the practice prevailing in the other Australian Colonies.'

"The Governor has ascertained that the practice in the other Australian Colonies is as under:

1. In Victoria 'The Legislature defines the purposes to which moneys shall be applied, and limits by Act the amount to be expended on lines of railway. The details of expenditure are left to the department.'
2. In New South Wales 'The Legislature has no control over the expenditure of loan moneys

“for the construction of Rail-
 “ways. The Government is re-
 “sponsible for the proper expen-
 “diture of such moneys in terms
 “of Loan Act under which loan
 “is raised.”

“3. In Queensland ‘The Govern-
 “ment has control of the ex-
 “penditure of the money raised,
 “which should be expended on
 “the works for which voted.’

“4. In South Australia ‘The only
 “control the Legislature has over
 “loan moneys is by Loan Esti-
 “mates, which are laid on the
 “Table and passed every year.’

“It will thus be seen that if the
 “Governor were to be guided, as you
 “suggest, by ‘the practice of the other
 “Australian Colonies,’ he would leave
 “matters as they are at present; but he
 “is quite prepared to adopt the South
 “Australian plan, so far as it may be
 “practicable to do so; and on the return
 “of the Commissioner of Railways from
 “Albany he will cause an estimate to be
 “prepared showing in as much detail as
 “possible the manner in which the new
 “loan for the extension of the Eastern
 “Railway is proposed to be expended by
 “the Government.

“Government House, Perth, 23rd
 “August, 1881.”

The Message was ordered to be taken
 into consideration on Friday.

EXCESS BILL, 1879.

Read a third time and passed.

ESTIMATES.

The House then went into Committee
 for the consideration of the Estimates.

Governor's Establishment, Item £373
 16s. 8d.:

Agreed to without discussion.

Legislative Council, Item £700:

Agreed to *sub silentio*.

Colonial Secretary's Department, Item
 £1,028:

Put and passed without discussion.

Treasury Department, Item £1,115:

Agreed to without comment.

Audit Department, Item £1,125:

Agreed to.

Survey Department, Item £8,349 7s.
 6d.—postponed.

Customs Department, Item £2,607:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord
 Gifford) moved, That the item “Assist-
 ant Tidewater, Champion Bay, £75,” be
 increased by £10. The officer in question
 was a very good public servant, and the
 Government found it was necessary to
 increase his pay in order to retain his
 services.

Motion agreed to, and the vote for the
 Customs Department put and passed.

Works and Railways Department, Item
 £11,530:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord
 Gifford) said the draftsman employed in
 this department was entitled to his
 annual increase of £10, and he would
 therefore move that the amount of his
 salary be augmented from £120 to £130.

Agreed to.

MR. S. H. PARKER asked whether it
 was true that the Station Master at Perth
 and at Fremantle received £50 house
 allowance, in addition to their salary,
 and if so why was it not shown on the
 Estimates, and from what vote were they
 paid this allowance?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord
 Gifford) said it was quite true that these
 officers received £50 house allowance,
 there being no accommodation for them
 at the station. They had accepted office
 on the distinct understanding that quar-
 ters should be provided for them, or
 that they should be allowed lodging
 allowance. The vote came out of the
 item “working expenses.”

MR. S. H. PARKER said he had no
 objection whatever to the allowance being
 granted, but he thought it would be
 much better that it should appear oppo-
 site their names, so that the House
 might see plainly what the officers in
 question received.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord
 Gifford) consequently moved, That the
 item “Two lodging allowances, Station
 Masters, Perth and Fremantle, £100”
 be added to the Estimates.

Agreed to.

MR. SHENTON referred to the item
 “Goods Clerk, £250,” and said it ap-
 peared somewhat strange that it should
 be proposed to give this officer £250 a
 year, when the Station Master only re-
 ceived £200.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord
 Gifford) said the officer to be appointed as
 Goods Clerk would have to be a very

energetic and active man, and thoroughly up to his work, and the Government did not think they would be able to get a suitable person to discharge the duties of the office in an efficient and satisfactory manner for less than £250. Of course if they could, they would do so.

MR. SHENTON said hon. members had been informed unofficially that the Traffic Manager at Fremantle had plenty of time to undertake the duties of the three offices which he now held,—though it should be borne in mind that they were about to extend the railway to York, when it would be impossible for one man to do the work connected with the three offices now held by Mr. Campbell. But, at the Metropolitan Station, they found the Station Master had nothing to do beyond carrying out his duties as Station Master; could not some arrangement be made under which that officer, at a slight increase of salary, should also act as Goods Manager, and, in addition to his present duties, be told off to look after the goods traffic, which much needed developing? This arrangement, if carried out, would effect a saving of at least £150 a year.

MR. CROWTHER regarded the office of Goods Manager as the most important office connected with the working of the line, and one which would afford quite enough work for one man to do, without discharging the duties of any other office. He thought he ought to be stationed at Fremantle rather than Perth, as there was more for him to do at the terminus of the line than there would be in the city. The salary might appear large, but if they took into consideration the nature of the duties he would have to perform, and the responsibility attached to the office; when it was also borne in mind that upon his energy and activity and business habits the extent of traffic on the line would to a great extent depend, he did not think that the pay proposed to be given to such an officer was by any means excessive. A combination of offices, in this instance, he was sure would not answer, and indeed would be impracticable, if the work was going to be done as it ought to be done.

MR. STEERE thought the suggestion thrown out by the hon. member for Toodyay might answer very well as a

temporary expedient. They could not get a more suitable person for a Goods Manager than the present Station Master at Perth, who, he believed, would be quite prepared to undertake the dual duties, if he obtained the assistance of a clerk. At any rate, he thought the experiment might be tried, pending the extension of the line.

MR. MARMION, while agreeing as to the fitness and capability of the Perth Station Master to fulfil the duties of Goods Manager, must say that he could not see how it was possible for him to discharge the duties of the two offices combined. It was necessary that the Goods Manager should not confine himself to Perth, for his duties would necessitate his presence up and down the line, and, that being the case, how would it be possible for him to perform the duties of Station Master at Perth? If it were to be said that he could, that would be tantamount to saying that a Station Master was not required, and that the office was a sinecure. For his own part, he failed to see the necessity of appointing a Goods Manager at present, when there was no goods traffic on the line.

MR. BROWN said they had the authority of the Commissioner of Railways for believing that a Station Master could also undertake the duties of Traffic Manager, and he had great faith in the Commissioner himself; if so, why should a Station Master likewise not be able to discharge the duties of Goods Manager?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said the Government had contemplated amalgamating the two offices, but it was found that the proposal was unworkable, for the reason that it was considered desirable that the Goods Manager should have his head quarters at Fremantle. He admitted that the salary appeared somewhat large to start with, but the position was a very responsible one, and the Government felt that it would be necessary to provide good pay in order to secure a thoroughly competent and trustworthy man.

MR. RANDELL thought it would be much better to leave the matter in the hands of the Commissioner himself, rather than for the House to interfere with the staff of the department.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) moved, That Progress be reported, and leave given to sit again next day.

This was agreed to.

The House adjourned at a quarter to ten o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 24th August, 1881.

As to removal of Geraldton Branch Survey Office—Money spent on the Albany Road—Work performed at Geraldton Branch Survey Office—Cost of Eastern Mail Service—Sandalwood Bill, 1881: in committee—Brands Bill, 1881: further considered in committee—Estimates: further consideration of—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

AS TO REMOVAL OF GERALDTON BRANCH SURVEY OFFICE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, asked the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, in the absence of the Honorable the Commissioner of Crown Lands, "If it is the intention of the Government to remove from Geraldton the Branch Office of the Survey Department at present provided at that place; and if so, upon what grounds?"

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) replied, "It is not the intention of the Government at present to remove the Office from Geraldton."

MONEY SPENT ON THE ALBANY ROAD.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That a return be laid on the Table of this House, showing the amount of money expended upon the Albany Road during the years 1878, 1879, and 1880, and during the first six months of the present year." The hon. member said there was an impression abroad that a very large amount of money had been spent on this road—

he did not mean to say that such expenditure had not been necessary, but he thought it was desirable that the House should know precisely what the road in question had cost the Colony. They all recognised the necessity of the mails which are carried overland to Albany being conveyed expeditiously, and that for that reason the road ought to be kept in good repair; but it was a question whether the Colony would be able to continue the immense amount of expenditure that must necessarily be entailed if this overland service was going to be continued as at present. Consequently, as a preparatory step, and possibly with a view of further action being taken hereafter, he had moved for this return.

Motion agreed to.

WORK PERFORMED AT THE GERALDTON BRANCH SURVEY OFFICE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That a statement be laid upon the Table of this House, showing the nature and amount of work performed in the Land Office at Geraldton since its establishment there, and the amount of fees received at the office during the same period." He had been induced to move for this return in consequence of the report of the Departmental Commission, who had recommended that the officer now in charge of the office should be removed, and that the duties should be performed by the Resident Magistrate's Clerk. They had just been informed by the Colonial Secretary that it was not the intention of the Government to remove the office from Geraldton, at present, and he was very glad to hear it, for he thought it was in the interest of the Colony that the officer in charge should remain there, as it appeared to him impossible that the clerk to the Magistrates could perform the duties of that officer. He thought the return which he now moved for would convince the House that this impression was a correct one.

Motion agreed to.

COST OF EASTERN MAIL SERVICE.

MR. BURGESS, in accordance with notice, moved, "That a return be laid on the Table of this House showing separ-