

no demand for the land. It is no use to settle people on the land who do not want to settle. Next: that in spending so much money, it is our duty to watch every item and see that nothing is spent except on reproductive and necessary works. I shall support the amendment.

THE HON. E. HENTY: I have felt constrained, after listening to the arguments, to vote against this item. I have carefully abstained from taking any side until I heard the arguments, and after listening carefully to those who know what they are talking about, I feel that the weight of evidence is against this item. I should like to point out that the sum allotted cannot be sufficient to carry the line to its proper destination. If a sum sufficient to carry it right through to Bridgetown were proposed, I should, perhaps, feel myself bound to support it. We are all alive to the great responsibility which devolves upon this House in a matter of this moment, but I think we are all equal to taking the responsibility.

The committee divided on the amendment.

Ayes 12

Noes 6

Majority for ... 6

AYES—12.

The Hon. R. G. Burges
The Hon. E. W. Davies
The Hon. C. E. Dempster
The Hon. R. W. Hardey
The Hon. S. J. Haynes
The Hon. Ernest Henty
The Hon. H. McKernan
The Hon. J. E. Richardson
The Hon. E. Robinson
The Hon. F. M. Stone
The Hon. E. H. Wittenoom
The Hon. F. T. Crowder
(Teller).

NOES—6.

The Hon. D. K. Congdon
The Hon. J. W. Hackett
The Hon. E. McLarty
The Hon. S. H. Parker
The Hon. C. A. Piesse
The Hon. J. C. G. Foulkes
(Teller).

Amendment agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) moved that progress be reported.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 10:30 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 9th October, at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th October, 1894.

Mr. Maher's proposal to supply Coolgardie with water—Anomalies in Railway Fares—Explosive Substances Bill: first reading—Dentists Bill: third reading—Petition of J. G. Drake-Brockman: consideration of—Brands Bill: laid aside on the order for going into committee—Estimates, 1894-5: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

MR. MAHER'S PROPOSAL TO SUPPLY COOLGARDIE WITH WATER.

MR. THROSSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works, — 1. Whether the Government had received certain proposals from Mr. Maher relative to the supplying Coolgardie with water from the Avon or Swan Rivers? 2. Had the Government made any inquiries from its professional staff as to the feasibility of such scheme? 3. If so, would the Government make public such professional opinion? 4. Had the Government any intention of entering into any arrangement with Mr. Maher on the matter?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—1. Yes. 2 and 3. No. 4. A private Bill will be necessary; and, if it is introduced and the terms are approved, the Government would assist its passage.

ANOMALIES IN RAILWAY FARES.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House anomalies in the Government railway fares, such as the following, should be at once rectified:—If a person takes a return ticket from Fremantle to Guildford direct he has to pay (first class) 4s. 5d. If he takes a return ticket from Fremantle to Perth it is 2s. 6d. If he takes a return ticket from Perth to Guildford he pays 1s. 9d., or a total of 4s. 3d., 2d. less than if he takes a return ticket direct from Fremantle to Guildford, the same scale applying to more distant places in same table."

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) explained that the apparent discrepancy in the

fares arose from the fact that a reduced scale of fares had been introduced on that section of the line between Fremantle and Perth. These anomalies must always occur upon lines consisting of short sections.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCES BILL.

Introduced by Mr. BURT, and read a first time.

DENTISTS BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

PETITION OF J. G. DRAKE-BROCKMAN.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration of the petition of J. G. Drake-Brockman, praying for redress in connection with his removal from the position of station master at Newcastle,—

MR. CLARKSON said: When I moved that this petition be printed and taken into consideration by the House, I did so as much in the interests of the officers of the Railway Department as in the interest of the petitioner. A great deal has been said outside, by the general public, about this department, and I think it is only right that the real facts should be made known. Serious charges have been made by the petitioner against the General Traffic Manager and also the Commissioner of Railways, and I think it would be in the interest of all parties concerned that the matter should be inquired into. I am not in a position to say that these charges are true in every particular; but I can speak from personal observation that some of his complaints are well-founded, because I know that the door of the office which he refers to was broken down, and the office remained exposed for a considerable time, and also the gate to the water tanks, and the water as fast as it was put in was stolen by teamsters and others. I also know there was a large hole in the floor of the office for a long time, and the petitioner told me he had frequently represented these matters to the General Traffic Manager, but he could get no satisfaction nor reply of any kind from that officer. Upon one occasion Mr. Brockman showed me the state the office door was in, and assured me he could get no answer whatever from Mr.

Davies, though he had written to him over and over again. I told him he could get the door repaired for a few shillings, and I asked him why he didn't get it done and send in the account. His reply was, "I am not allowed to do it; I cannot spend a penny without the sanction of the General Traffic Manager." Those were his very words. Ultimately a tradesman was sent up from Perth to Newcastle to repair this door, but when he arrived at Newcastle he hadn't the material wherewith to repair it, and he had to return to Perth for the necessary material; and, in the long run, the door was repaired by someone on the spot. The petitioner told me that the cost of the work ran into pounds, whereas it could have been done in the first instance at a cost of a few shillings. I am not in a position to say whether it is true or not, but that is the statement the petitioner made to me. Now if these things are true, I say it is a state of affairs that should not exist. If an officer is competent to take charge of a railway station, surely he may be empowered to expend a few shillings in necessary repairs without consulting the head of the department; but the petitioner declares that he had no such power. He also complained of the very great increase in the number of letters he had to write, and it is rather curious that the department made the same complaint against the petitioner, about his always pestering them with letters. I think it is not right that an officer holding the position the petitioner did should have been without the power to have trifling necessary repairs done, unless he first got authority from headquarters, and that when he applied for such authority he could get no answer, good or bad. No business firm or any employer of labour would ever limit a man in charge of his store or business in such a way as that; he would give the man discretionary power to spend a few shillings in repairing any damage of that sort. I do not know, but I believe, that this paltry damage to the office door was the cause of the rupture between the General Traffic Manager and the petitioner, which ultimately led to the petitioner's dismissal from his office by the Traffic Manager. I am not in a position to say whether the Traffic Manager exceeded his powers in dismissing this

officer from his position in the service; all I have got to say is, if the General Traffic Manager has such a power, I think he has too much power. I do not think it should be within the power of the General Traffic Manager to dismiss an officer of the standing of a station master, at a moment's notice. However, one side of a case is always good until you hear the other, and I presume the Commissioner of Railways will throw some light upon this matter. I wish members to understand that I in no way identify myself with the petitioner in this case; I am simply acting as the representative of the district in which he was employed as station master, from which position he was dismissed, and he has asked me to bring his grievance before the House. I cannot vouch for any of the statements made in the petition beyond those I have already referred to. I know the office door was left for a long time in a very insecure state, and that the necessary repairs, which might have been done locally in the first instance at a small cost, according to the petitioner's statement to me cost many pounds in the long run. I can only add that I know the late station master was a most obliging officer, and I feel sure that the members of this House will give his petition their very serious consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member going to make any motion? There is no question at present before the House.

MR. CLARKSON: All the petitioner seems to ask for—he has not instructed me to ask for anything—is contained in the last paragraph of his petition, where he says: "Your petitioner feels that he can confidently appeal to the general public of this colony, irrespective of their class, creed, or social status, to bear testimony to his desire at all times and under all circumstances to serve them honestly, faithfully, and well; but a sense of self-respect has forced him to resent the insult, intimidation, and annoyance directed at him persistently by the General Traffic Manager over a period of two years, and he now respectfully solicits from your Honourable House the protection and fair play which he has failed to obtain from the Commissioner of Railways according to the Regulation Book of the Railways

"Department." I presume that what he wishes is that the matter be taken into consideration by this House, and that he should be exonerated from any blame attached to the complaints referred to, and that it should not be considered that he has neglected his duty.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better move that the prayer of the petition be granted.

MR. CLARKSON: I beg to move that the prayer of the petition be granted.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I have but very little to say on this subject, and I should have liked to have said less. I have listened to what the hon. member said in introducing this petition, and the burden of the whole complaint seems to hinge upon the hinge of a door. I ask the members of this House, as sensible men, whether they think it possible that a man vested with the authority of a station master could not have got this trifling repair done without causing all this hubbub. It reminds me of a little thing that occurred some thousands of miles up the country when another public officer—I had nothing to do with the service then—drew my attention to the great neglect of the authorities (and he laid great stress upon it) in not repairing a hole at his front door. I asked him, "Do you seriously expect the Government to send a man up here, a thousand miles, to do this little job, when you could do it yourself in two minutes?" His reply was "I am not authorised." I said, "Well if you are not authorised to do a little job like that, you are certainly not fit to be entrusted with the duties of your position." Any sensible man in the position of the petitioner would have got this door repaired at once; he would have been perfectly justified in doing so, and he would have been paid the amount. I really must express my contempt for a man who would allow such a paltry little thing to form the subject of correspondence extending over several days, when he might have done the blessed thing himself, or got it done, in a few minutes. It is not a fact that station masters are debarred from acting upon their own responsibility in such trifling matters. If they were, and I was responsible for it, I should be ashamed to hold the position I do. In no instance have I

ever refused to pass accounts for small repairs made by station masters, and sent for confirmation afterwards. Therefore that part of the charge falls to the ground. As to the petitioner getting no reply to his communications, I may say that the General Traffic Manager did reply at once, and, if there was some little delay in getting the work attended to, it was not the fault of the Traffic Manager. The reason why that door was not repaired was, I think, greatly due to the station master himself. I regret to think that this gentleman should have made the statement in his petition that he has not received justice at the hands of the Commissioner of Railways. I commend the correspondence, which I will lay on the table, to the consideration of members. I decline to defend myself from such an allegation. For many reasons, I do not wish to say much in reference to Mr. Drake-Brockman. He has left the service, and I think it is a good job for the service that he has done so.

MR. A. FORREST: Before this question is dealt with, I should like to say a few words. I am sorry, myself, that the Commissioner of Railways did not enter more into this matter. A gentleman who has occupied the position of station master in some of our important centres has a perfect right to come to this House for redress, if he thinks he has not received justice at the hands of the head of his department; and I think the least the head of the department could do is to explain to the House the why and the wherefore of all this trouble between the petitioner and the General Traffic Manager. I have known Mr. Brockman for many years; I knew him when he was station master at Beverley, and I think he was a most obliging and painstaking officer—in fact, he seemed as if he couldn't do too much for people travelling backward and forward on the line between here and Albany. I know he gave general satisfaction at Beverley, and it was against his wish that he was removed to Newcastle; and after he went there he does not seem to have been subjected to the best of treatment. He is not a young man, and he deserved to be treated with some little consideration and a little more courtesy than appears to have been shown by the

Traffic Manager towards him. I have no wish to take up any side in this matter at all; I only wish to say that I have known the petitioner for many years as an honourable man, and that he carried on his duties at Beverley to the satisfaction of most people who travelled on that line. [MR. MONGER: No.] The hon. member says "No." All I can say is I have always found Mr. Brockman a most obliging and painstaking officer, anxious to do all he could to accommodate the public. I think it only due to this gentleman that the Commissioner of Railways should have given the House some further explanation as to why this officer was dismissed, and also some explanation as to the grave charges he has made against the department in the way he has been treated. One charge is that a relative of the General Traffic Manager has been irregularly employed in his office.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What has that to do with the petitioner?

MR. A. FORREST: I think it has a great deal to do with him, if it can be shown that this officer, irregularly employed in the Traffic Manager's office, was at the bottom of the whole trouble which led to the petitioner's dismissal. We have not been told why he was dismissed—whether it was for incompetency, or want of tact, or discourtesy, or what; not a word of explanation has been given by the Commissioner of Railways, and I think it is due to the petitioner and to this House that there should be some further answer to these charges.

MR. JAMES: I take it that every member recognises that it would be inexpedient for this House to be too frequently interfering with departmental matters, or disputes between public officers; on the other hand, members must bear in mind that they have a certain duty towards those who bring their grievances to the bar of this House, seeking for redress. I think when we find a petition, in spite of the opposition of the Government, ordered by this House to be printed, by a majority of two to one, that petition must be considered to contain some allegations requiring much fuller explanation than what has been vouchsafed by the Commissioner of Railways in this instance. I think there can be no doubt that there is a good deal of friction in this department between the officers and the men em-

ployed, and that a strong feeling of dissatisfaction exists on the part of the men. I am aware that statements coming from officers who have been dismissed from the service, or who have received an intimation that if they do not resign they will be dismissed, should be received with a considerable amount of suspicion. On the other hand, we must bear in mind that until the men are dismissed they have no chance of having their *bonâ fide* complaints heard, because while they are in the service they always find it to their advantage not to be making complaints, or making themselves unpopular with those who are above them, and it is only when they are dismissed that they have a chance of speaking the truth. The petitioner in this case has been dismissed, and no attempt has been made by the Commissioner to justify his dismissal before this House. It seems that the only ground upon which he was dismissed, so far as this petition shows—and the Commissioner has not condescended to explain the circumstances—was because he would not depart from one of the rules of the department, which requires officers to obtain authority before they cause any expenditure of money. The Commissioner now says the petitioner ought to have taken this responsibility upon himself, and acted on his own discretion. There may be some force in that argument, but surely they are not going to dismiss a man because he too conscientiously carried out one of their own regulations. The question we want to know is,—are the allegations made in this petition true? Let us take them *seriatim*. In the first place the petitioner says:—"That on the 3rd March, 1892, accompanied by Mr. George Roberts, the Traffic Manager, Mr. Davies, the General Traffic Manager, visited your petitioner's station, and among other alterations Mr. Davies proposed to dispense with the services of the Beverley assistant station master, who represented at that time the interests of the Great Southern Railway Co. at Albany; and to impose these duties upon your petitioner, in addition to his own duties of station master for the Government. To such arrangement your petitioner demurred, conceiving that not only was the step irregular, but that he could not serve two masters conscientiously and well." One can well understand

the petitioner demurring, if these statements are correct. We have not, all of us, the judicial calmness and imperturbability of the learned Attorney General. The Premier himself is sometimes sadly deficient in concealing his irritation; and it is only natural that the petitioner should have been irritated. The question is,—Is it true or not true that the petitioner was dismissed because he was too faithful in carrying out the departmental regulations relating to small matters? Those of us who know Mr. Brockman may well understand that he should be irritated at the proposal to dispense with the services of his assistant. Mr. Brockman's irritation would probably arise very quickly, but no one can deny that he was a very obliging public officer. I can say that of him from my own personal experience of his courtesy towards travellers. He may be a bit fussy; no doubt he is, and also a little peculiar. But we cannot all be perfect, like the Commissioner of Railways; we have all some little imperfections. But that is not the point. Are the statements made in that paragraph correct or not? Is it a fact that he was asked to perform these double duties—the duties of his assistant and his own duties, and that he demurred to such an arrangement? We can hardly complain of a man being asked to serve two masters; and, because the petitioner demurred, he was removed. I do not think he can be said to have been promoted when he was removed to Newcastle. [MR. SIMPSON: Less work and the same pay.] At any rate he did not want that kind of promotion. He would have preferred to have remained where he was, but he was kicked upstairs to Newcastle, and I want to know why? It is very strange that this friction arises as soon as the present Traffic Manager arrives on the scene. What right have we to assume that Mr. Brockman is not stating the facts, and not deliberate falsehoods? Whatever his peculiarities may be, there is no man in this House who would dare say that Mr. Brockman is a man who would tell a deliberate lie. He has his peculiarities, I know; he is a very fussy individual, but no one can say that he is not a conscientious man, or a man who would put in this petition anything that was not true. Surely statements coming from such a man are entitled to some consideration at the hands of this

House, and are not to be disposed of in the cavalier way in which the Commissioner of Railways has treated them. The next paragraph says: "That your petitioner after this was transferred to the charge of the Newcastle station on 1st July, 1892: and it became imperative, on public grounds, for your petitioner to make a full report of the wants of that station, and the necessity that existed for providing suitable accommodation, and numerous other appliances for the lack of which the traffic, however small, could not be conveniently or satisfactorily worked. Such an unsatisfactory condition of things necessarily produced correspondence, but Mr. Davies, instead of speedily seeing that the wants of the station were supplied, and evils rectified, made every report sent in by your petitioner to the Commissioner through him the subject of dispute, thereby needlessly engendering friction, and causing waste of time and a voluminous correspondence." Is that a fact, or is it not a fact? It is easily contradicted, if not true, by the production of the correspondence referred to. If the petitioner was asking too much, in order to provide suitable accommodation for the public, surely he was erring on the right side. I only wish other stationmasters would show the same eagerness to accommodate the public. It shows at any rate that Mr. Brockman took an interest in his work, and tried to do the best he could for the station he was in charge of. Then we come to another allegation: "Your petitioner complains that reports made by him in the public interest, and for the due performance of his duties, and which he desired to be brought to the notice of the Commissioner of Railways, appear to have been either misrepresented to that official or to have been altogether suppressed by Mr. Davies. Since, it has been ascertained upon good authority that the station wants, which had been occasionally represented by persons outside the Department, elicited from Mr. Venn the invariable reply: 'That it was the first he had heard of the want;' thus conclusively showing that the Commissioner was systematically kept in the dark as to the pressing needs of his district officers." That is a very serious allegation, but no attempt has been made

to deny it. Has the General Traffic Manager, or has he not, been misrepresenting matters to the Commissioner, or suppressing reports that were intended to reach the Commissioner? Surely that is an allegation serious enough to deserve some explanation, or some denial if there is no foundation for it. But we have neither explanation nor denial. Then he says: "Your petitioner further complains that, not only did Mr. Davies unnecessarily provoke much unnecessary correspondence of a disputatious nature upon some of the most frivolous and trifling subjects, which produced irritation and continued annoyance, but he made reckless and false accusations against officers and men, imputing to them, in some instances, dishonesty, for which he was forced to apologise, and admit his improper conduct." Is that true, or is it not true? It is a most serious allegation, and we have not had a single word of explanation from Mr. Davies or from the Commissioner. I will not say that these allegations are true, but if you discount them at 75 per cent., are they true then? There has been no suggestion that they are not true. The Commissioner does not even suggest that they are not true. In the face of statements like these, which no one attempts to contradict, and no one suggests are untrue, surely such statements are entitled to some consideration at the hands of this House. Look at the seriousness of the allegation: "Not only did Mr. Davies unnecessarily provoke much unnecessary correspondence of a disputatious nature upon some of the most frivolous and trifling subjects, which produced irritation and continued annoyance, but"—and this is the gravamen of the whole charge—"he made reckless and false accusations against officers and men," not only against Mr. Brockman, but against other men.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What has that to do with Mr. Brockman?

MR. JAMES: It has a great deal to do with him. If a man is capable of making these imputations against other persons, falsely and recklessly, as alleged, it throws a strong light on this case of Mr. Brockman's. If these statements are true about the General Traffic Manager, surely they must have a most material bearing upon the issue now before the House. Are they true?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No!

MR. JAMES: Is there a part of them true?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No!

MR. JAMES: Is there a shadow of truth in them?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No!

MR. JAMES: I should be sorry to think that a man like Mr. Brockman, whom we all know to be a conscientious man at any rate, would be capable of making such utterly reckless and groundless statements, if, as the Commissioner says, they are not true, nor have a shadow of truth about them. It is almost incredible. Either there must be some foundation for them, or they are malicious falsehoods. In the concluding portion of this paragraph the petitioner, after referring to the language used by Mr. Davies in his correspondence, says: "It now remains for your honourable House to say whether it is permissible for Mr. Davies to direct abusive and insulting language to public officers accidentally placed under him by the Government." Where is this correspondence, so that we may see this insulting and abusive language, if it exists?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is on the table.

MR. JAMES: Surely we had a right to expect the Commissioner to have gone into it. Why has not the Commissioner referred to it in any way? Then there is another paragraph, which says: "Your petitioner further submits that he has been subjected to offensive and insulting correspondence from one H. C. Davies, a reputed relative of the General Traffic Manager, who is irregularly employed in his office; and petitioner further states that, presuming upon his relationship to Mr. Davies, and being in his office, this clerk, H. C. Davies, has done much to create mischief and friction between petitioner and Mr. Davies." Is there any truth in that? I think, myself, there is. I think so not only from what is said in this petition, but from what I have heard outside this petition. It is a peculiar fact that this man, H. C. Davies, was imported here as a shorthand writer, on the representation that no

shorthand writer could be obtained in the colony, and since he has been in the Traffic Manager's office he has been thrust over men who had been in the department long before him. I do not blame the Traffic Manager for looking after his relatives, but it is an injustice to other men in the service.

MR. SIMPSON: I understand he is not a relative.

MR. JAMES: I say he is.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Before the hon. member makes any further rash statements, I may say that Mr. H. C. Davies is no connection of Mr. Davies, the Traffic Manager, in any way whatever. They are both Welshmen, I believe; but Mr. H. C. Davies came here from New South Wales, and is in no way connected with the General Traffic Manager.

MR. JAMES: Then we will let it stand as a reputed relative. It appears that this reputed relative of the Traffic Manager is at the bottom of all this friction and trouble. I have heard the same complaints from others than Mr. Brockman. These complaints may be true, or they may not be true; but the feeling outside is that the only men who get on are those who cringe to Mr. Davies, and do what he likes. I do not think that a public officer has a right to take up that position. It is a very strange thing that a man like Mr. Brockman, who we know is not inclined to cringe, should be singled out in this way. I think we have a right to have some further explanation from the Commissioner. I believe, from all I hear, that there is a good deal of friction in this same department.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): None whatever.

MR. JAMES: I hope the Commissioner will pardon me; he is not the person likely to know whether there is friction,—

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No one else knows better.

MR. JAMES: As a rule we know the Commissioner is "bossed" by the Engineer-in-Chief and the General Traffic Manager. If Bill Smith goes to the Commissioner and makes a complaint, the Commissioner simply asks the Traffic Manager, "Is this true what Bill Smith says?" The answer of course is "No";

and Bill Smith loses his billet in a week. The consequence is, Bill Smiths do not make their complaints until they are discharged, and safe from the Traffic Manager's venom. In a large and important department like this, so intimately associated with the general public, I think it is of the utmost importance that this House should inquire into such allegations as are contained in this petition. I think the mere fact of its having elicited this discussion will be calculated to do a great deal of good.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think if this matter were fully investigated, as desired by the hon. member for East Perth, it would not do Mr. Brockman much good. However, I am prepared, myself, to let it be investigated as much as the House likes. We have nothing to keep back or to conceal from members in this matter. All I can say is, it has caused me considerably more pain and trouble than to those members who have spoken on the subject. For years and years, ever since he has been in the service, I have been a personal friend of Mr. Brockman's, and he has communicated his grievances to me time after time, and I have written to him on many, many occasions—I should say a dozen times—telling him that there could only be one result from all his letters, and that was that he would lose his position in the service. I told him his letters were thoroughly disloyal towards those over him, and that his manner was thoroughly insubordinate, and that there could be only one result—that he would have to leave the service if he persisted in such conduct. This went on while he was at Beverley. I think the cause of his grievance then was that a portion of the railway station was built on some ground he had prepared for a garden. He was not content with abusing one, but everybody; the Commissioner of Railways, and the late General Manager, Mr. Mason, all come in for abuse from Mr. Brockman. I have written, as I have said, often to him, urging him to try and subordinate himself to those in authority over him, and to be loyal to the department; but the result has been what members know. I have now before me the letter of the General Traffic Manager, reporting the matter to the Commissioner of Railways,

and I do not mind reading it to the House. The reason my friend the Commissioner did not go more deeply into this matter was simply his kindness of heart, and a desire not to hurt the feelings of Mr. Brockman. There are reasons why I should be sorry, too, to injure him or say anything unkind of him; but when members bring these grievances into this House, and take upon themselves to criticise the actions of the Government in the discharge of their Executive functions in dealing with public servants, there is nothing left but for the Government to defend themselves. Therefore, if anything I have to say is unpleasant to Mr. Brockman—and I don't intend to say all I could say: I will restrain myself—Mr. Brockman must blame those friends of his who are determined to stir up these things. The report of the General Traffic Manager to the Commissioner is as follows:—

Perth, 27th April, 1894.

Mr. J. Drake-Brockman, Stationmaster, Newcastle, suspended from duty; recommending his removal.

THE HON. H. W. VENN.—

I have to report for your information that I suspended the above-named officer from duty on the 23rd inst., without pay, for continued insolence.

For a long time past this officer has adopted a most hostile attitude towards this office, treating it both by language and action in a discourteous and contemptuous manner, regardless of the many injunctions and warnings conveyed to him by me, and manifesting, instead of a desire to amend, a decided disposition to be aggressive and insubmissive. In a letter received from him on the 23rd inst., he makes the extraordinary accusation—I can view it from no other light—against this office of “needlessly compromising the Hon. the Commissioner in the eyes of the public,” and it was on receipt of this that I decided to take the action referred to. Although this is sufficient in itself to justify his suspension, I would not have taken the course I did, were it only a solitary instance of misdemeanour on his part. I can only come to the conclusion that such statement was actuated by a sense of arrant malice. The letter, written in a most domineering style, I send on to you with other correspondence, which will show to you of what malignant spirit he is possessed. With reference to the subject of his letter of 23rd inst., viz., “damage to office door,” and his suspension, he has requested that the correspondence, copies of which he has addressed to you, should be sent forward to you. The particulars are these:

It appears that on the 15th April the door of his office broke off its hinges, and he re-

ported the circumstances to me by letter on the 16th, which reached this office by the mail train on the 18th, and immediately on receipt Mr. Martin was telephoned to, and a reply was sent to Mr. Brockman (file No. 2,269 attached) that the matter was receiving attention. On the 18th Mr. Brockman writes two letters on the same subject, another on the 19th, and another on the 20th (received 23rd). Why it should be necessary to write so many letters in such a short time I cannot understand. Surely, if he endeavoured, a small repair of this description could have been attended to by him; but no, his desire has been to give the department as much trouble as possible, petty damages being a favourite subject of his, over which he never loses the opportunity to make capital by criticising the station premises and accommodation at Newcastle.

That he has been an unfaithful servant to the department, during my term of office, has been conclusively demonstrated by the many complaints and claims which have emanated from Newcastle, a larger number than from any part of the system, and it is very difficult to believe that some of these, if not the majority, were not preferred as a consequence of his promptings. At any rate the numerous letters you have received from our constituents in the Newcastle district are sufficient evidence to show that he has made but little attempt to protect the interests of the department in such cases, and we have paid several sums which I am perfectly satisfied, with a conscientious officer who understood and carried out his duties faithfully, would have been saved. It is a significant fact that all complaints from the Newcastle district are sent to you direct, forming a just reason for believing that Mr. Brockman has been using his influence to prejudice myself in the eyes of the department and the public. I have sufficient knowledge of him to believe he is capable of doing so, and in a letter I attach (file No. 7,022) received from Mr. Walker, of Newcastle, it is admitted he had been "influenced by one of my many envious friends, who never loses an opportunity of poisoning the public against you,"—alluding, of course, to the stationmaster.

In another file (No. 112) attached, is a letter from Mr. Brockman to one of our constituents, advising the latter to "bill the Commissioner" for certain damages done, and I think analogous instances will be found in the papers you have received. Now, an officer who understood his duties and did them properly, if there was a claim against the department, would either try to smooth the matter over, or at least save the men the trouble of writing to you, by requesting they should submit their claims to him, when he could send them on in the ordinary course to me. Instead of that we find him acting quite contrary, and apparently doing his utmost to defeat the efforts and interests of the department to which he belongs.

His own porter (Elliott) stated to me, and I have casually heard it from other sources,

that Mr. Brockman has advised people to adopt the road route for the conveyance of goods in preference to rail. What injury he may have caused by this action cannot very well be calculated, but it is an unjustifiable action to take, creating, as it does, a direct loss to the revenue, and increasing the expense of an already unprofitable railway, besides an adverse public opinion. He has been an expense to the department. His retention in the Service cannot be other than detrimental, and the sooner the department is rid of him the better will its interests, and that of the public, be served. I have, therefore—and I cannot conscientiously do otherwise—to recommend his removal from the Service, his dismissal to date from the 23rd April, 1894.

J. DAVIES,

General Traffic Manager.

Members will see that we found ourselves in this position: here was an officer who was in a state of continual quarrel and trouble with the head of the Traffic Department, and what could we do with him? I even wrote a private letter to him, asking him what did he expect the Government to do—did he expect us to dismiss Mr. Davies, and get someone else to manage our railways, because, if he did, we were not prepared to do so. I think Mr. Brockman in his last letter to me said, referring to Mr. Davies, "No gentleman could possibly serve under such a man." What were we to do? Here were two men, one being the head of the department, and the other a country stationmaster, and they had come to this pitch: one said he must get rid of the other, and the other said he could not work under such a man. I don't know what other members would have done under the same circumstances; but I think they would have adopted the same course as we did. I know my friend the Commissioner tried to have the breach patched up, if possible, and not to dismiss Mr. Brockman; but what else could we do? We were not going to break our engagement with Mr. Davies; we could not do so, and we had no reason to do so, as we were satisfied with him. But this officer said he could not work with Mr. Davies, and the decision we came to was that, under the circumstances, he must sever his connection with the service, that he must go; and we told him so. A great deal of trouble was taken in the matter, I know; even His Excellency the Governor looked into it. We were all anxious to deal as gently as we could with the petitioner;

we had no desire to ruin him, or take away his livelihood if we could help it. But when persons will not consider their own interests, they cannot expect the Government to do so. As I have said, I tried myself to put him on the right track; I told him to act loyally to those in authority over him, but in the end I found it was no use. I could do nothing with him, and, in the result, I had to approve of his dismissal from the service. That is all I have to say about the matter.

MR. TRAYLEN: I should like to add my testimony to the unquestioned and unimpeachable character of the gentleman under consideration; but, having said that much as to his personal character, I am afraid, when we come to look at his conduct in the light thrown upon it by the head of the Government, I cannot say much in his favour. It is very obvious that if others can use intemperate language, so can he. At the same time, it does seem strange it should take two or three days for a letter to pass between a stationmaster at Newcastle and the General Traffic Manager at this end of the line; I should have thought it was quite within the range of possibility—not to say the common sense view to take of the situation—to have at once instructed Mr. Brockman to have got those repairs made, and charge them to the department, without necessitating all this correspondence. Apparently, if that had been done, it would have saved a great deal of friction. His request not being attended to, in this simple and effective manner, the petitioner resorts to this persistent form of correspondence for which he has been conspicuous for many years past; and I am not surprised that the Government found themselves at last in such a dilemma that they had to say ultimately he must go. But may I suggest, in view of the excellence of his general character, and the difficulty he had of working under the General Traffic Manager, that the Government might look around and see if there is any other department in which they could find some position for this gentleman, where his undoubtedly good service to the public in the past might be again availed of. Those of us who have been accustomed to visit either of the stations he has been connected with must know

how extremely courteous and attentive he has been to travellers, and how he has even gone out of his way to administer to their comfort. I am persuaded, notwithstanding what has been said, and what is shown by the correspondence, that he has been, in the main, an excellent servant, so far as the public are concerned, however embittered he may have been against the Traffic Manager. Either we ought to make some further inquiry into this case—though I am afraid the result of that inquiry would be to get a great deal more of the intemperate language we have already heard—or the Government should pass him over, if possible, to some other department, in recognition of the undoubted good service he has done to the public in the past, during his eight years' term of office.

MR. MORAN: We have had several petitions before the House up to date, but, in my belief, none of such importance as the present one. It throws the very strongest light possible upon the question which is being debated at the present moment, the relationship between civil servants and this House, and the Executive Government generally. I think the facts revealed go a long way to support the contention that the time has arrived when the Civil Service of this colony should be placed on a different basis, and that a Civil Service Board or Commission, independent of Ministers and Parliament, should be appointed, as in other parts of the world, to control the public service, and that admission to the service should only be by competition and examination. Petitions would not come to this House then until the cases had first been tried by an independent Commission. I do not know much about the merits of this particular case, except from the report that there had been high jinks between the petitioner and the Traffic Manager, and that the petitioner was slightly eccentric in his ways. Further than that, I have nothing more to say, but I thought the opportunity ought not to be allowed to pass without our stating—some of us at least—that we believe the time has arrived when disputes of this kind should be settled by a proper Board appointed by this House.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I do not know what might take place if the prayer

of this petition were granted, but I do think there is one thing members ought to ask themselves, and it is this: how is the management of our railways to be carried on, if this House is always to interfere with the Commissioner and with the General Traffic Manager? I ask the hon. member for East Perth how he would manage affairs in his office, if any clerk, who was insolent or who chose not to comply with his master's wishes, were to turn round, when spoken to, and say "I shall report you to the Resident Magistrate," or somebody else. Mr. Davies is appointed by the Commissioner of Railways to manage these railways, and he can only do it by having supreme authority. If he cannot do so, it is for Parliament to pass a vote of censure upon him or upon the Commissioner of Railways who employs him for that purpose. But I think members must see it would be impossible for any department to be carried on if we are going to allow outside influence to be brought to bear upon this House, and if civil servants are led to believe that they can do what they like, and not obey the instructions of their superior officers, or that if they are dismissed they have only to present a petition to Parliament to get themselves reinstated. All I know about this affair is what Mr. Brockman told me himself; and I told him if I had been his superior officer and he had said to me what he told me himself he said to the Traffic Manager, I should have been very much vexed and very much riled. I really do think that, in the interests of Mr. Brockman himself, these proceedings should not go any further. I really am sorry for Mr. Brockman that the hon. member for Toodyay should have brought this petition forward.

MR. CLARKSON: It was at his request.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I know it was at his request, but I was hoping the hon. member would not comply with the request. He is very peculiar, is Mr. Brockman; there is no doubt about that, and I am very certain it is very difficult for anyone to carry on any business with him as a subordinate. There is no question about that. As for his honour, and integrity, and zeal for the service, I have nothing whatever to say against him. I believe he is a very honourable man, and a man of high integrity and great zeal,

but his zeal no doubt overruns his discretion. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Greenough, if the Government could see any chance of giving Mr. Brockman an appointment where there is not much to do, and no one above him, I should be very glad to hear of it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think the petitioner in this case has had a very good innings—perhaps not very profitable to himself, and I am not sure that it has been very profitable to this House. But I think it would be a very sad day for this House and for the country if, in addition to the pressure brought to bear by civil servants on members of Parliament to secure them appointments or promotion, there were to be added this further obligation of fighting their battles in this House, and of adjusting the differences between the heads of departments and their subordinates. Of course we cannot help it sometimes; we have no right to burke an inquiry or to refuse to receive a petition, and, if necessary, to have it printed, so that we may have the matter before us. I voted for the printing of this petition because I thought it contained charges of one sort or another that ought to be put on record, either for the benefit of the petitioner or of Parliament. I was very much grieved to hear some of the letters read, and I thought the Government should have an opportunity of answering some of these allegations, and of throwing some light upon these very peculiar circumstances. That was the reason why I voted for this petition being printed. I think the Government have shown us to-day that they have gone a very long way out of their way to deal with this somewhat obstreperous member of the Civil Service. The Premier, prompted no doubt by the guidings of his large and kindly heart, it seemed to me went entirely out of his way, and I question very much whether it was in the interests of the service or of Mr. Brockman himself that the head of the Government should write such letters as the Premier informed us he has written to this gentleman. Reading between the lines, I have come to the conclusion—and if I am wrong I want to have the impression erased from my mind—that some order, or rule, or regulation exists in the Railway Department to the effect

that before anything shall be done in the way of repairs, or anything of the kind, there must be a distinct reference to the head office. If this be so, it cannot be said that Mr. Brockman was departing from his duty in sending notice to head quarters that the door of the railway station office was broken. But if there is such a regulation, I think this petition has shown us that it ought to be altered. If there is such an absurd regulation in existence, that when a little hinge is broken or a bolt gets out of repair, it is to cost as much pretty nearly in time, correspondence, and paper, as it would do to have the work done, I think the sooner that regulation is done away with the better. Then we have a statement about a certain other Mr. Davies—whoever he may be—I do not know the Traffic Manager nor this other Mr. Davies—but I think it is unfortunate that two ancient Britons should come into such close contact with a gentleman of this character. At any rate this other Mr. Davies, somehow or other, arrives at Newcastle, and a certain altercation takes place between him and the petitioner, and Mr. Davies suspends him.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That was a year before his dismissal. He was suspended for calling him a "bog," and all that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then this statement in the petition is not correct, so far as I can make out, or it must have been the other Mr. Davies. According to the petition (paragraph 6), Mr. Brockman was suspended for writing an "improper and insolent" letter to Mr. Davies; and we should say, by a vote of some kind, whether we consider it is a proper thing, or a right thing, or a justifiable thing, for a stationmaster to use "improper and insolent" language to his superior officer. That is the bottom and top of the matter. There is no denial of the statement that this language was used; and, if the motion before the House is carried, we are to affirm seriously, in Parliament assembled, in this 19th century of civilisation and righteousness, that a stationmaster is to be supported by Parliament in using improper and insolent language to his superior officer. If we were assured that he did not use such language and that he had been improperly charged, there would be some ground for us to go by; but there

is no denial of the fact. The petitioner does not attempt to deny it. I maintain that however improper may have been the tone of the letters which an inferior may receive from his superior officer, it does not justify him in using improper and insolent language to his superior. He cannot justify it, and I cannot vote for a motion that proposes to justify it, and I do not think the members of this House will support it. I will, however, take this opportunity of saying that it is most unfortunate (to say the least of it) to the Traffic Manager that there should be so many people who, like Mr. Brockman, are making complaints of a similar character. I say it is most unfortunate that there should be so many reports about this city with regard to the management of this department.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): All from the same source.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Of course if it is found that the Attorney General is correct, and that Mr. Brockman is the originator of all these reports,—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Not Mr. Brockman at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. gentleman said they all came from one and the same source.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): So they do.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then there must be other sources than Mr. Brockman.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Exactly.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is unfortunate, I say, that amongst merchants and people who have to come in contact with this General Traffic Manager there should be so much feeling of dissatisfaction in regard to the manner in which this department is managed, and that there should be so many cases of complaint amongst the men who are daily going and coming, taking and receiving goods from the Traffic Manager's department. I say it is unfortunate for Mr. Davies that such a feeling exists in the public mind; and I presume that out of that feeling there has come a certain amount of sympathy towards the petitioner in this case. But I do hope this House will not allow even that kind of feeling, which certainly does exist, and ought to be dealt with on its merits,—I say I hope this House will not vote for a motion

which practically says that this House approves of the stationmaster at Newcastle, or anywhere else, using improper and insolent language towards the General Traffic Superintendent.

Question—that the prayer of the petition be granted—put and negatived on the voices.

BRANDS BILL.

BILL LAID ASIDE.

On the Order of the Day for going into committee on this Bill,—

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said: I think I will be in order in making a few observations at this stage. The Government in no way desire to press this Bill upon the House or the country. But I may say that the whole system of branding is now in a congested state, and has been for some time past, and it cannot go any further,—that is to say, the old system of registration of brands by signs and symbols. The Registrar reports to me—and he told me the same again this afternoon—that everything is hung up, and that it is impossible to go any further; and it was in that state of things that the Government proposed this new system. Before doing so, communication was held on the subject with every colony, including New Zealand, and they were all unanimous in recommending us to adopt this three-letter system as the best of all systems,—better than two letters and a numeral, or two numerals and one letter. The Chief Inspectors of Stock in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia seemed to envy the position we were in, to be able to take up this best of all systems. But it appears that the idea of branding with three letters is regarded by most members I have spoken to, and who, perhaps, are better able to give an opinion on the subject than I am, as a system that must rather tend to disfigure the animals branded; and it has been suggested that we should adopt two letters. I think it cannot be denied that if the other colonies had found that two letters answered the purpose they would have adopted it in preference to three characters; but, as I have said, they strongly recommend us to adopt three. I thought I would endeavour to see how far we could meet the views of

those who are interested in the subject, and how far two letters would carry us. I have gone into the matter with the Registrar of Brands, and I have come to this conclusion, that it is impossible to apply the two letter system here, at this stage, for this reason: the most you can get out of the two-letter combination is 1,676 different brands. When I went into the question before, I was under the impression that the number of registered brands in this colony would be something between 500 and 1,000 perhaps, and that if we had a system that would give us 1,676 we might manage with it, and, by altering the position of the letters, and turning them upside down, or sideways, we might be able to get along for some years. But to my surprise I find that we have already registered no less than 3,500 brands for horses and cattle; and I do not think it would be possible with two letters, no matter how you transposed them, to get a satisfactory number of legible combinations. If you begin to transpose you get into confusion at once: A turned upside down becomes very much like a V, and M turned upside down becomes very like a W, and so on. However, I should be sorry to press upon the House or the country a system that was not likely to give satisfaction, and, perhaps, we might with advantage withdraw this Bill for the present, and have it published in the *Gazette*, and let those who are interested in the subject have an opportunity of saying what they think of it. If, however, it is decided to go on with the Bill, I propose that it shall not come into operation until the 1st April next, and that after that date no old brands should be used any more, but that stock already branded need not be rebranded, and that only stock that required branding after the 1st April next should be branded according to this new system. I think that would cause no great hardship to anyone. All you would have to do would be to have a new brand for any new stock to be branded, and use it instead of the old one. A suggestion has been made that those who have already registered a brand should be allowed to re-register their new brand without a fee. That is a mere matter of detail which could be settled at once. But, looking at the fact that some valuable suggestions—or at any

rate suggestions that would be considered valuable by those who offered them, though I do not think they would be more valuable than the suggestions we have already received from the Chief Inspectors of Stock in every other Australian colony; but, looking at the fact that the owners of stock may desire to offer some suggestions as to the Bill, I have no wish to force it upon the House this session, unless members desire it. I am quite prepared to go on with the Bill if the House wishes it, but if members think it would be better to withdraw it until next session, the Government will be only too glad to fall in with their views; and I should like those members who are interested in the subject to let us know what their views are.

MR. LEFROY: There do not seem to be many members interested in the question, or they are very loth to express their views, and others are absent. I think, myself, the Government are certainly to be complimented upon having brought the Bill forward, and I think it is really necessary that something should be done, so that stockowners and others may be in a position to know what brands are in existence. At present we cannot get any information on the subject, as the list of brands is not published, owing it is said to the difficulty of reproducing some of the present brands. At the same time it seems hard that so many good, useful and legible brands (as many of the present brands are) should have to be given up, if we adopt this new system.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I think it would be better to put this matter off until another session. So far as I am aware, there has been no demand in the country districts for a new Brands Bill, and I think the Bill is rather in advance of the times. If people want a new law, why don't they ask for it? I have heard no complaints from the Agricultural Societies, or any kindred institutions representing bucolic interests, about the present law; nor have I heard any complaints from stockowners themselves. I think that legislation should only be resorted to when there is a demand for it. This may be a good Bill, but I think it might be left until next session.

MR. CLARKSON: There are several amendments on the notice paper in my name which I intended to move if the

Bill went into committee; but I am quite willing it should remain in abeyance until next session. I agree with the hon. member for Sussex that there has been no outcry or complaints among stockowners as to the present system.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. S. BURT): It is in the registry office where the trouble is; everybody is writing to the Registrar about the present state of things, and the Registrar says it cannot go any further.

MR. CLARKSON: At any rate, I am quite certain that the stockowners of this colony will never agree to this Bill as it stands—that is, to wipe out all brands now in existence, many of which have been in existence for the last half a century, and rebrand their stock with three letters. I do not see why, because they use three characters in New South Wales, or Queensland, or South Australia, and stockowners in those colonies choose to disfigure their stock, we should also do the same. We are entirely in a different position; we have nothing like the number of stock they have, nor are we likely to have—

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must not discuss the Bill at this stage. The only question before the House is whether I shall leave the chair.

MR. H. W. SHOLL: I should like to say a few words on this Bill,—

THE SPEAKER: I have just ruled one hon. member out of order. The hon. member cannot discuss the Bill now.

Question—That the Speaker leave the chair, and that the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole to consider the Bill—put, and negatived on the voices.

Bill laid aside.

At 6-30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the chair.

At 7-30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the chair.

ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Estimates.

Rottnest Establishment, £3,610:

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked if it was worth while to keep up the native prison at Rottnest? The revenue received from prison labour last year was only £599,

as compared with a proposed expenditure of £3,610 for this year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that provision was made in the Estimates for a larger number of native prisoners to be received from Wyndham, instructions having been sent to the Resident Magistrate there to send some of the worst offenders to Rottnest. Native prisoners were continually escaping from such confinement as was available at Wyndham.

MR. JAMES, referring to Item 6 (medical officer, £100), asked how often the medical officer at Fremantle, Dr. Hope, visited the prison at Rottnest.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the visit was once a fortnight, and at other times whenever the doctor was telegraphed for. Dr. Hope received £150 a year as quarantine officer, also, he believed, £100 as medical officer of the prison, and £100 for attending the prisoners at Rottnest, these sums amounting to £350 a year.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to Item 11 (provisions and other necessities, £1,200), said he was sorry to hear the Government intended bringing down more native prisoners from Wyndham. They could be as well managed at Wyndham as at Rottnest, and their prison labour would be most useful to the Wyndham district in making and mending roads. The cost of keeping them at Wyndham would be only half as much as at Rottnest, and their labour would be a benefit to the district. They were too well treated at Rottnest, and they returned to their own district in that half civilised state which was the most dangerous to the inhabitants. Each native would cost about £10 for travelling by steamer from Wyndham to Rottnest and back.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was not intended to remove all the native prisoners from Wyndham to Rottnest, but only a few of the worst. The natives about Wyndham were more troublesome and desperate than on any other part of the coast. A sort of warfare was going on there between the whites and the blacks. The natives came into the town at night and committed thefts, and the prison accommodation there was very defective, the buildings, which were put up years ago, being now

ravaged with white ants. He agreed that native prisoners should not be removed to Rottnest to any greater extent than was necessary.

MR. CLARKSON said the worst thing to do with a nigger was to attempt to civilise him, for it ruined him body and soul, as was shown by experience. Native prisoners should be sent to districts where they would be useful in making roads.

MR. R. F. SHOLL agreed with the remarks of the member for West Kimberley. The Wyndham natives were a more vicious class, and the adjacent country being hilly, the natives were difficult to capture when once they got away. Instead of sending native prisoners to Rottnest, they should be sent to work in districts where their labour would be useful, and where they would feel they were being punished.

MR. LEAKE, referring to Item 19 (Reformatory), asked whether the Government intended to provide a reformatory also for girls.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was not intended to make a reformatory at Rottnest for girls. The Fremantle prison was at present used for women, but the Government were thinking of establishing industrial schools for children, and also an industrial reformatory school for boys at Fremantle; but he did not know that an industrial reformatory school for girls would be established at present.

MR. LEAKE said the girls committed by magistrates were sometimes too young to be sent to the women's prison, and he knew that a question had been mooted, outside this House, as to the desirability of a reformatory school for girls.

MR. SOLOMON asked whether it was intended to teach trades in the boys' reformatory at Rottnest, as that would be the most serviceable kind of instruction with a view to after-life.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, with regard to little girls committed by magistrates, there were the orphanages, and he did not think the superintendents refused to take in young children, even if these had previously been among bad associates. It was only in the case of older girls that they could not be managed well in the orphanages.

Vote put and passed.

Printing, £13,142 8s. :

MR. LEAKE asked whether, in view of the increasing cost of this department, it would not be practicable to get the work done by contract.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said there was, in other departments, a system of debiting the several departments with the cost of work done on their account; and why should not the cost of printing be debited against each department in the same way, so as to show the value of the printing done for each, during the year? A great deal of the printing done was for the Works and Railways Department, and the cost of such printing ought to be shown. The cost of the Printing Department was increasing enormously, consequent on the greater amount of printing required for the public service. He believed there was also a large sum paid for extra printing which was done outside the Government printing office, so that the actual cost for all the printing was not shown in the Estimates.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said some means might be devised for showing the value of the printing done annually for each of the departments, but he questioned whether the result would be worth the trouble and expense of keeping such accounts. The Post Office and the Railway Department did make a charge for services performed for the other departments; but this system of charging was not a fixed rule throughout the Service. He did not think it would be an advantage to have additional clerks in the Government printing office for keeping these nominal accounts. At any rate, this check would show a big bill against Parliament for the amount of printing done on its account each year. He would read to the committee a memorandum he had received from the Government Printer, as follows:—

The expansion of business has been great in all departments—culminating, so far as the printing is concerned, in this office. Printing is an indispensable adjunct, which must be expected to increase in proportion to the extension of public business. The plant, which was barely sufficient to keep pace with the work of one House of Legislature, and the comparatively limited requirements of the old order of things, was utterly insufficient for that of the new; and still further expenditure will be inevitable if the convenience of members of Parliament and the public is to be

considered. At the present moment we have in progress, besides the Debates, the evidence taken by the Civil Service Commission to date, also by three Select Committees, with the Parliamentary work, in addition to the job printing; and if the situation had not been grasped in time to procure extra supplies of type by cablegram from England, a serious block could not have been avoided.

With regard to the increases of pay, they have been proposed in order to retain the services of useful men who have been, in many instances, a long time in the office at very low rates of wages; also to place the fixed establishment on a firmer basis. In no instances can they be considered excessive; and the fact must be remembered that our work is not of the ephemeral character of a newspaper office (where the day's work is completed in each day, and it would be almost immaterial if many of the hands were replaced daily by others), but it is continuous, and experienced workmen, familiar with the work and customs of the establishment, are therefore the most valuable. Of course there is a certain class of work of a more transient nature, which is mainly delegated to the employes who are provided for under an "extra labour" item, and who can be taken on and dispensed with as required. In this latter class the rates proposed are just sufficient to remove the skilled artisan from the labourer, which concession should not, I respectfully beg to recommend, be withheld.

MR. LOTON said the Printing vote was increasing seriously, because the work required to be done was increasing. The only real check for keeping down the expense was the efficiency of the control exercised by the head of the department. If a system of charging the other departments were instituted, the accounts would be more satisfactory to hon. members. No doubt the Government Printer would make the rates of charge sufficiently high to show that his department had made a profit on the year's working. Still, it would be only a *prima facie* account, and hon. members would get no more real information from it than they got at present. The efficiency and trustworthiness of the head of the printing office were the only checks they had to rely on. He believed the Government Printer was a very efficient officer, and hon. members must all admit that the work done was of first-class character, while no one could complain that the wages were in excess, comparatively.

MR. JAMES asked why the Government printing office should not take credit for the work done for each department, as a set-off against the debit? Such a check would cause the other depart-

ments to practise more economy in the cost of the printing required. He was given to understand that much of the expense was incurred by unnecessary alterations made in the printed proofs after the type was set up, and that in some instances the matter was altered two or three times over in the proofs. He asked, who got the money which was paid for advertisements inserted in the *Government Gazette*? Having regard to the nature of the work which the printers had to do, and the careful manner in which they did it, these workmen ought to have a larger increase in their wages. A material saving of cost might be effected by using less expensive stationery, the cost of which amounted to £2,000 a year. He had noticed, in other colonies, that none of the Governments used such elaborate stationery. As to the suggestion that the printing should be let out by contract, he hoped, on the contrary, that the Government would provide for doing all their own printing.

MR. SOLOMON said that if the Government departments were charged with the cost of the printing which was done for them, this department would show very favourably.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to Item 3 (Clerk, £180; previously under "Provisional and Temporary"), said he found this officer and another officer had been placed on the permanent staff, which would entitle them to pensions. He objected to the creation of a large Civil Service, for the day would come when the staff would have to be reduced, and then the colony would be saddled with pensions and compensation charges. In case of future appointments, the officers should be required to insure their lives.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the clerk referred to in Item 3 was previously on the temporary staff, and was experienced and assiduous. When officers were placed on the permanent staff they were regarded as being on the permanent Civil Service of the country. He did not take the same view as the hon. member for the Gascoyne in regard to pensions; for although he knew it was a popular idea that servants of the State should not get pensions, yet those who talked in that way did not realise the fact that none of these men would become entitled to a pension until he

got over 60 years of age, and then only if incapacitated for further work; also, that during the first 10 years of service no servant had any right to a pension. His own opinion was that no greater inducement could be offered to a man in the public service than the prospect of his becoming entitled to a pension when he got old and incapacitated.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the heads of departments showed favouritism. They might put a friend on the permanent staff. The whole Estimates were bristling with appointments on the permanent staff. The "Government stroke" suited many of these men better than the work outside. The pension system had been done away with in most of the colonies, and should be done away with here.

MR. JAMES said that, as a rule, Mr. Pether underpaid the men he employed. This department was, without exception, one in which the men were paid the lowest. The compositors were paid less than those employed in other printing offices within the colony.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to Item 49 (extra labour, £2,700), said that £1,000 was voted for this item last year, and the amount spent was £1,400.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government Printer's memorandum stated, in reference to this item: "I fear there will be plenty of work to call for this extra expenditure." Hon. members would be aware that this department in past years had been labouring under difficulties—building going on—and now that the extension was completed, new machinery and more type would have to be provided for meeting the increasing requirements. The Railway Department especially would require more printing to be done than previously; the Post Office also would require more; and, as the colony was going ahead, so must there be more demands made on the printing office. The amount of this item seemed high, but the Government Printer knew pretty accurately what was actually needed. He (the Premier) felt sure Mr. Pether would not ask for more than was actually required.

Vote put and passed.

Inspection of Stock, £3,626 15s.:

MR. A. FORREST said this vote also was growing. He noticed there was an inspector of stock for Kimberley, but he

had not heard of this appointment. The time had arrived when, instead of maintaining so many inspectors in the Central District, other steps should be tried for stamping out scab in sheep. In the Central District there were to be five inspectors besides the Chief Inspector. He now gave the Government notice that, next year, he would move that this vote be abolished. The amount was £3,600, and for only one portion of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the inspector for Kimberley was for pleuro and other diseases, but not for scab.

MR. CLARKSON supported the remarks of the member for West Kimberley, and said it was disgraceful that the scab disease should exist so long in one small portion of the colony around Geraldton. The Chief Inspector resided in that neighbourhood, and, although he had a number of assistant inspectors, the scab lingered there, and spread from that centre all over the colony. One of the assistant inspectors should be stationed near Perth, so as to be able to detect those undipped scabby sheep from the North which escaped the dip at the Irwin. It would be a good thing if the scabby sheep were destroyed on the spot.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said this money was completely and utterly wasted. He had in mind certain inspectors, nine-tenths of whose time were occupied with billiards and whisky, and who for months together did not see a sheep or go to look for one. He did not think this kind of thing was calculated to eradicate scab, for the tendency was rather otherwise. The positions made under the Scab Act were mere sinecures, and those employed to detect scab were too anxious to keep their comfortable situations, rather than try to eradicate scab. The whole business was an unmitigated fraud from beginning to end. To deal with scab required more drastic treatment. In Victoria, whole flocks had to be destroyed as the only effectual means. He hoped the Government would waken up these inspectors with an electric battery, and let them know that if they were to draw money from the public chest they must do something for it. Some of these inspectors could not tell where there was a

scabby sheep, to save their lives, and they did not want to find one.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether the Toodyay and Victoria Plains districts had been declared infected, as required by the Scab Act, after the recent outbreak was reported? He asked also whether any levy had been made on the sheep owners? The provisions of the Act should be carried out.

MR. LEFROY said this discussion should more properly take place when the select committee on the Scab Act had reported on the subject. The hon. member for Nannine was an authority on scab, and it was a pity he did not offer his evidence to the select committee. If the inspectors were to be abolished, as suggested by the hon. member for West Kimberley, was scab then to be left to run wild? It was the duty of the Government to find out whether the inspectors were efficient, and were doing their duty. There being other diseases besides scab among live stock, there ought to be a permanent staff of inspectors, who would be more zealous in the work when they knew their appointment was permanent. The members of the select committee had come to the conclusion that the recent outbreak of scab was entirely due to a want of inspection in the district.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) quite agreed that it was a reflection on the colony that scab had existed in it so long. He could not think this fact reflected creditably on the administration. The Government had not been unwilling to provide for any necessary expenditure in this work. The chief inspector was supposed to be an efficient officer, and had only to ask for whatever funds were required; but the end of the trouble seemed to be as far off as ever. He did not know what the Government could do, unless they swept away every inspector and appointed fresh ones. This would have to be done unless there was an improvement. He had already expressed himself in this way to the Minister in charge of the department, and the Minister was anxious to do all he could in the matter. Without reflecting on any officer in the department, his own opinion was that the Government would have to be guided by results; and if, after several years, the present inspectors were found

unable to remove the disease which continued to be a terrible source of danger to sheep owners in the South, those inspectors must give way to others. Scab had been eradicated all over this country, except only in the Geraldton district. The inspectors reported that the district was nearly clean now, and they hoped that in a short time it would be altogether clean. He only hoped it would.

MR. ILLINGWORTH suggested that the same method should be used as in eradicating dingoes—that was, to offer a premium for the discovery of scabby sheep. He also suggested that notice should be given to the inspectors that unless there was a distinct improvement in their several districts within a stated time, each inspector would be discharged. It was not a question of being able to eradicate scab, but the men were not attending to the work. From information which reached him, he was perfectly satisfied that the inspectors were not doing their work.

MR. LEAKE said there was a strange anomaly in the salaries, for whereas the Chief Inspector of Stock got only £250 a year, all the assistant inspectors got £260 each.

MR. A. FORREST said the Chief Inspector got £200 more.

MR. LEAKE said the Chief Inspector also got £200 a year as travelling allowances; yet in the Estimates for 1893-4 his travelling allowance was only £100, and that of each assistant inspector was £70. But the travelling allowance was not a perquisite, therefore the Chief Inspector's actual salary was only £250 a year. The Premier, while professing not to reflect on any officer in the department, had proceeded to reflect upon the Chief Inspector in the gravest manner, and this was not the first time the Premier had done so. If the Chief Inspector was to blame, why should not the House be informed of the facts, and a better man be put in his position? From his own personal knowledge of the Chief Inspector, he had always found him intelligent, hard-working, and painstaking. The real fault was that the Chief Inspector did not get that support which was necessary for enabling him to carry out the Scab Act. It was in the administration of the Act that it failed,

for no matter what trouble the Chief Inspector took in bringing home charges, adequate fines were not inflicted. The Chief Inspector was defied, and thwarted, and burked by the settlers in every way; and he did not get that support from justices and others which he ought to receive. It was not right for the Premier to attack a public servant by innuendo.

MR. A. FORREST said they all believed the Chief Inspector was a very good man; but Parliament and the country were getting tired of voting this money without results. Stock owners in the Northern parts of the colony were also tired, for the cost of the compulsory dipping was a tax on them, and a further loss of 6d. a head was caused by the sheep losing condition after dipping. Hon. members could not go on for ever having a good opinion of a Chief Inspector who, with a large staff of officers, could not eradicate scab from the district. Some of these men had kept these positions fifteen or twenty years, and they knew that if scab were eradicated their billets would disappear. It would be better to destroy all the sheep in the Victoria district, and let the first loss be the last. He hoped the inspectors would see the Press reports of the debate on this subject.

MR. CLARKSON said an assistant inspector had told him recently that the sheep were sometimes not properly dipped at the Irwin; and that some of them were not dipped at all. He further said that if he had the appointing of the inspector for that dip, he would guarantee that no sheep came Southward of the dip without passing properly through it.

MR. SOLOMON said it was the duty of that assistant inspector to have informed the Government how and why the sheep were not properly dipped.

MR. CLARKSON said he believed the same inspector did report to his superior officer.

MR. LEFROY said he was surprised the hon. member for Toodyay did not also report to the Government the information he had obtained from that inspector about the defective dipping. He hoped hon. members would read the evidence given by the Chief Inspector before the select committee, when the report appeared in printed form. He knew that the present Chief Inspector did clear the Toodyay district of scab

many years ago; and when an outbreak afterwards occurred in the Victoria district, the then Government sent the same officer to eradicate scab there, but he was not able to do it, and in his evidence given lately before the select committee, he explained why he was not able to do it—that the Act was defective, that sheep were allowed to run in paddocks, that these were not properly secured, that he had not power under the Act for compelling owners to make their paddocks secure, and that the sheep got away and wandered over the country. His (Mr. Lefroy's) opinion as to the assistant inspectors was that some of them were not what they ought to be, and were not efficient. The recent spread of scab in a Southern district was, he could now state, due entirely to a want of proper supervision. The prevention of scab was a sort of detective business, which many persons did not care about taking up, because they got into trouble with settlers; therefore it was difficult to get good men to take up this work. Still, he hoped the Government would not employ, as inspectors, such men as spent their time in playing billiards, and that sort of thing.

MR. SIMPSON said he was glad to hear, from the chairman of the select committee which had inquired into scab, a distinct vindication of the Chief Inspector. The hon. member for West Kimberley, while professing not to say a word against the Chief Inspector, yet contrived to make innuendoes. A great deal of the difficulty was in the Scab Act, or in the wrong interpretation of it by justices, the result being that the Chief Inspector could never get a conviction.

Vote put and passed.

Educational, £24,250 :

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked how it was that certain items in this vote did not appear in the Estimates for last year, and that the total amount was now much larger.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that formerly the administration of this vote was under the Central Board of Education, and credit was taken for a lump sum, the Board employing all the officers of education. The total amount expended last year was £17,078 3s. 3d., and out of that sum the Board paid all the officers. Probably more officers were employed now. Since the Act of

last year had abolished the Central Board, the salaries had to be voted by this House.

MR. A. FORREST asked why the cost had increased from £17,000 to over £24,000, since last year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the note he had was to the effect that last year was an epidemic year, when the school attendance did not increase in the usual proportion; but for the current year the estimated increase of attendance was very much larger. There was also an estimated increase for the Assisted schools.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he observed there was a system of teaching music, or singing, and he thought it would be better to instruct the girls in the use of pots and pans, while the boys might be shown how to use carpenters' tools, or something useful. It appeared to him absurd that the teachers were directed to teach certain songs at certain times, when probably a teacher might have as much music in his or her composition as the Premier had. A teacher might be excellent in other respects, and yet not have any idea of music. It was also absurd that musical instruments, in the shape of pianos, were supplied to Government schools. What should be done was to give a plain education—to teach the girls to be good wives, and teach the boys some useful kinds of trade. Teaching singing and learning how to play musical instruments were luxuries which should not be expected.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said a piano was not introduced into a school for teaching children how to play on it, but as an accompaniment in teaching them to sing in harmony, and to keep time. The school was opened and closed each day with a song sung by all the scholars, and this practice had a good effect on them, and also improved the discipline of the school. There were other places, outside the school, where girls could be taught the use of pots and pans.

MR. JAMES said he was glad to see the increase in the vote, which he did not think was large enough; indeed, he hoped it would be found utterly inadequate, and that next year they would be called upon to vote double the amount for the

schools. He thought £500 a year was too little to spend in the proposed establishment of technical classes, which should not be limited to Perth and Fremantle. The instruction in musical drill during the past year had not been satisfactory, as it had not gone beyond teaching the ordinary volunteer recruit exercises, instead of the proper physical drill. It was to be regretted that, when an instructor was appointed, his knowledge did not go beyond the drilling of recruits. This was not the kind of drill desired for children, and he would like to see it altered.

MR. LEAKE, referring to Item 10 (Teacher of Method, £205), asked what it was for.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this officer was appointed to give instruction in the proper method of teaching, and it was intended for the benefit of all teachers throughout the colony.

MR. MORAN said this was an extraordinary item, and useless altogether.

MR. CONNOR said that such an appointment as this should have been thrown open to competition. From information given to him, he thought the most suitable person did not get the appointment on this occasion.

MR. MORAN said that as there were so many schools in the colony, and these so far apart, one teacher of method travelling about could not do much, and this would be a waste of money. Referring to Item 12 (Government schools, £16,000), he asked how the amount was arrived at.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the amount was arrived at by estimating the number of children who would probably attend both the Assisted and the Government schools.

MR. MORAN said that in looking through the Blue Book for last year he found the last item on the list was "Yilgarn," and it had the magnificent sum of £70 allotted. He found that a school was going to be built there, and he wanted to know whether a salary had been voted for a school teacher at Southern Cross and one at Coolgardie.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said these salaries were provided for, and that wherever a school had been or was being established, the teacher's salary

would come out of the amount of this item.

MR. MORAN asked what was the amount of salary fixed for the teacher at Southern Cross and at Coolgardie?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said there was a capitation allowance, and the salary in each case was dependent on the number of scholars, as a rule—so much for 50 scholars, so much for 80, so much for 100, and so on.

MR. MORAN said that if a teacher at Coolgardie was to be paid by results at first he would starve.

MR. LEAKE asked for an explanation of Item 21 (establishment of technical classes, £500).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Colonial Secretary having, during his journeyings in other colonies, seen the advantage of schools for technical instruction, in which trades and some science were taught, proposed to introduce the system into this colony, whereby persons might be trained in trades, and be able to obtain some instruction in science. For starting these classes the Government had agreed to ask for a sum of £500 in this vote.

MR. LEAKE congratulated the Government most heartily on the introduction of this item. Technical education would be productive of the greatest possible good, and would be much better than giving to the rising generation only book learning. It was a great thing to teach children to exercise their intelligence. One other thing he would like to see taught in schools, and a subject on which most young persons were kept in ignorance, was the rendering of first aid in cases of injury or accident. He was glad to observe that a number of small societies had been formed in Perth and Fremantle, by medical men, for teaching the principles of first aid.

MR. ILLINGWORTH also expressed satisfaction with the item for establishing technical classes. These would be stepping-stones to schools of mines, which he hoped to see in the future, though it would be too early for him to press these on the attention of the Government now. The immense value of schools of mines, in other places, should encourage the Government to take steps in the same direction.

MR. RANDELL said that, having moved in the direction of establishing technical classes some time ago, and been one of a committee, he was now pleased to see the Government were making a start. He congratulated the Government on having introduced the subject of technical education, to some extent at least, and he believed such instruction would be of more practical use than the ordinary "higher education," in a colony where the resources were developing, and where minerals were in large abundance.

Vote put and passed.

Registry, £2,166:

Agreed to.

Charitable Institutions, £10,978:

MR. JAMES asked the Premier to inquire into the inadequate accommodation of the Women's Home in Goderich Street, Perth. He said in one building were placed blacks, negroes, whites, half-casts, Chinese—all sorts and conditions of females, of all ages; he was told there were also several very young children, and one woman who was almost an idiot. There was no attempt to separate or classify these various females; and only one servant and a matron were employed to look after them. There was a growing need for improvement in that institution. Referring also to the Old Men's Home at Mount Eliza, Perth, he said that building should be removed, as the men were very much cramped for space.

MR. RANDELL said the Mount Eliza dépôt was a nice place, and very desirable. Until there arose an urgent need to have that site for some other object, the dépôt might well continue there. The salary of the master was very small, the position being a responsible one, and the Government might well consider whether the office was not worth more than £90 a year. There was room for improvement in the quality of food supplied at the dépôt. Some eighteen months ago he saw a sample of bread there, and it was unfit for human food. It was shown to him as a fair sample. He knew that the same complaint prevailed some years ago, and that it was well grounded. These things required constant watching.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the system of tendering for the supply of food to charitable institutions should be watched constantly as to the quality of the food

supplied, in order to prevent abuse, as the poor inmates had no means of making their complaints heard.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he agreed that £90 a year did not appear to be a large salary for the master in charge of the Mount Eliza dépôt. The Superintendent of Charitable Institutions, Mr. Dale, wrote in reference to the master at the dépôt: "The duties and responsibilities have greatly increased since 1887, and the salary is the same now. A deserving and painstaking officer; and would be glad to see some increase." Mr. Dale also wrote to the same effect about the matron of the Women's Home. He would, however, bring these matters under the notice of the Colonial Secretary. With regard to the quality of the food, he thought the old men at the dépôt would complain to the Superintendent when he visited them if the food was not satisfactory. He would mention this matter to the Superintendent.

MR. JAMES hoped the Premier would be careful about accepting, without qualification, what the Superintendent said about such things.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the dépôt was a receptacle for old loafers who had broken down their constitution by drinking, and been no good to society at all, nor been at all useful. They had either been in gaol, or ought to have been there. This institution was much abused in many ways. He knew some of these old men came from the dépôt into Perth and got drunk, and often appeared before the police magistrate. The institution was too close to the city. Only worthy cases should be admitted, whereas it was used as a convenience by men who ought to be at work.

MR. LEAKE said the master was also allowed quarters and rations, besides the £90 a year. None of those present knew when they might be relegated to that quiet retreat.

MR. JAMES, referring to Item 11 (travelling expenses of Superintendent, £50), asked what travelling the Superintendent had to do.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Superintendent had to go to the Swan Orphanage, to Subiaco, and to all the orphanages. The distance to Mount Eliza dépôt was two miles.

Vote put and passed.

Government Gardens, £1,069 15s.:

MR. LEAKE said attention might well be directed to the cultivation of native flowers of this colony, which would add greatly to the attraction of these gardens.

MR. JAMES supported the suggestion, and said he knew the head gardener was one who would gladly take the matter up. He expressed his gratification at the manner in which these gardens were managed, and the great improvements lately made. These gardens were improving day by day.

MR. RANDELL said that although this institution had not accomplished all he had expected when he moved for establishing it some years ago, still it was a pleasing feature. When moving for its establishment, he had desired that shade trees should be acclimatised, especially such as had nice foliage and were shapely; also that useful timber trees, such as the pines, should be obtained from other countries, so that persons in the colony might be induced to grow them in gardens. Every species of pine introduced here grew admirably. The Sydney cedar was also a tree which might be introduced here with advantage, as it produced a beautiful wood for furniture-making and such purposes. He hoped the attention of the managers of these gardens would be given to these suggestions.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether it would not be well to take that portion of the Government House domain which was now used for grazing a couple of cows, and lay it out for public gardens. The stables there might be removed to another part. A large area of ground there, now little used, could be better utilised for the benefit of the public, and might be laid out for the acclimatisation of plants.

MR. WOOD said that, rather than adopt the suggestion just made, he would prefer to see the Supreme Court buildings swept away, and the present Government Gardens extended to the river by reclaiming the foreshore. More attention should be given to the acclimatising of plants obtained from other countries, rather than cultivating the bush flowers of this colony, which could be seen without going to the Government Gardens.

Vote put and passed.

Defences, £19,542 10s. 10d.:

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this vote looked more formidable than it really was. The amount for this year was £19,542 10s. 10d., as compared with £12,214 13s. 4d. for last year, showing an apparent increase of about £7,000. On analysing the vote, it would be seen the increase was not nearly so great, because the amount actually expended last year was only £6,578 12s. 6d. out of £12,214 13s. 4d. estimated and voted, leaving underdrafts to the amount of £5,971 to be re-voted this year. Examination of the items would show that, for the upkeep of the Australian Auxiliary Squadron, this colony's contribution was not paid within the financial year. It would also be noticed that out of the amount voted for "small arms and maintenance, £2,984," only £39 17s. was expended, leaving £2,944 to be re-voted; the explanation being that the arms, although ordered, had not been received, and therefore not paid for, within the financial year. Deducting the underdrafts shown for several items in the Estimates, the actual amount required to be voted this year, apart from these re-votes, was £13,571, as against £12,214 voted last year. The only matter really requiring explanation was the change of policy on the part of the Government; for, instead of increasing the Volunteer force, it was proposed to establish a Militia, being a partially paid force. The Colonial Secretary had written him a memo., which he read, as follows:—

I forward you the Commandant's minute explaining his Estimates for 1894-5.

2. *Militia.* * * * The cost of maintaining the force is estimated at £3,680, but the saving on Volunteers and other items, as shown in the papers, will be about £1,330, thus making the net cost about £2,350.

3. There can be no question, I think, as to the necessity for maintaining an efficient military force in the colony, not only to preserve our sea coast towns from the depredations and exactions of marauding cruisers, in case Great Britain should unhappily be engaged in warfare with any naval power, but also to strengthen and support the law in the maintenance of peace, order, and good government in the colony.

4. With the exception of the garrison at Albany, jointly maintained by all the Australian colonies, Western Australia has up to the present time relied solely on its Volunteer corps to resist an invader and maintain law and order. I do not think she can safely continue to do so.

5. In consequence of the superior attractions of athletic sports, and the fact that to become a good soldier a man must submit to a considerable amount of drudgery and discipline, volunteering is far from as popular as it was in former years. Some few corps still exist, animated by the true volunteering spirit, but in the infantry, I regret to say, a general impression prevails that the soldier is worthy of his hire. In other countries his ardour is encouraged by military displays and encampments, rifle contests, and handsome prizes, and in other ways unknown to us, and I much fear that unless he be given an opportunity of enrolling himself in a partially paid force, the Volunteers will almost cease to exist in Perth and Fremantle, in the shape of infantry rifle corps.

6. By adopting the Militia scheme, we shall be assured of possessing a force of artillery and infantry, well disciplined and efficient, and sufficient in number to secure Fremantle from the attack of any ship or ships which a foreign power could possibly send to our shores, and available to suppress any disturbances or disorder which may possibly arise at our goldfields or elsewhere in the colony.

7. At Fremantle there are at present two large guns, which will, I hope, be mounted so soon as the harbour works are somewhat more advanced. These guns, in the hands of disciplined gunners, will be a match for any cruiser likely to honour our chief seaport with an unfriendly visit.

8. In case of war, it will be necessary to support the Albany garrison with an infantry force. It is proposed to maintain 50 militiamen at that port, and, if the necessity unfortunately arises, to draft such further infantry as may be required from the militia of Perth or Fremantle. Unless properly supported in the manner I have mentioned, the forts will be in danger of being attacked and taken by an enemy landing at Middlebar Beach, or elsewhere on the coast near King George's Sound; consequently, the existence of the fortifications renders an infantry force which can be relied on absolutely necessary for the security of King George's Sound, and to prevent the overwhelming misfortune it would be to this colony and Australia generally, were the forts to fall into the hands of an enemy.

That memo. was, no doubt, inspired by the Commandant. Hon. members need not be afraid of this proposal. The only question they had to decide for themselves was whether the colony should have a partially paid force, or should go on with the present Volunteer system. He might say, at once, that he had resisted this idea for a considerable time, because he thought it would be rather a death-blow to the Volunteer system; but he had at last given way, because he found he was not on as strong ground as he had thought he was. On the 10th June, he

wrote to the Colonial Secretary, saying he hesitated to strike a blow at the Volunteer system, as this new plan would no doubt do; and he suggested that the payment system should be applied to all Volunteers as they then stood. These were his views, at that time; but he found afterwards that what he was aiming at, in his suggestion for applying the payment system to the Volunteers, could be attained under the proposed Militia system, because many of those who were at present Volunteers would become Militiamen. These men were not to be paid at a high rate, but only for the time they were engaged in drill. If the defence forces were to be made efficient, this was about the best course to take, by having a partially paid force, rather than spending a lot of money on a force organised in such a way that the men could not be expected to give up their time and submit to strict discipline in a position that was purely honorary. He thought hon. members would not be going wrong in following the advice of the military authorities. The expense would not be much greater, and he would like hon. members to understand distinctly that the increased cost, in the present estimates, would be only £2,350.

Mr. A. FORREST said this vote was growing in amount, and was not reproductive, nor was it any particular benefit to the colony. The amount of the vote for this year was 2 per cent. of the whole revenue of the colony, and that was to be spent on soldiers. The idea of having a paid Militia was beyond the necessities of the colony. There being nearly 2,000 miles of coast, how could these few defenders protect that coast line? He moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

HOSPITALS BILL.

FIRST READING.

Bill received from the Legislative Council.

Read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:28 o'clock p.m.