

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 8th September, 1879.

Expenses of special survey, North-West Coast—Steam services on the coast and with Eastern Colonies—Grants to Road Boards for 1880—Vote for Roads and Bridges for 1879—Chinese Coolies and Nominated Immigrants—Classification system and re-organization of the Civil Service—Free sale of Colonial Wine—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7 p.m.

PRAYERS.

EXPENSES OF SPECIAL SURVEY,
NORTH-WEST COAST.

MR. CAREY, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands to lay on the Table of the House copies of all papers connected with the salaries and allowances paid to the surveyors employed on the North-West Coast Special Survey, 1877-8. Such papers to include memo. of probable cost, and proposed staff, as furnished by the Deputy Surveyor General previous to party being organised, &c.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) laid upon the Table papers affording the information asked for.

MR. CAREY asked the Colonial Secretary why the papers on this subject, laid on the Council Table last year, were taken away, and not printed with the Votes and Proceedings, as ordered by the Printing Committee?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) explained that the documents referred to had been laid on the Table through inadvertence, and had therefore been withdrawn.

STEAM SERVICES ON THE COAST AND
WITH THE EASTERN COLONIES.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place upon the Estimates such sum as in His Excellency's opinion will probably be required to carry out the wishes of this House, as expressed in their resolution of the 29th August, relative to steam services between the Eastern Colonies

"and the various ports of Western Australia." The hon. member said the Council had already passed a resolution very much to the same effect, but, in that resolution, no request was made that a sum of money should be placed on the Estimates for the object in view.

MR. SHENTON thought the resolution now before the Committee and that adopted on the 29th August were not altogether in accord. The present motion went outside the previous resolution, and was a distinct proposition from that already approved by the House. Nor was he prepared to support it unless the words "Eastern Colonies" were expunged.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said it appeared to him the present resolution was simply confirmatory of the previous one. The House might rest assured that nothing would be done by the Government in the matter beyond carrying out the expressed wish of the Council.

MR. SHENTON said it was distinctly understood when the resolution of the 29th August was adopted that the primary object in view was the extension of steam communication on the coast, as far as Nickol Bay, a secondary consideration being the empowering of His Excellency the Governor, in the event of the P. & O. Co. obtaining a monopoly of the intercolonial trade, to make some arrangement with the owners of the *Otway*, or some other steamer, for establishing a direct service between Albany and the Eastern Colonies. The present resolution ignored that part of the previous resolution altogether, and, as it stood at present, he should certainly oppose it.

MR. MARMION also thought that the intention of the House, when adopting the previous resolution, did not go so far as was contemplated on the motion now before the Committee. The previous resolution was to the effect that the Governor should be empowered to provide steam communication on the coast between Albany, Champion Bay and Nickol Bay, and the intermediate ports, and if possible, to make some arrangements with the P. & O. Co. for the conveyance of passengers and cargo between Albany and the other Colonies,

or, in the event of his being unable to make any satisfactory arrangement with that company that His Excellency should be at liberty to treat with some other company, and break up any monopoly which the P. & O. Co. might take advantage of.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) moved as an amendment, to strike out all the words after "steam services."

MR. SHENTON said that would entirely meet the objection he had to the resolution as at present worded.

MR. BROWN said he would be happy to accept the amendment. All he wished was that the House should adhere to the resolution adopted on the 29th August.

The resolution, as amended, was then put and carried.

GRANTS TO ROAD BOARDS FOR 1880.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That, in the opinion of this House, "considering the large sums which it is "proposed to expend out of loan upon "the main roads of the Colony, it is "desirable that a considerable reduction "should be made in the annual grant for "roads: and that an humble address be "presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to "place upon the Estimates for 1880, the "sum of £5000 for this purpose." The hon. member said that for some years past something like £11,000 a year has been voted out of the public funds for roads purposes, and so long as the revenue of the Colony warranted such expenditure, he would be the last to cavil at it, for, in his opinion there were few more deserving objects upon which the public funds, in a Colony like this, could be expended than upon roads and bridges. But, in view of the existing state of the finances, and of the further fact that a large sum of borrowed money was about to be expended on the public roads of the Colony, he thought hon. members would agree with him that it was their duty to cut down the expenditure in every possible way legitimate with the actual requirements of the Colony, so as to bring it down to a level with the revenue. To that end, it was

proposed in the resolution before the Committee to reduce the annual grant for roads from £11,000 to £5,000. Indeed some hon. members were of opinion that it should be reduced even more than that, and he was not at all disinclined to agree with them, if such was the general wish of the House.

MR. HARPER thought every hon. member must admit the necessity of reducing the public expenditure, in view of the present unsatisfactory state of the finances. Economy ought to be the order of the day just now, and he thought the grant for roads, for next year, might easily be reduced even to £3000, bearing in mind the large expenditure that was contemplated for this purpose out of the roads loan. Moreover, he thought that the apathetic manner in which the various Roads Boards discharged their functions, and the small degree of interest shown in the proceedings of these bodies, as evidenced by the difficulty experienced in obtaining members of the Boards to meet for the despatch of business—he thought, in view of these circumstances, that the vote for next year might even be reduced to £3,000. If that sum were found to be insufficient for the purpose, it might possibly induce those who required the roads to do as people in the other Colonies did—assess their properties for the purpose of providing the necessary funds for the conservation of the roads in their own neighborhood. He would therefore move as an amendment upon the resolution before the Committee that "£3000" be substituted in lieu of "£5000."

MR. CROWTHER was opposed to any reduction being made in the annual grant for roads, which only amounted to about 3½d. per mile. If they were going to reduce the grant from £11,000 to £5,000 or £3,000, and fritter money away like this, they had better button up their pockets altogether, and refuse to grant a penny piece for the preservation of their roads. As to the allegation of apathy and indifference manifested by the District Roads Boards, the charge might be well-founded as regards some of the boards, but in the case of other boards it was not so, and he thought it would be very unfair that these boards should have to suffer for the remissness of others, on the principle of visiting the

sins of the fathers upon the children. Let those boards who spent the money properly and economically—and the Government knew pretty well which of the boards did so, and which did not—have the money to spend. He thought there were plenty of other items of expenditure which might fairly be reduced before the grants for roads.

MR. BROWN: Name them.

MR. CROWTHER: Reduce the salaries of officials to £600 a year. He had no intention to move any amendment upon the motion before the House, but he would ask the hon. member for Geraldton whether it would not be wise on his part to reconsider the subject, and to withdraw his resolution.

MR. SHENTON presumed the hon. member for the North (Mr. Harper) must have been alluding to his own district when he spoke in such disparaging terms of the Local Roads Boards. The charge of apathy and indifference was not applicable to the boards in this part of the Colony, at any rate. He understood the intention to be that this sum of £5,000 should be expended by the boards upon minor roads of their respective districts, leaving the main roads to be provided for out of the loan raised and appropriated for that purpose. It was on this understanding that he supported the resolution before the Committee. He thought £5,000 was the lowest sum to which they could reduce the annual grant, if the roads of the Colony were to be maintained in an ordinary state of repair.

MR. BROCKMAN was not at all surprised at the manner in which the hon. member for Nickol Bay had referred to the mode in which the District Roads Boards, as a rule, discharged their duties. As it was evident that the House must exercise the most rigid economy in the expenditure of the public money, in view of the heavy deficiency that stared us in the face, he thought that a reduction in the annual grants for roads, would, in view of the large amount to be expended for the same purpose out of borrowed money, be a legitimate reduction. For that reason he would support the resolution.

MR. HARDEY said, had he ever thought that the annual vote for roads purposes would have been cut down, as

it was now proposed to cut it down, he never would have given his support to the proposal to raise a roads loan. He had always understood that this loan had been raised to subsidise, or to supplement, the usual annual grants for roads, which were getting into a worse state of repair every year. He could not help regarding the step now proposed, as an effort to "steal a march" (so to speak) upon the annual grant. It would have been far better to have done without the loan at all, if they were going to reduce the annual grant for the maintenance of their roads, in the manner now proposed. The great cry against the amount voted for roads had always been that it was insufficient to keep the existing roads in repairs; how would it be, then, when they had to meet the increased expenditure for upkeep, which the loan would entail? He had voted for the loan on the distinct understanding that its expenditure should go hand in hand with the annual grant, and therefore he could not consistently support the resolution now before the Committee, and still less the amendment.

MR. MONGER thought at one time that £5,000 would have sufficed for the roads next year, in the face of the large amount appropriated for the same object out of the loan; but recently, after seeing the manner in which the loan was being expended on the York road, he was afraid this money would be simply thrown away, and that it would never do to reduce the annual grants made to the Roads Boards. The contracts which had been accepted by the Superintendent of Roads, on the York road, up to the present time, would prove perfectly useless, and the money might just as well have been thrown into the sea. He was surprised to hear the member for Nickol Bay express so poor an opinion as to the District Roads Boards; the hon. member must surely be measuring the capacity of these bodies by that of the board in the district which he (Mr. Harper) represented. He would say this much of the board in his own district—£500 expended under their supervision would realise more permanent benefit to the roads than would the whole of the £8,000 appropriated out of the loan, if spent in the manner in which it had been spent up to the present time. He

would vote against any reduction in the annual grant, for he felt perfectly satisfied that the expenditure out of the loan would be of no use at all, judging by the specimen already to be seen on the York road.

MR. CAREY said he had been a member of a District Roads Board for many years past, and his experience of the working of these bodies did not tally with the estimate formed of them by the hon. member for the North. He believed the work performed under their supervision was quite equal to that done under the new system of superintendence, judging from what he had seen of both; and if no other member would move that the annual grant remain as it is (£11,000), he would do so himself. The step now proposed to be adopted appeared to him to be only a quiet way of wiping out the roads boards. They were to have no voice in the expenditure of the £50,000 loan, and it was proposed that the annual grant placed at their disposal all over the Colony be reduced to £5,000, or even £3,000, which, in fact, would leave them hardly anything at all to control or spend, and they might as well be wiped out of existence altogether.

On the amendment being put,

MR. CROWTHER moved, as a further amendment, that "£11,000" be substituted for "£5,000" as the amount of the grant for roads boards.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said hon. members were aware that this grant had been gradually increased as the revenue of the Colony increased, and at present it stood at £11,000. Last year, however, after a long discussion as to the condition of the roads of the Colony, it was resolved to borrow a considerable sum of money for expenditure upon them. That money had been apportioned to the various Districts, and its expenditure would spread over the next two years, giving a sum of £25,000 to be spent on the principal main roads this year, and the same amount next year. The expenditure of this large sum of money could not do otherwise than reduce the necessity for the ordinary expenditure upon roads; nor indeed could the two systems be carried out very well together. It was therefore proposed to leave the

expenditure of the loan to what he might call a central body, and to place a certain sum, in addition, at the disposal of the roads boards, to enable them to carry out any works of special necessity in their respective Districts, and not to deprive them entirely of the resources hitherto placed at their disposal. In doing this it appeared to him that hon. members would be acting quite consistently. Twenty-five thousand this year, and the same amount next year, in addition to an annual grant of £5,000, would, he thought, be a very fair expenditure upon the roads—an expenditure which the Colony could not well afford to exceed. When the whole of the loan had been expended, then undoubtedly members might fairly expect that the amount of the annual grant should revert to its normal standard. Although the hon. member for York had spoken somewhat disparagingly of the contracts which had been let on the York road, he thought when the hon. member saw the work completed his opinion would be very considerably modified. At present the hon. member's opinion appeared to have been based upon a foregone conclusion, prejudicial to the existing arrangement. He felt sure that by giving full license to the present system, and simply leaving the Roads Boards with such a sum as would suffice to meet their requirements on the minor roads of the Colony, the result would be eminently advantageous to the Colony. By the time the £50,000 loan had been expended, the local boards would have the roads handed over to them in a fair state of repair, and the House would then be perfectly justified in reverting to the present grant of £11,000—and, if possible, increase it—for distribution among the various boards, to enable them to maintain the roads which would be handed to them. At present he was entirely in accord with the hon. member for Geraldton.

MR. MARMION said it was his intention to support the amendment of the hon. member for the North, and reduce the grant to £3000. He did not profess to be intimately acquainted with the internal working of the Roads Boards, nor did he mean to say a word against these bodies; but he did mean to say that the feeling which had actuated that House in passing the Roads Boards Act,

1871, and the hopes which influenced hon. members in doing so, had never been realised. The intention of His Excellency Governor Weld, who was the prime mover in the introduction of the system of local boards, as well as of municipal institutions, into the Colony, was, while giving the Colonists greater control over the expenditure of the public funds, at the same time to lead them to adopt the principle of direct taxation. It was now seven or eight years since the District Roads Boards Act came into force, and he believed that in no solitary instance throughout the whole Colony had the principle of direct taxation been recognised and acted upon. Let hon. members look at the Act itself. What was set forth in its preamble? "Whereas it may be necessary that such sums of money [devoted to the purpose of road repair out of the general revenue] should be supplemented by local rates, and it is desirable that such rates should be raised and expended under the authority of district boards, by and with the consent of the inhabitants of such districts, be it therefore enacted," etc. This clearly indicated what the House had in view in passing that Act, and in establishing District Roads Boards; and that was, to introduce a system of direct local taxation, to be expended under local control—in other words, to pave the way for a system of local self-government. But what had been the result? In no solitary instance had the principle been recognised, and not a single district in the Colony had come forward spontaneously to impose upon itself a system of direct taxation, as was contemplated when the House adopted the Act referred to. He thought the time had arrived when the people of this Colony should recognise the duty of contributing by means of direct taxation towards the conservation of their roads, and, in the hope that this principle might the sooner be recognised and acted upon, he would support the amendment limiting the grant out of the general revenue for roads purposes to £3000. He was quite ready to acknowledge at the same time that beginning to cut down expenditure upon works of public utility like roads, the Council was beginning to retrench at the wrong end, and if any hon. member

could show him in what particular other instance they could commence to cut down the expenditure, he should be most happy to fall in with him. On the other hand, if he found these District Roads Boards practically manifesting their readiness to adopt direct taxation for the purpose of conserving, improving, and making their roads, he would be glad to help them, even to a greater extent than the amount of the present annual grant. But seeing, as he did, that there appeared to be no inclination on the part of these country boards to recognise the principle upon which they were established,—when he saw the selfishness that characterised the proceedings of these local bodies—he thought the time had arrived when they should be taught to recognise their duties in respect of imposing local taxation to meet their local wants. In order to impress this upon their minds, and in order to show the reason that actuated him in supporting the proposition to reduce the amount of the annual grant, he would vote for the amendment of the hon. member for Nickol Bay.

Mr. CROWTHER said the hon. gentleman opposite, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, had talked about the consistency of the course proposed to be adopted by the hon. member for Geraldton. He (Mr. Crowther) also would preach consistency. The hon. gentleman said that as the revenue of the Colony increased, the annual grant for roads purposes had been correspondingly increased. This was as it should be. But the inconsistency to his mind was the proposal to cut down this grant to less than one half the present amount, when in reality there had been no diminution in the revenue. The diminution, if any,—as he had pointed out on a previous occasion—was apparent rather than real, and in view of this fact he failed to see the consistency of diminishing the amount of the roads grant. As hon. members were aware, the money borrowed for expenditure upon roads was not intended to supplant the annual grant for ordinary repairs, but in order to render impassable portions of otherwise good roads fit for traffic. There was no intention to interfere with the ordinary duties of the Roads Boards, or to curtail their expenditure. This was evident on reference to the debate that took place

on the subject of the loan last Session, as recorded in the Book of Chronicles. The question was distinctly asked, whether it was the intention of the Government to interfere with the functions of the local boards, or with the present expenditure upon roads, and the reply of the Commissioner of Lands was that it was not—that they would not in any way trench upon what might be regarded as the legitimate functions of the local boards, namely the expenditure of the grant-in-aid in keeping in order the roads entrusted to their care. Yet, the House was now asked to reduce that grant from £11,000 to £3,000, which was surely interfering with their functions, and restricting their operations very considerably, apart from the inconsistency of such a proposal, in the face of there being no actual diminution in the general revenue. He would be sorry, in the interests of the country at large, to see this vote reduced one penny, and he hoped other members would regard the subject in the same light.

The amendment upon the amendment—That the annual grant for roads be £11,000—was then put, and a division being called for, there appeared :

Ayes	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	10
Majority against			3

AYES.
Mr. Carey
Mr. Burgess
Mr. Hardey
Mr. Monger
Mr. Brockman
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Crowther (Teller.)

NOES.
The Hon. R. T. Golds-
worthy
The Hon. G. W. Leake
The Hon. M. Fraser
Mr. Glyde
Mr. Harper
Mr. Marmion
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Pearse
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Brown (Teller.)

MR. HARPER'S amendment was then put and negatived, on the voices.

The original resolution was then agreed to.

VOTE FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES FOR 1879.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House in consequence of the large expenditure out of loan, upon the main roads of the Colony, it is undesirable to expend the

"full amount of the vote for roads and bridges placed upon the Estimates for the current year; and this House humbly prays that His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to make such a reduction in the usual payments as to His Excellency may seem advisable." The hon. member said he was perfectly well aware that in moving this resolution he was adopting a very unpopular step. The press of the Colony was strongly, and he believed unanimously, opposed to it, and he had no doubt the public generally would object to a reduction in the annual grant made for roads and bridges—which he supposed was the most popular item on the Estimates. But the time had arrived when it behoved the members of that House, as the guardians of the public purse, to exercise the utmost economy in the expenditure of the public funds, irrespective of the clamours of their constituents. It was all very well, though somewhat inconsistent, for people to say that this vote or that vote must not be reduced, and in the same breath to say "we must not have increased taxation." He yielded to no one in his desire to see a large amount of money economically expended on the roads of the Colony, but the question was—where is the money to come from? The Colony had not the money to spend, and he thought it would be dishonest on the part of that House, no matter how desirable it was to carry out road repairs, to vote away money unless they saw their way clear to provide it. Hon. members were aware, from the investigation which was made last Session, that, with the strictest economy in all departments of the public service, it was doubtful whether the revenue would meet the expenditure; and the same state of affairs would be found to be the case during the ensuing year. He, therefore, thought that it was the bounden duty of the House to economise in every legitimate way; and bearing in mind, as he had already said that evening, that a large amount of money would be expended on the roads of the Colony next year out of the loan, he thought they might fairly curtail the expenditure for the same service out of the general revenue. What the extent of this curtailment should be was left entirely to the discretion of the Governor, who was

asked to make such reductions only as might to His Excellency appear advisable. It was true that some of the districts had not had any portion of the loan allotted to them, and in the case of those districts it would only be fair, and an act of common justice, that they should have their full allowance of the annual grant. As he had already said, he was fully aware that the motion for reducing expenditure in this direction was an unpopular one; but he was prepared to face the responsibility attaching to the proposal, and he hoped other members would not shirk their share of the responsibility. They were told there were other items which ought to be cut down rather than the grant for roads, and when he asked the hon. member who said so to name those items, the reply was "Cut down the salaries of all officials to £600 a year!" Now there happened to be a very few officials who were in receipt of salaries amounting to that sum, and therefore very little saving would be effected by the adoption of that course. It was a very popular cry with some people this cutting down the salaries of officials—let them live on bread and cheese. But he had always maintained—and in this his constituents had always upheld him—that a public servant like any other servant was entitled to a fair remuneration for his work. If it could be shown that any saving could be effected in any department of the public service, without destroying the efficiency of the service, or injuring the public interests, he would be very glad indeed to see such a saving carried out, and he would feel it his duty to support it. It was not contemplated in the resolution that the Government should withhold money from road boards who had already contracted to carry out improvements on the faith of receiving their usual share of the grant. This was a matter of detail which he thought might fairly be left in the hands of the Government, who no doubt would deal fairly with each claim, on its merits. As to the question of road boards declining to accept the principle of direct taxation, and to impose upon themselves a local tax for the purpose of keeping their roads in repair as contemplated by the District Roads Board Act, it was true that no road board had voluntarily adopted that

principle; but, in his opinion, all the taxes which were levied in the Colony fell finally upon the producer. And so far as the producers were concerned—residents in country districts—it was as broad as it was long whether they were taxed by a vote of that House or by a self-imposed tax; one would have precisely the same effect upon them as the other. And he thought that it was the duty of the House, seeing the crippled state of the Colony's finances, to ask the local boards to exercise the powers with which they were invested, and tax themselves, for the purposes of keeping their roads in repair.

Mr. CROWTHER said he had yet to learn that the House had the power to cancel a vote already passed, as was proposed to be done here. The Council last Session voted a sum of £11,000 for roads and bridges, and he questioned whether it had the right now to come forward to limit the expenditure of that vote. If it could, all he could say was that the constitution under which we lived, moved, and had our being was a different constitution from what he had thought it was, and different to that possessed by any other country he had ever heard of. Last year a sum of £11,000 was voted and set apart for the various roads boards, who, in effect, were told that this amount would be placed at their disposal as usual. On the strength of that vote the boards had entered into contracts and engagements, in the expectation of receiving their usual grant from the Government to meet the expense, and it would be most unfair towards these boards if the grant, or any portion of it, were to be withheld from them. To his own certain knowledge, some road boards had done this—had borrowed money from the banks, for the purpose of carrying out necessary works, in the expectation of being able to pay back the money when they received their share of the annual grant from the Government. If that House, after voting the money one Session—thereby leading people to expect it, and to contract debts on the faith of it—at the next Session withheld it, why, all he could say was, that it looked to him very like a dishonest action on the part of the House. There was no other word for it.

MR. CAREY rose to move an amendment. He did not think this was a matter of whether hon. members were in accord with their constituents or not, but a matter of keeping faith with the roads boards. As to expecting these boards to impose a local tax for the purpose of keeping the roads in repair, it was a well-known fact that the farmers could not afford to meet any further demands in the way of taxation—they were taxed heavily enough already in proportion to their means. When the House agreed to the £50,000 loan for roads, it was thoroughly understood that the annual grant of £11,000 should also be appropriated, and that the loan would not interfere with that. He would therefore move, as an amendment upon the motion of the hon. member for Geraldton—"That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable to expend the full amount for roads and bridges placed upon the Estimates for the current year."

The Committee divided, and the amendment was carried, the numbers being

Ayes	10
Noes	6
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Majority for	4

AYES.
Mr. Brockman
Mr. Burgess
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Glyde
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Hardey
Mr. Monger
Mr. Pearse
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Carey (Teller).

NOES.
Hon. E. T. Goldsworthy
Hon. G. W. Leake
Hon. M. Fraser
Mr. Harper
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Brown (Teller).

The original resolution was therefore negatived, and the amendment reported.

CHINESE COOLIES AND NOMINATED IMMIGRANTS.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. HARPER moved the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the experiment adopted last year of meeting the demand for labor within the Colony, by the importation of a limited number of Chinese coolies, should be continued; also, that facilities for the introduction of nominated immigrants should continue to be afforded; and this House humbly prays that His Excellency the

Governor will be pleased to place upon the Estimates a sum of £2,000 for this purpose." The hon. member said the subject had already been so freely and fully discussed at an earlier stage of the Session that he would not trespass on the time or patience of the House by dilating upon it, but would content himself by simply moving the resolution.

MR. BROCKMAN moved an amendment, limiting the sum to be placed on the Estimates to £1,000, for the introduction of nominated European immigrants only. The hon. member did not think the Colony, in the present state of its finances, could afford such luxuries as Chinese coolies.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he would support the amendment. If hon. members would look at the return (furnished the other day) showing the expenses attendant upon introducing the 50 coolies recently imported to the Colony by the Government, they would find that the cost of their passage and the expenses incidental thereto amounted to £493. In addition to that amount, there was a sum of £195 18s., which had been paid to these men at Singapore—being an advance of three months' wages to them. Of this sum, only £29 had yet been repaid, and the balance might, or might not, ever be paid. This return did not, in reality, show anything like the actual cost incurred in connection with these fifty coolies, for, after three years, the Government were bound to return them to their own country, and pay their passage back. So that instead of expending money in introducing a class of people who were likely to become permanent settlers, the Government actually undertook to send these men, introduced here at public expense, back to the place they came from after three years' residence in the Colony. If we were in a position to afford the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of immigration, our first consideration should be to expend it in the introduction of people who were likely to become permanent settlers and thus contribute to the general welfare and prosperity of the Colony. He understood that some half a dozen of these Chinese coolies had been sent to Sharks Bay, where he presumed the only employment for them was pearling. Now pearling had always been regarded

as a most lucrative industry, and surely the country should not be asked to tax itself for the purpose of introducing labor for those employed in prosecuting that industry. Why the Government should take such a fatherly interest in these pearlers at Sharks Bay, by providing them with cheap labor at the public expense, he could not say. Not one of these coolies were even described as agriculturists or farm laborers—the very class of men which the country stood in need of; they were described as house-servants, cooks, gardeners, etc. Surely persons who required that class of servants, and who wished to indulge in the luxury of colored labor, ought to be made to pay for their introduction, and not ask the country, which was already very heavily taxed to meet the ordinary public expenditure, to do so.

MR. BROWN looked upon the principles enunciated by the hon. member for Perth as most damaging principles. They virtually amounted to this—that in a young and struggling Colony, requiring population to develop its resources, where labor was exceedingly difficult to obtain, and exceedingly expensive considering the quality of that obtainable, no money was to be expended out of the public funds in the introduction of the labor necessary for the development of its resources. That short-sighted principle had been abandoned long ago in all other parts of the world similarly situated to Western Australia,—not in British Colonies alone, but in other foreign dependencies. It was all very well to say that the class of immigrants we ought to encourage were those who would become settlers and employers of labor, rather than laboring themselves, but the hon. member must know perfectly well that we were not at all likely to get that class of immigrants in any number. The Colony had expended thousands of pounds in introducing immigrants from the United Kingdom, but the result hitherto had been utter and complete disappointment and failure. He did not suppose any member of that House would think of going elsewhere than the home country for immigrants, if there was any chance of our getting a suitable class from that market; but they all knew they could not hope to do this. The cry adopted by the hon.

member for Perth against the introduction of the class of labor contemplated in the resolution was undoubtedly a popular cry. There had been a great outcry on the part of the laboring classes against the introduction of these coolies, or indeed of any other kind of labor. But was the House to submit to so selfish an outcry, and allow the resources and the industries of the Colony to be crippled by adopting the principles advocated by the hon. member for Perth? He did not mean to say that these coolies were the most suitable class of labor for the Colony or indeed that they were the best we could obtain. Possibly there might be other parts of the world besides the United Kingdom—Germany, for instance—where they might obtain more suitable labor; but at present the East seemed to be the only field open to us, and he therefore trusted hon. members would support the resolution. Possibly some of the coolies introduced had proved worthless, but the same remark would apply to a great number of immigrants introduced, at very great expense, from the mother country. He very much doubted whether the cost of importing these coolies and of paying their passage back would be greater than the cost of introducing European immigrants, and our experience in that line had been anything but encouraging.

MR. S. H. PARKER corrected an error he had fallen into when giving the cost of introducing the fifty coolies recently imported. He found that the actual expenditure incurred was £716, and not £493. A portion of this amount might, it was true, be refunded to the Government, but, on the other hand, it might not—it depended whether these men were successful in obtaining constant employment, and also whether they were honest or dishonest. On referring to the report of the Immigration Agent, describing these coolies, he found that five of them at least—ten per cent. of the whole lot—were, admittedly, utterly worthless. One of these was described as “very willing, but a cripple,” and would have to remain in the depôt during the remainder of his term of three years, unless the Government chose to pay his passage back earlier. The next one was briefly described as “useless.” Another was char-

acterised as "lazy and dishonest;" another as "no good: cannot be got to do anything;" while the fifth was described as "good tempered, but very idle." If the House thought it worth while to expend the public funds in the introduction of men of this stamp, all he could say was that in doing so they would be departing from every sound principle of political economy and of common sense.

MR. CROWTHER said the hon. member for Swan had characterised the coolie as a luxury. It was but the enunciation of a truism to say that what were luxuries in some parts of the world were simply necessities in other parts, and he thought that in this Colony the coolie must be classed in the latter category. He was not exactly the precise article we wanted, but, for many considerations, he was about the best we could get; and as we were not likely to secure the genuine article from the laboring market of the old country the best thing we could do was to be content with small mercies in the shape of an occasional importation of coolies. As to the outcry against this class of labor, he would ask hon. members who it was that cried against it? Why, the very men who themselves had their passages paid out here from home, and who were jealous of any acquisition to the labor market. His own personal experience of the coolies that had recently been introduced was such as to lead him to the conclusion that they compared favorably, very favorably, most favorably, with the labour that had been introduced from other countries. He remembered when the *Lady Elizabeth* brought a shipload of immigrants from England some time ago, the Immigration Agent in reporting upon the class of men then brought out, said they were on the whole a fair lot—one certainly was an imbecile, one or two certainly were cripples, two or three certainly were jail-birds, and a few more certainly were returned convicts. So that, upon the whole, there appeared to have been a much larger proportion than ten per cent. of that shipload who would compare unfavorably with the most objectionable of the recent experimental batch of coolies. Of the five unfortunates that had fallen under the displeasure of the hon. member for Perth,

it appeared that the head and front of the offence of one of them was that he was "willing, but lazy." Now really that was a venial offence, after all. He often felt that way himself, especially during the summer season. Seriously, if the House wished to see the Colony's resources developed, and its industries successfully prosecuted—if they had a desire to contribute to the honest progress of the Colony—something must be done to supply the settlers with labour. As to the question of colour—the hon. member for Perth said if people wanted colored labour, let them pay for it themselves. But surely the same principle applied to white labour. The fact of the matter was, we must be content with what we could get. No one was better aware than himself that the class of labour which the Colony really required was the honest, industrious, agricultural laborer; but as there was no prospect of their wants being supplied in this respect, let us accept the next best class of labour we could get—coolie labour.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said he had already, on a former occasion, informed the House how the Government had been disappointed with reference to the first batch of coolies, in not having been able to obtain them at Hong Kong as intended, and having to put up with Singapore coolies, which probably accounted for the objectionable five referred to by the hon. member for Perth, who, with his usual ingenuity, had so tortured the return placed before the House as to make as much capital as possible out of it. The hon. member's eagerness for making capital out of official returns reminded him of the Scotchman's advice to his son, "Make money; honestly, if you can, but make money." Although, as very truly pointed out by the hon. member for Greenough, coolie labor was not exactly the class of labor the country stood in need of—and no one maintained that it was—still it was better for the Colony to put up with what it could get than to have every industry paralysed and trade stagnate for the want of labour. As already pointed out, the cost of introducing these coolies was very considerably less than the cost of importing European labour, and the quality of the latter had certainly not been such as

to render it proportionately cheaper than coolie labour. He saw no reason why the majority of these coolies should not remain in the Colony, especially the best of them, and the result would probably be that others, finding that their countrymen had succeeded so well, would come to our shores of their own accord, spontaneously, and without any assistance from the public funds. He would be sorry to see the Colony inundated with Chinese, or to witness any large accretion to our population from the over-flowings of the Northern Territory of South Australia, and he thought it behoved us to be very careful in this respect. But, seeing that the few which it was proposed to introduce under Government supervision would be carefully selected, and free from any contagion, there was no cause for apprehension on the score of the Colony being invaded by any overwhelming force of these celestials.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) supported the resolution, and said the Government were quite prepared to carry out what the House wished with reference to the question of coolie immigration. That question appeared to him to resolve itself into this—labor or no labor, for it was evident from their past experience that it was useless to rely upon the English market for a supply of labour suitable to the requirements of the Colony. As to the cost of introducing the coolies who recently arrived, although as stated by the hon. member for Perth the entire outlay in connection with their introduction was about £700, still it must be borne in mind that a considerable proportion of this sum was repayable by the coolies, as it consisted of advances made to them by the Government. It was true that up to the present time only a small portion of these advances had been repaid, but he maintained that the whole amount would be recovered as the men became possessed of the means to recoup it. As to the Government paying back their passages, that of course would have to be done, if they desired to return; but whether this should be made a condition in any future agreement entered into with these men was a question worthy of the consideration of the House. As to the moral character of those who

were recently introduced, and the five unfortunates to whom the hon. member for Perth had referred, there were black sheep in every flock, and if hon. members would refer to the Immigration Agent's report on the European immigrants who came out in the *Lady Elizabeth*, he thought they would find that, morally speaking, the coolies were a superior class of immigrants to a great many who came out in that vessel. The Government, however, were quite prepared to do whatever the House wished in this matter; for his own part he hoped hon. members would agree to the original motion, and give this class of labor another trial.

MR. BURGESS quite agreed with the sentiments expressed by the hon. member for Greenough; we wanted labor, but we could not get it from the old country, and the immigrants we got from the other Colonies were a bad lot—a lot which he would not care to have much to do with. He believed if the Government succeeded in obtaining a supply of coolies from Hong Kong, we would be pretty sure to get a good lot of men; and if they could talk and understand a little English, it would be much to recommend them to the favour of employers of labour. The hon. member for Perth said that people who wanted house servants, cooks, and so on, ought to pay for their introduction, and not ask the country to do so. He would like to know whether the hon. member had acted on this principle with regard to his own domestic servants. Did he import them at his own cost, or were they introduced at the cost of the public?

MR. S. H. PARKER admitted they were brought out at public expense, but they were immigrants who would eventually settle down in the Colony, and whose passages would not have to be paid home by this country. But with coolies, we started at once with the assumption that they would never settle down, and if we started with the same assumption as regarded white labor he would be as strenuously opposed to the importation of Europeans at the public expense as he was now opposed to the introduction of Chinese.

MR. GLYDE would support the amendment of the hon. member for Swan, in the belief that, though it was

desirable that facilities for the introduction of nominated immigrants should continue, it was not desirable that the Chinese experiment should be renewed. He had always been of opinion, and was so still, that it was to the neighbouring Colonies we should have to look not only for the labor to meet our requirements, but also for capital and enterprise necessary to force this settlement ahead.

MR. CAREY said it was a significant fact, and one that spoke volumes as to the estimation in which the official members held coolie labor, that not one of the hon. gentlemen who sat on the Treasury benches had any of these coolies in his own employ. He agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member Mr. Glyde, that we should turn our attention more to the other Colonies for supplying our wants in the way of labor, and he would suggest that a sum of £1000 should be added for the introduction of immigrants from those Colonies. The cost per head would only be about £4, whereas, what with paying their passages here and paying their passages back, the cost of introducing Chinese coolies would certainly not be less than £15 a piece, at the lowest calculation. Should it be determined to continue the introduction of coolie labor, he thought it would be wise to limit any further experiments in this line to Indian, rather than Chinese, coolies. The Postmaster General (Mr. Helmich), who was about to visit his old home, in India, would no doubt, if empowered to do so, undertake the selection of a suitable class of coolie immigrants from that country.

MR. MONGER said a great deal had been said by some hon. members in favor of the coolies recently imported. The experience of them gained by the settlers in the York district was altogether the reverse, the three or four who had been introduced there having proved utterly useless. Two or three of them had been returned to Perth—at the public expense he believed; the other one was still employed on an outlying station. He had recently communicated with the employer of this man, and asked how the Chinaman was getting on? The reply he received was “Oh, bother the Chinaman! I wish the Colonial Secretary had him

round his neck.” He was afraid that those who spoke so much in favor of continuing the introduction of this class of labor, were actuated by selfish interests rather than by any desire for the welfare of the Colony.

MR. MARMION said it had been stated that it was stipulated in the agreement with these men that their return passages should be paid by the Government, and as the statement had been endorsed by the hon. gentleman opposite (the Colonial Secretary), he presumed such was the case. In the course of the debate last Session on this subject he spoke adversely to the introduction of these men, principally, on the ground that they were not desirable Colonists,—that their introduction was intended to benefit a few rather than the general community, and that such being the case he considered that those who were desirous of encouraging the introduction of this class of labor, and who would benefit by its introduction, should relieve the Government of the expense of importing them and of the liability of paying their return passages. He was still of the same opinion—that they should be introduced at the expense of those who desired them, and who would benefit by their introduction. Stress had been laid on the fact that these men were useful to various classes of the community. No doubt they were more or less so, and he could quite understand country members being desirous that their constituents should be supplied with a class of labor that was, at all events, cheap, and that sooner or later might become useful; at the same time, he was not prepared to advocate their introduction at the expense of the Colony, more particularly if the Government rendered themselves liable to pay their passages back. Such was never the intention of the House. He thought if hon. members would read the debate that took place on the subject they would agree with him that it was never contemplated that the return passages of these men should be paid by the Government. He did not think the Colony could afford to go that far, in the matter of introducing what, after all, could not be regarded as a desirable class for the purposes of settlement. He would also draw attention to the fact that the fifty coolies recently introduced

cost, in the first instance, £10 per man, or nearly two-thirds the cost of introducing European labor. It did surprise him to find that those employers of labor who were so eager to engage these coolies had been so backward in refunding to the Government the amount of the advances made to the men. He had always understood that it was stipulated in the agreements entered into between the employers of these men and the Government that these advances should be refunded by the employers; but it appeared from a return recently laid on the Table that out of a sum of £175 due in this respect only £29 had been refunded. Possibly the Colonial Secretary might be able to throw some light on this subject. Allusions had been made in the course of the debate to the failure of the Government in getting from the United Kingdom a desirable class of immigrants, and some hon. members had suggested the expediency of endeavouring to obtain a suitable class of labor from the Eastern Colonies. Had it ever struck these hon. members whether it was actually necessary, or desirable at the present time, to introduce any large number of immigrants from any part? He very much doubted whether the requirements of our labor market justified any large addition to our population. With regard to European labor, the only field the Colony had tried was the United Kingdom; the continental markets had never been tried and it did appear to him strange that such a trial had not been made, with a view to the introduction of Germans, or Italians, or Swiss, who were acknowledged, wherever they had been tried, to be excellent colonists—frugal, industrious, and law-abiding. He thought the Colony, whenever it resumed European immigration, should make an effort to induce some of this class of labor to come to our shores, where they would prove very useful as vigneron, and for other purposes and pursuits. He would prefer to see an experiment made in this direction than in the introduction of coolies, and for that reason he would support the amendment.

MR. HARPER said a great deal of stress had been laid on the fact that the Government was liable to pay the passages of these coolies back to their own country. On this point he would

only speak from his own experience in the matter. The few coolies who had been introduced to the North West Settlements some few years ago were, he believed, introduced on the same condition; at any rate, those introduced by the firm of which he was formerly a member were introduced on those terms, namely that at the termination of their engagement, if they wished to return, their passages should be paid. But not one of those men claimed a return passage, or desired to go back; they found that they were far better off where they were than they could ever hope to be in their own country, and so they remained after the expiration of their engagement, and until they had earned enough to pay their own passage back.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake), referring to what had fallen from the hon. member Mr. Glyde, as to our having eventually to look to the Eastern Colonies for our supply of labour, said it would obviously be a breach of good faith, and certainly of good manners, to say nothing of inter-colonial reciprocity, were this Colony to seek, by offering free passages and other inducements, to attract, to inveigle, from the other Colonies labor which had been introduced there at the expense of the local taxpayers. So far as he could gather about these Chinese, they appeared to be altogether a very desirable class of immigrants: they were docile, hard-working, sober, and frugal, and as to their moral character, the Supreme Court at any rate had never been graced by their presence.

MR. PEARSE thought it would be very undesirable indeed that these coolies should be introduced in any large numbers. He had no great faith in them himself. As to obtaining labor from the Eastern Colonies, possibly it would not be altogether the correct thing for us to seek to attract immigrants from those Colonies, where they had been introduced at public expense; but, if these people found they could do better here than there they would soon find their way here, without any inveigling on our part. He would certainly support the amendment.

The Committee then divided upon the amendment:

Question—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the original motion:

Ayes	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	8
Majority for	...		1

AYES.	NOES.
The Hon. E. T. Golds-	Mr. Carey
worthy	Mr. Glyde
The Hon. G. W. Leake	Mr. Hardy
The Hon. M. Fraser	Mr. Marmon
Mr. Brown	Mr. Monger
Mr. Burges	Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Crowther	Mr. Pearce
Mr. Hamersley	Mr. Brockman (Teller.)
Mr. Shenton	
Mr. Harper (Teller.)	

The amendment was therefore negatived.

The original resolution was then put and carried.

CLASSIFICATION OF CLERKS AND RE-ORGANISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL, in accordance with notice, moved that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole, to consider the following motion standing in his name: "That in the opinion of this House it is "desirable that the classification system "and reorganisation of the Civil Service, "recommended by His Excellency the "Governor, should be carried out; as "also the proposed increase to salaries of "Post Office Officials, Magistrates, and "Clerks of Local Courts; at the same "time the House would recommend that "the average amount of fees received by "magistrates and their clerks during the "past three years, in addition to their "regular incomes, should be taken as the "basis upon which to calculate their "future fixed salaries." The hon. baronet said he wished to say a few words on the subject before the House went into Committee, as he would not then have an opportunity of doing so. As the House was aware, last Session certain resolutions were passed asking the Government, during the recess, to take into consideration the present system of the classification of clerks, with a view to the re-organisation of the Civil Service; and also the expediency, as regards certain departments of the service, of readjusting the salaries of the officials connected with those depart-

ments. In consequence of these resolutions, the Government appointed a commission to consider and report upon the several matters referred to, and the report of the commission, as hon. members were aware, had been laid before the House. The Government, after a careful consideration of the various recommendations embodied in that report, arrived at certain conclusions, which also had been submitted to the House in a minute appended by His Excellency the Governor to the report of the commission. It appeared from the papers furnished to the House that the whole cost of the proposed reorganisation of the service, and the readjustment of salaries, amounted to something over £400. The commission, so far as he could make out, regarded the present classification system a mistake, and considered that it was productive of considerable discontent in the service—a conclusion which was in accord with the view expressed by the House last Session, and which was endorsed by the Government; and if the small increase of expenditure which the reorganisation of the service and the proposed readjustment of salaries would entail, would lead to a greater spirit of contentment and satisfaction in the public service, he thought the few hundred pounds would be very well expended. Indeed, in view of the present financial condition, it would be false economy to refuse to adopt the recommendations of the commission, as affirmed by the Governor, and to remove the feeling of discontent which existed among the public servants with respect to the present classification system. There was one thing which he would like to say with regard to the proposed reorganisation of the service, and that was—if the House went in for the scheme at all, he considered they should adopt it in its entirety, without interfering with the details of the new system and the re-arrangement of officers. He thought it would be highly inadvisable for the House to interfere with these details, for no doubt the Government had given the whole subject careful consideration, and were in possession of information and facts that the House had not the advantage of being possessed of. He did not mean to say for a moment that it was not competent for

the House to deal with the details of the scheme of reorganisation submitted for its affirmation—that they had no right to interfere with these details; but it was extremely unusual for the House to do so, the adjustment of departmental details being generally regarded as coming more essentially within the province of the Executive Government. He thought it would be extremely inadvisable to depart from this rule, and to have the public servants to look to that House, instead of to the Government, to redress their grievances.

The House then went into Committee to consider the resolution standing in the hon. baronet's name.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. BROWN formally moved the resolution, on behalf of the hon. member, the Chairman of Committees. In doing so he asked permission to make a verbal amendment in it. Personally he was not in favor of the future fixed salaries of magistrates and their clerks being calculated on the average amount of fees received during the past three years. He thought that two years would be a fairer basis upon which to calculate the salaries of these officials.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) drew the attention of the House to the provisions of the Superannuation Act, with reference to the question of computation. Under that Act no superannuation allowance was to be calculated on the amount of the salary and emoluments received for less than three years. In the return which accompanied the commissioners' report the amounts which it was proposed the magistrates and their clerks should receive, as compensation for the abolition of fees, were based on a calculation of the average amount of their fees for the last six years; but the Government were quite prepared to adopt the suggestion embodied in the resolution before the House, and reduce the period to three years.

Mr. S. H. PARKER moved to report Progress. He thought the commission had carefully considered the whole matter, and had performed their duty in a highly satisfactory manner. One of their very first recommendations was to recommend an increase of £50 a year in

the salary of the Postmaster General—a very old and efficient public servant; yet His Excellency had passed over this recommendation altogether, although prepared to suggest increases in the salaries of other officers not recommended by the commission.

Mr. CROWTHER seconded the motion to report Progress. If there was any man in the public service of Western Australia who enjoyed the confidence of the public, and deservedly so, it was the Postmaster General; if there was any officer in the public service who honestly earned his money, it was the Postmaster General; and he (Mr. Crowther) did think it rather hard that the recommendation of the commission—a commission the members of which knew what they were about, and who were actuated solely by a desire to do justice to the public service and to the public interests—he did think it hard that the recommendation of a slight increase to the Postmaster General's salary made by the commission, should be tabooed, as it had been, by the Government. He supported the motion for reporting Progress, in the hope that the Government would meantime reconsider the question, and feel it their duty either to accept the recommendation of the commission, or to throw their report over altogether. The commission had carefully considered the claims of all the officers of the departments referred to them, and if the Government in their wisdom could not agree with the recommendations of the commission they should not make ducks of one and drakes of another.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) asked the House to bear in mind what the commission had been appointed to consider, namely to enquire into the advisability of increasing the salaries of the "officers" of the department. This could hardly be said to embrace the permanent head of the department, and it would be invidious to increase the salary of one departmental chief without considering the claims of other heads of departments. The question had been carefully and thoroughly considered by the Executive Council, and the recommendations embodied in His Excellency's minute were the result of their deliberations. He maintained it was never intended that the commission

should consider the salaries of the head of the department, but the officers employed under him; had it been otherwise, he felt sure the commission would have felt equally bound to recommend an increase in the salaries of other heads of departments.

MR. CROWTHER: That simply confirms what I have already said. They do recommend an increase in the salary of the head of one department, but not in that of any other. There is no man—and I challenge any hon. member to deny it—there is no man in the Government service of this Colony who does the same amount of work for the same emolument as the Postmaster General. If the public were appealed to on this point I feel certain that not a dozen voices in the community would say nay to the recommendation of the commission to increase that officer's salary; and I maintain that the Executive Government had a right to give some weight to that recommendation.

MR. BROWN regretted to find the hon. members for Greenough and for Perth taking up this subject in what appeared to him a spirit of partisanship. [Mr. Crowther: Not at all.] No doubt their intention was good, but that was the impression which the tone of their remarks would naturally convey. The House was asked to report Progress, and why? Because His Excellency had dared not to give effect, in every particular, to the recommendations of the commission. [Mr. Parker: No, no; not in every particular.] If that was the case, then, the principle upon which they were asked to report Progress was because the Head of the Executive had dared not to follow up the recommendations of a commission appointed to enquire into certain matters connected with the public service. He (Mr. Brown) knew nothing—and he ventured to say the hon. members themselves knew nothing—about the merits of the case referred to. He had no objection to Progress being reported, so that the subject might receive further consideration. The recommendations of the commission were no doubt entitled to weight; but surely it could not be said that the members of that House were in as good a position as the Executive to determine whether any particular officer, the head of a department, was

receiving a fair amount of salary, compared with other officials.

MR. CROWTHER disclaimed anything like a feeling of partisanship on the question before the Committee. He thought the best thing they could do was to make the salary of the Postmaster General (£450) the standard for the salaries of all other heads of departments.

MR. S. H. PARKER said he merely wished to report Progress so as to enable the Government to reconsider the subject. Had he desired to push the question to a division, he knew he would have a majority, and a decisive majority on his side; but he had no wish to do that, in the hope that the subject would receive further consideration at the hands of the Executive. If the Government were not prepared to accept this recommendation of the commission—a recommendation that met he might say with universal concurrence—he, for one, would not be prepared to go with the Government in any of their own recommendations.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) said he did not suppose there was a worthier or more deserving officer in the public service than the Postmaster General, but the question was not whether he was worthy of an extra £50 a year, but whether, in the face of the crippled state of the Colony's finances, the Colony could afford to increase the salary of an officer whom everybody believed deserved it. The salary of the Postmaster General was probably not as much as he was worth, but the question was—was it as much as we could afford?

MR. S. H. PARKER said that what had fallen from the Acting Attorney General would have been admirable, if directed against any increase of salaries at all. But there were other increases amounting to over £400 recommended, and to which no objection was raised on the ground that the Colony could not afford it. If the hon. and learned gentleman was prepared to go so far as to say that in the present financial condition of the Colony it was inadvisable to increase any salaries whatever, he (Mr. Parker) would be prepared to go with him. He certainly would not support any other proposed increase, unless the Postmaster General received his, and

he would now move, That Progress be reported.

MR. SHENTON said he thought the further consideration of the question at issue should be postponed until the next sitting of the Council, or next Session. Hon. members had been twitted with advocating this particular increase in a spirit of partisanship. He thought, if hon. members would look carefully into the other proposed increases, the charge of partisanship would more justly apply to the other side.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said he rose simply to draw the attention of the House to what gave rise to the appointment of this commission. When the Estimates were considered in Committee last Session, there was a general expression of feeling in favor of increasing the pay of magistrates' clerks and also of the officers of the postal and telegraph department, and the commission was appointed to report on this subject. Nothing whatever was said about the head of the department—the Postmaster General; nor were the salaries of heads of departments referred to the commission in any way.

MR. CAREY said he it was who moved the resolution adopted last Session in favor of increasing the salaries of the post office officials, and the wording of the resolution was as follows: "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates such additional sums as may be deemed advisable to increase the salaries of the officers of the postal and telegraph department." Surely that was comprehensive enough to include the Postmaster General, and every other officer connected with the department. If the Postmaster General had a seat in that House, and sat on the Treasury Benches, his salary would have been increased long ago. His services might be duly appreciated by the Executive, but that appreciation would be much better shown by agreeing to the proposed increase than by mere assertion. He must say, he felt half inclined to go with the hon. member for Toodyay and postpone the consideration of the whole question, in the face of the opposition shown by the

Treasury Benches to the expressed wish of the House.

Question—That Progress be reported—put, whereupon the Committee divided, with the following result:

Ayes	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	5
Majority for			8

AYES.

Mr. Brown
Mr. Brockman
Mr. Carey
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Glyde
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Hardey
Mr. Harper
Mr. Marmion
Mr. Monger
Mr. Pearce
Mr. Shenton
Mr. S. H. Parker (Teller.)

NOES.

The Hon. G. W. Leake
The Hon. M. Fraser
Mr. Burgess
Sir L. S. Leake
The Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy (Teller.)

Progress to be reported.

The Speaker then took the Chair, and the Chairman of Committees reported Progress.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past eleven.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 9th September, 1879.

Railway Bridge at Fremantle—Arrest of Mr. John Bishop—Free Sale of Colonial Wine: adjourned debate—Consideration of Message (No. 9): Colonial Museum in London—Secret Bills of Sale Bill: further considered in committee—Branding Consolidation Ordinance: third reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

RAILWAY BRIDGE AT FREMANTLE.

MR. CROWTHER, with leave, without notice, drew the attention of the Colonial Secretary to the fact that the piles being used in the construction of the Railway Bridge at Fremantle were squared, instead of round. The hon. member said that experience had shown