

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 12th September, 1895.

Resumption of Land for Donnybrook Railway—*Mail communication between Coolgardie and Norseman*—*Qualification of applicants for the office of Government Medical Officer*—*Wesleyan Methodists (Private) Bill*; *report of Select Committee—Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie Bill*: second reading; in Committee—*Strongy Room for Land Titles Department*; *consideration of Legislative Council's Message—Parks and Reserves Bill*: second reading; in Committee—*Estimates, 1895-6*; *further considered in Committee—Trustee Ordinance, 1854, Amendment Bill*; *first reading—Adjournment.*

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

PRAYERS.

RESUMPTION OF LAND FOR DONNY- BROOK RAILWAY.

MR. RANDELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways, whether he would give the following information on the resumption of land for the Donnybrook railway, &c. :—

1. Whether it was a fact that two landholders offered their lands, before the resumption, at 15s. and £1 per acre, respectively.
2. What reply was made to such offer, if made.
3. The reasons for afterwards referring the matter to arbitration.
4. The amounts paid to each owner under the awards of the arbitrators.
5. The amounts paid for costs to owners.
6. The amount of the Government expenses.
7. Whether there was any objection to lay all the papers connected with the resumption and awards on the table of this House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS
(Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. It is a fact that a landowner, in December, 1893, did offer to the engineer of the line certain land at £1 per acre.
2. This was before the survey for land resumption had been completed, and the offer could not at once be accepted, and before the matter was ready for my decision the offer was withdrawn.
3. On the 6th October, 1894, Mr. Trigwell was offered £2 per acre for the land actually resumed and for compensation for severance, but he claimed £15 per acre and declined the

offer ; hence the matter was referred to arbitration.

4, 5, and 6 :—

AWARDS, ETC.																	
Names of Owners.	Amount of Compan- ation Claimed.	Amount offered.		Amount of Award.		Amounts paid for Costs to Owners.	Amount of Government Expenses.		Valuation fees. Arbitration fees, and other ex- penses.								
		£	s.	d.	£		s.	d.		£	s.	d.					
J. Trigwell	313	41	0	3	186	7	6	32	0	0	}	35	5	9			
Eccleston & Trigwell	30	4	2	8	20	12	6	47	12	2		47	14	0			
J. H. Eccleston ...	24	8	0	0	24	0	4	31	7	6		32	0	0			
G. R. Turner	30	2	10	0	30	0	0	32	0	0		32	0	0			
H. Learman	140	13	8	6	77	3	3	32	0	0							
															82	19	9

7. There is no objection to lay the papers on the table of the House, as soon as they can be had from the Legislative Council.

MAIL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COOLGARDIE AND NORSEMANTON.

MR. MORAN, in accordance with notice asked the Premier, whether the Government were considering the advisability of establishing a bi-weekly mail service between Coolgardie and the large and important mining centre at Norseman.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the department had considered the matter, and did not feel justified in going to this expense, in view of a weekly mail having been arranged for between Esperance and

Norsemanton. Should a greater demand arise, the matter would receive attention.

APPLICANTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICER.

MR. RANDELL (for Mr. James), asked the Premier:—

1. The names of the gentlemen who applied for the position of Government Medical Officer now, or recently, occupied by Dr. Waylen.

2. The qualifications possessed by these applicants.

3. The qualifications of Dr. Lovegrove, and when they were obtained; and

4. The date of Dr. Lovegrove's arrival in the colony; and whether, if at all, he had since visited either the sister colonies or England.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—

1 and 2. Not having obtained the permission of the applicants, I hesitate to give their names and qualifications. If, however, it is desired that I should ask the permission of the applicants, I shall be glad to do so.

3. Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, England, 1867.

4. In 1868. I believe he has not since visited either the sister colonies or England.

WESLEYAN METHODIST (PRIVATE) BILL.

SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), in accordance with notice, moved the adoption of the report of the Select Committee on this Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES reported to the House that the Bill contained the several provisions required by the Standing Orders. He wished, however, to inform the House, under the provisions of Standing Order, No. 33, relating to Private Bills, that in his opinion this Bill was not a Private Bill, but a Public Bill. In support of that opinion he relied upon the following quotation from "*May*, p. 640; "In 1871 a Bill for regulating "the management of certain trust properties "of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was "introduced into the House of Lords as a "Private Bill; but, objection being taken to "legislation upon such a subject by means of "a Private Bill, the Bill was withdrawn, and "a Public Bill for effecting the same object "was passed by both Houses. And, in the "same session, the like proceedings occurred "in the case of a Bill to regulate the proceed-

ings and powers of the Primitive Wesleyan "Methodist Society of Ireland."

THE SPEAKER: I am of opinion that this Bill was introduced properly as a Private Bill and could not have been introduced otherwise. I notice that both in Queensland and New South Wales Bills brought in for exactly a similar object as the present Bill, were introduced as Private Bills; and, in South Australia, when a Bill to create certain fresh trusts on account of the Church of England was introduced, the same course was followed. There is no doubt in my mind that the Bill now before the House is a Private Bill.

Motion, for the adoption of the Select Committee's report, put and passed.

COOLGARDIE-KALGOORLIE RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): In moving the second reading of this Bill it will not be necessary for me to say more than very few words. The Bill provides for the extension of the railway from Coolgardie to Hannan's, or Kalgoorlie. I have already placed upon the table of the House the necessary plans showing the route which it is proposed this line shall take, as far as it is practicable at present to lay it down, but allowing for a deviation on either side of ten miles. Members, of course, know that no survey of the proposed railway has yet been made, and it is necessary, when passing a Bill like this, to give sufficient latitude to enable the engineer to lay down the best and most effective line of railway possible. The distance between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie is only 25 miles, and the road is a fairly open road. The country to be traversed is not level, but fairly undulating. The engineering difficulties are practically small, nor are there likely to be any deviations, so far as I know, from the line as laid down on the plan, though it has been done, I may almost say, at haphazard. I may say that the Government propose to undertake this work as early as they can, after they are in possession of the line now being constructed between Southern Cross and Coolgardie; and I can assure those members who are interested in the Mullewa-Cue railway that there will be no delay whatever caused in the prosecution of that work by reason of the Government undertaking the construction of this line to Kalgoorlie, which

will not be commenced before the Murchison railway is fairly in hand. Hon. members, therefore, who feel any anxiety on that point, need not entertain any apprehension that there will be any delay in regard to that undertaking. They may accept that assurance from me, as coming from the Government. I have nothing further to say, Sir. I believe this railway to Hannan's is a line which commends itself very much to the House, and to the colony generally, and I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

MR. MORAN: I do not intend to say more than three or four words on this Bill, and they are to thank the Government for their promptitude in bringing it forward, and for their promise that the work shall be proceeded with as soon as practicable. The only thing I would like to impress upon the Commissioner is this: the hon. gentleman said the Government intended to proceed with this line as soon as the railway now in course of construction between Southern Cross and Coolgardie is handed over to them by the contractor. That will be some considerable time hence, and it might be advisable for the Commissioner to consider whether he could not do something to expedite the commencement of this Kalgoorlie line before the Coolgardie line is formally handed over to the Government. We may fairly assume that the contractor for that line will be in no hurry to hand it over to the Government, when he is making a big profit out of it; and we may take it as a matter of certainty that the Government will not get possession of that line one day before the contract date expires, even if they get it then. We know that difficulties and delays generally crop up in connection with big contracts of this kind. What I wish to ask the Commissioner is, whether something could not be done so that this line to Kalgoorlie may be taken in hand before the Coolgardie line is finally handed over to the Government? I desire to again thank the Government, as the representative of that part of the colony most deeply concerned in this work, for their promptitude in bringing forward the Bill. In doing so they are pursuing a right course, in pushing forward a work that is urgently needed; and I have no doubt that the people on the fields fully recognise and appreciate the action of the Government in this matter, as also in the matter of the prosecution of other works for the development of the goldfields. It is the surest possible way for allaying any feeling of

discontent there may exist, and the strongest and most convincing argument that could be put forward against that cry of separation which has been heard in some quarters. I hope that this vigorous public works policy will be continued, so long as it is conducted on safe principles. I can only add that I trust the same public spirit which animates the Government in building these railways will prompt them to assimilate the freight rates on the Yilgarn line with the rates charged upon the other railways of the colony. I cannot lose a single opportunity of mentioning this matter, and I hope it will be well considered by the Government during the recess.

Motion put and passed.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Short title:

Put and passed.

Clause 2—"Authority to construct:"

MR. GEORGE said he wished to emphasise what had fallen from the hon. member for Yilgarn, as to expediting the commencement of this line before the Coolgardie railway was handed over to the Government. This could probably be done by introducing conditions into the contract, providing against any delay owing to the non-completion of the line now in course of construction. He hoped the Commissioner would make a note of that.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.—Deviation:

Put and passed.

Schedule put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and report adopted.

STRONG ROOMS FOR LAND TITLES OFFICE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House went into committee for the consideration of the following resolution received, by message, from the Legislative Council: "That it is desirable, in the interests of the public, that a strong room and suitable premises be speedily erected for the Registry of Deeds and the office of Land Titles, and that the officers of the department be consulted in respect of its requirements."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), without comment, moved that the resolution be agreed to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH wished to elicit from the Government what their intentions were with reference to the location of this strong room. If it was to be a strong room attached to the present Land Titles Office, then all he had to say was, they would not be rising to the necessities of the case. This room, which would hold the securities of the whole colony in respect of land possessions, for all time, ought to be isolated from all other buildings, so as to avoid the danger of fire, and the destruction of securities which could never be replaced. The importance of this point had been so fully realised in Victoria that the Government of that colony paid so large a sum as £200,000, for the purchase and removal of a large timber yard which, being on the opposite side of the street to the room where the land titles were deposited, was, in consequence of its propinquity, a standing menace to the security of that building. He had heard that it was intended to put this strong room in the new building that was to be erected on the vacant piece of land adjoining the present Assembly Chamber. If that was the intention, all he could say was the Government would simply be doing a thing which would have to be undone again, in the course of a few years. Or, if it was intended to have this room attached to the Land Titles building, or, indeed, any other building, it would, in his opinion, be a mistake.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the present intention he believed, was to have this strong room in the basement of the new building that would occupy the site referred to, adjoining the Legislative Assembly Chamber, and facing Howick-street. He did not think the hon. member need be apprehensive that there would be much danger from fire, if the room were properly constructed; and he might say that great care would be taken in designing this room, with the view of making it secure, because the Government quite realised the necessity there was for taking every precaution against the destruction of the valuable documents that would be stored in this building. It might, perhaps, be a good thing, in some respects, if they could adopt the hon. member's suggestion, and have the strong room isolated, like a powder magazine, from all other buildings; but such a thing seemed to him impracticable. Nor did he see the necessity for it, so long as every care and precaution were observed in the planning and construction of the room, with the special object of

making it fire-proof, and free from all danger of destruction. These conditions would, he thought, be attainable if the room were placed in the basement of the building proposed to be erected on the suggested site. At any rate, the hon. member might take the assurance of the Government that, in the construction of this strong room, every care and precaution would be taken to ensure the safety of the documents lodged in it.

MR. MORAN had no doubt the Government, in locating and constructing this room, would adopt all the precautionary measures which modern experience in the construction of such rooms suggested, such as fire-proof walls and fire-proof safes; and, it appeared to him that if the room was to be located in the basement of a building, on the site proposed, it might be rendered absolutely safe from fire.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) asked whether the hon. member for Nannine suggested that the building containing this strong room should be away altogether from the Land Titles Office or any other building? [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes.] Of course, that would be a safe way of dealing with the matter; but a very inconvenient, if not impracticable, way. The officers of the Land Titles department had occasion to make constant reference to the bulky and unwieldy volumes stored in this room, and it would never do to have them moved about from one room to another, as they were required. It seemed to him that the only possible way to meet the difficulty would be to erect a completely separate building for the Land Titles Office, and to have this strong room attached to that building. The subject no doubt, required very serious attention before this building was constructed, and he had some doubt whether there was room enough for such a building on the site indicated, because this was a growing department. Every new township declared, and every transaction in land, added to the bulk of the volumes stored by the department; and the way these records of land titles were multiplying was really extraordinary. He thought that, before many years, they would soon want a strong room as large as the chamber they were now sitting in, for accommodating all these volumes; and, if they were going to rise to the occasion (as the hon. member for Nannine had suggested), it appeared to him they ought to erect a new building for the Land Titles Department, separate from the

other offices, and have this strong room attached to it. He did not see how they were going to isolate the room from the Land Titles building, when there was a constantly recurring necessity for reference to the volumes stored in this strong room.

MR. ILLINGWORTH strongly urged the Government to take some advice before proceeding with this work. Unless judgment and care were exercised, and ample space was provided, it would be found that this room, in the course of a few years, would be useless. It was quite clear to his mind that the area available on the site suggested was not sufficient for the purpose, looking at the immense and growing volume of the transactions in land which must necessarily take place in a huge colony like this.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said everyone agreed as to the necessity of having a strong room for storing land titles, and no doubt the Government would exercise every precaution in constructing such a room, so as to meet all requirements. He did not think if members were to discuss the question until to-morrow morning they would be able to tell the Government what sort of a room they ought to build. Surely the officers of the Works Department would rise equal to the occasion, when they knew the importance of ensuring absolute security for the documents that would be stored in this building.

Resolution put and passed.

PARKS AND RESERVES BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I may point out that the object we have in view is for the Government to be able to place public parks and reserves under boards of management, and give to these Boards certain powers. Hon. members will notice in the Bill that the Governor is given power to appoint Boards for the control and management of parks and reserves; and the duty of the Board will be to control and manage the public parks and reserves so committed to their care, and employ in such control and management any funds that may be provided for this purpose by Parliament, as well as any funds arising from profits, such as penalties, coming into their hands. Clause 8 provides that Boards of Management may, with the approval of the Governor, make by-laws for giving effect to this Bill, in respect

to the parks and reserves committed to their care; and the clause sets forth what these regulations may provide for. The Bill also provides that these Boards shall keep accounts, and transmit them to the Treasury in the ordinary way. This small Bill will be found very useful. I do not mean to say it will supply all that may be necessary in the future, but it will certainly be useful by giving the Government power to appoint Boards for controlling parks and reserves, by regulating the traffic in them, and controlling the conduct of persons using them. This is a power which the Government should have; and especially now that we are improving the Park on Mount Eliza, some provision of this sort is absolutely necessary, in order that there may be a Board of Management for regulating the traffic, and for exercising some control over the persons using the park. This is a kind of legislation that finds a place in the laws of other colonies, as well as in other parts of the world; and the necessity has now arisen for having the same statutory powers here. Hitherto we have been content with the powers contained in the Land Regulations, for controlling reserves; but those Regulations are not very explicit in their application to these purposes, for, although the Governor may place such lands under the control of a body to be appointed for the purpose, that power is not sufficient, and certainly not so convenient as having an Act of Parliament regulating the conduct of the Boards, and giving them certain powers, while also allowing everyone to see exactly under what powers these Boards exercise their privileges. I now move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not see any provision by which Boards of Management, when appointed, can be removed, in the event of their not acting properly.

THE PREMIER: Clause 3 gives power to cancel and revoke appointments.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It will be advisable that some limit should be put on the appointments—at any rate, as to the number of members of Parliament who may be appointed on these Boards; otherwise large sums of money may be expended, and great power may be brought to bear in this House by members of Parliament who happen to be appointed on these Boards. In the case of the Park on Mount Eliza, several members of this House may be appointed members of the Park Board, and very large sums of money may be expended on

it to the detriment of other parts of the country and particularly when we hear of a proposal for forming terraces on the face of the Mount. There should be a limit to the number of members of Parliament to be placed on that Board.

MR. MORAN: You might also consider whether you should go a step further, and prohibit any one who becomes a member of a Park Board from ever entering Parliament afterwards.

MR. LEAKE: It does not appear that commonages will come within the scope of this Bill, and I should like the Premier to consider whether they should not be included. The Premier will know that, in dealing with commonages, there is some slight difficulty. The only regulation applying to them is in the Land Regulations, which says commonages may be put under a board of management; but, in practice, very little authority can be exercised by those bodies in whom commonages are vested. If the Government have considered this point, they will no doubt be able to give reasons why commonages should not be included in the scope of this Bill. If those reasons are valid and good, I shall be glad to support them; but I do hope the Government will give consideration to the suggestion I have made. The pith of the Bill is in Clause 8, which gives a Board power to make by laws, though I do not say the power is an extensive one. On the whole, I think the Bill is one that might well pass.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I quite agree with the hon. member for Albany, that it would be well to include commonages in the scope of this Bill, if the commonages were settled in their area and position as are public parks and reserves. But, all over the colony commonages are set apart, not with a view that they should be altogether permanent, for sometimes they are reduced in size and sometimes increased. There are instances in which it would be unwise, in the interest of the colony, to make the commonages permanent. I know of many commonages that have been reduced in area, in accordance with the wishes of the people; but, if we place commonages in a statutory position, by placing them under a Board such as the Bill contemplates in the case of parks and reserves, we may find it more difficult to deal with such commonages afterwards. I do not think the time has arrived for placing commonages in the same position as that in which we propose to place parks

and reserves, although I agree there is some little difficulty with commonages under the Land Regulations, which perhaps are not so full and explicit as they might be. I do not think we need insert commonages in this Bill, and I can assure hon. members that no great harm will arise through leaving them out at present. When they get more settled as to their exact area, we may deal with them in this way.

MR. TRAYLEN: I hope the Government will make sure there is provision in the Bill for the establishment of zoological gardens in connection with parks and reserves.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3:

Put and passed.

Clause 4—"Duty of a Board."

MR. MARMION said he presumed these Boards to be appointed by the Government were for the control of Government parks and reserves, and were not for the control of municipal parks.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said these Boards were not for the control of municipal parks.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6:

Put and passed.

Clause 7—"A Board may appoint officers and servants":

MR. GEORGE said the Bill should give power to the Government of the day for regulating the salaries and number of officers which a Board might appoint.

THE PREMIER: We shall have the voting of the money.

MR. GEORGE said that would not be a sufficient check against extravagance. These Boards might become important bodies, and might, like the Agricultural Bureau, want highly paid officers; indeed, it might become necessary for these Boards to have a Minister of the Crown at their head.

MR. RANDELL would not consider it a bad thing if the Boards did find it necessary to appoint a number of officers, for the simple reason that such appointments would be a good indication of the progress of the country. The measure was one upon which he desired to congratulate the Government, and the movement generally had his heartiest wishes for its success.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The positions of the members of these Boards will be honorary, of course?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Certainly.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 8—"Board may make by-laws":

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that, before the Bill was committed, the hon. member for Greenough had made a suggestion to the effect that some provision should be made for the establishment of Zoological gardens in connection with these park reserves. He would adopt the suggestion by moving an addition to the third subsection of this clause, which provided for the management and conservation of park lands and reserves. He moved, as an amendment, that the words "including zoological gardens" be added after the word "reserves."

Amendment put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) remarked that this alteration would render it necessary for the Bill to be re-committed, in order that Clause 5 might have a similar addition made to it.

Clause as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 12, inclusive:

Put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendment.

ESTIMATES, 1895-96.

The further consideration of the Estimates was resumed.

Vote: "Railways and Tramways, £226,900"
—(Debate continued.)

MR. LEAKE desired to refer to the item "Under-Secretary, £500." He would like to be informed what reason there was for the increase of £50 in the salary of the gentleman occupying this position, who was now the Under-Secretary for Works and Railways. The Estimates of the Public Works Department showed that it was intended to separate the two departments, and from this it would appear that the work of the Under-Secretary who filled the dual position referred to, prior to this re-arrangement, would be very much lessened, consequently there could be no reason for increasing his salary for doing a lesser amount of work.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that, while it was

true the two departments were now to have separate Under-Secretaries, it did not at all follow that the Under-Secretary for Railways would have less to do. As a matter of fact his time would still be fully occupied. Apart from this, the increase was made on account of years of service, and it was carrying out the system of the Government by which gentlemen holding these positions would gradually reach a maximum salary of about £600, which was the amount some of the Under-Secretaries were now receiving. A salary of £400 was regarded as the minimum, and Mr. Alpin Thomson was merely being raised a stage because his years of service, and the manner in which he had discharged his duties had fully entitled him to this consideration. Mr. Thomson was a most valuable officer, and had done his work most carefully and zealously. He was practically a walking encyclopædia on the affairs of the department. It was Mr. Thomson who would occupy the position of Under-Secretary for Railways.

MR. LEAKE: And who is to be Under-Secretary for Public Works?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Mr. Jull, the present chief clerk of the department.

MR. GEORGE thought it was somewhat peculiar that the Under-Secretary, with a salary of only £500, should rank higher on the Estimates, as a matter of precedence, than the General Traffic Manager, who had a salary of £800. If the Under-Secretary was regarded as a superior officer to the General Traffic Manager, the office should, at any rate, carry equal salary. Outside of that point, he really thought it would be advantageous to the department if the Under-Secretary for Railways was a gentleman who had had equal experience in the practical management of railways to that enjoyed by the General Traffic Manager. The Under-Secretary should be in a position to confer with the General Traffic Manager on matters of practical working. Personally, he desired to congratulate the Government upon the selection they had made of a General Traffic Manager. The gentleman carrying out the duties of that office was undoubtedly doing his work well, and with great success. Mr. Thomson, too, was a most capable officer, and one for whom he had the greatest respect, but he had had no real experience in the management of railways. The best man that could possibly be got should be secured for the position of Under-Secretary.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) pointed out that the question of superiority did not arise. The Under-Secretary for Railways was not superior to the General Traffic Manager, and the hon. member appeared to misunderstand the position. The two offices were entirely separate. So far as the appointment of someone with equal experience and practical knowledge to the General Traffic Manager was concerned, such a gentleman would be quite out of place in the position of Under-Secretary for Railways, and his abilities would be thrown away. The Under-Secretary was merely a medium of communication between the Minister and the various branches of the Department, and a very necessary officer to be in charge of the routine work, as well as to preserve the necessary connection of the office between successive Ministers.

MR. GEORGE understood from what the Commissioner of Railways said that the Under-Secretary was only a sort of superior clerk. That being so, he was now quite satisfied with the salary paid to that officer. Referring to the item "General Traffic Manager, £800," he wished the Commissioner of Railways to inform the House whether the General Traffic Manager was consulted with regard to the plans for the sidings, stations, goods sheds, and other conveniences of his department. In particular, he wished to know whether the General Traffic Manager had been consulted upon the designs for the Perth goods sheds and station yards, and the Bunbury station yards.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that the General Traffic Manager had been consulted regarding the works in question, and at all times when designs connected with his branch of the service had been prepared. He would be consulted more particularly in the future, in the event of the changes which he (Mr. Venn) contemplated being adopted, when this officer would probably hold a higher position, and exercise greater control in the department. When Mr. Davies was consulted upon the Perth goods sheds and station yards and the Bunbury station yards, he was perfectly satisfied with the designs. When the sheds and yards at Perth were completed, it would be found that they were most convenient, as the works provided for carrying on the inward and outward traffic, independently of each other.

MR. GEORGE said that in spite of the assurances of the Commissioner of Rail-

ways, he would not go from the position he had taken up, that, in regard to the Bunbury station yards, and the Perth station yards and goods sheds, the General Traffic Manager had not been consulted. Moreover, the plan of the Perth goods sheds was one that no experienced railway man would ever have approved, and the sidings were being so laid out that the goods trains would have to run up to the William-street crossing, thereby blocking the passenger traffic, for which a road ought to be kept clear. With regard to the Bunbury station yards, the design was so bad that, if it were desired for a train to make any communication with the jetty, it could not do so until the trucks at the station had been shifted out of the way. But, whatever had been the policy in the past, he was pleased to hear the Commissioner say that, in the future, the General Traffic Manager would be fully consulted before any changes which were intended to facilitate the work of the traffic department, were undertaken.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn), referring to the item, "Engineer in charge of existing Lines, £600," said at present there was no officer permanently filling this appointment, but, in the revision of the managing staff of the railways that was about to take place, the office would be filled. Under the new system there would be a General Manager of the railways, to whom the Traffic Manager and the other heads of the different branches of the department would be responsible. At the present moment the Engineer-in-Chief acted as General Manager, but that gentleman had asked to be relieved of the position, and he would be relieved if the House assented to the proposal which, at a later stage, he (Mr. Venn) proposed to make.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, referring to the item "Locomotive Superintendent (consulting), £500," asked who was to fill the post?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the appointment would be given to Mr. Mather, who for many years had creditably carried out the duties of Locomotive Superintendent, but who now, through advancing years, was not able to take so active a part as formerly in the general working of the Locomotive Department, while, as consulting superintendent, Mr. Mather would be able to render very valuable service.

MR. A. FORREST said that if Mr. Mather was such a valued officer as he had been described, and had had to relinquish active service by reason of his health failing him, he considered that he should be put on the superannuation list, or given an appointment in connection with the magistracy, or some other position. The country should not be saddled with the expense of employing two Locomotive Superintendents, when one man could do all the work required.

MR. RANDELL said he could bear out what the Commissioner of Railways had said with regard to Mr. Mather being an efficient Locomotive Superintendent, for he carried out the duties of the office, at one time, without the assistance of a Shops Manager, which no other Locomotive Superintendent in any of the other colonies had ever done. He was glad to hear that the Shops Manager, who was appointed on the recommendation of the Commission which enquired into the condition and organization of the Railway Workshops at Fremantle in 1893, of which he was a member, had given entire satisfaction.

MR. GEORGE said the country was now on the eve of a great alteration in connection with its railway system, by reason of the removal of the Railway Workshops from Fremantle to the Midland Junction; and he hoped, therefore, that practical men would be secured to design the new Workshops buildings in such a way as to ensure the work to be done there being carried out economically and efficiently. In connection with the preparation of those plans, he thought it would be a graceful act of the Government to acknowledge the good work done by Mr. Mather in that direction, and ask his opinion (he being a thoroughly practical man) as to the particular form which those designs should take. With regard to the proposal to make Mr. Mather the Consulting Locomotive Superintendent, and to abolish the office of Shops Manager, he took it that the Government intended that the officer who had held the position of Shops Manager at £400 a year, would be appointed Assistant Locomotive Superintendent in charge, at £500 a year?

MR. R. F. SHOLL considered that Mr. Mather should have been pensioned off, when it was found that the failure of his health prevented him from discharging the duties of his position; and, in order to enter his protest against the country being called upon to pay £500 a year to an officer who was merely to

be consulted on matters concerning the locomotive department, he moved to strike out the item.

MR. MARMION said he agreed with the view which the hon. member for the Murray had taken of the proposed alteration of offices in this branch of the department. If proof were wanting that Mr. Mather had been an efficient and capable Locomotive Superintendent, it was afforded by the fact that he had, in the face of the acknowledged difficulties connected with inefficiently equipped Workshops at Fremantle, discharged his duties in an admirable manner, and he hoped hon. members would deal with him fairly and justly. He trusted, and he believed, that Mr. Mather would be able to do good and efficient work for many years to come in his new position as consulting superintendent. The mere alteration of his title did not imply that he would relinquish active service. His services at the present critical period of the history of the railways of the colony would be invaluable. He, therefore, hoped—seeing the proposed alteration of offices in the department only involved an additional £100 a year (which was the proposed increase to the salary of the late Shops Manager, who was to be the Assistant Locomotive Superintendent in charge)—he hoped that Mr. Mather would not be relegated to the pension list, by having his salary struck off the Estimates, as proposed by the hon. member for Gascoyne.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he objected to old officers, whose health was failing them, being kept on the active list, and he thought it would be far more satisfactory to allow such officers to retire. However, he did not wish to press for the striking out of the item.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment, because he trusted that Mr. Mather would be able to occupy the position of Consulting Locomotive Superintendent for many years to come, if his health lasted. He was a much valued officer, whose opinions, on matters connected with the locomotive branch of the service, carried great weight with the Government.

MR. LEAKE asked if it was intended that the Consulting Locomotive Superintendent should be allowed private practice?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Oh, no.

MR. LEAKE wished to know further what the officer's duties would be. Would he only

advise the Government on locomotive matters when called upon to do so?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the officer would always be found at the Railway Workshops, and would superintend the work there. It was not intended that he should do any actual manual labor, but that he should generally control the work done in the shops, and advise the Government when he was required to do so. With regard to the question asked by the hon. member for Albany, as to whether this officer would be allowed private practice, he might inform the committee that he would not. Sometimes private railway companies loaned the services of the Locomotive Superintendent through the Government, but the work he did for those companies was purely honorary.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked leave to withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. GEORGE, referring to the item "Railway Accountant, £400" (increase £50), said he considered that, owing to the delay of three years, which the railway accountant (Mr. Fuchs) had caused in the issuing of the Engineer-in-Chief's report, owing to his not having the accounts of the Railway Department up to date, and in view also of the opinion expressed by competent witnesses before the Civil Service Commission, that this officer was not a capable officer, and, further, in view of the Auditor-General's statement in his report, that serious, not to say grave, irregularities had taken place in connection with the cash receipts of the Central Railway Station—in view of all these facts he considered it was not right that the officer in question should have an increase of £50 in his salary. He moved that the item be reduced by £50.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he considered that £400 a year was not a sufficient salary to give an officer occupying the responsible position of railway accountant. Even £600 a year would not be too much to pay a competent officer.

MR. GEORGE: Quite so; but get the proper man for the position.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he did not think the increase of £50 was more than Mr. Fuchs thoroughly deserved. He (the Commissioner) intended to re-organise the system in vogue of keeping the accounts of the Railway Accountant's Department, and, for

that purpose, he proposed to secure the services of a New South Wales expert to assist in that work. He did not know yet when the gentleman referred to would arrive.

MR. GEORGE: Do I understand the Commissioner to say that this New South Wales expert is to be imported into this colony to remain here?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the loan of the services of the gentleman in question had been asked from the New South Wales Railway Department, but some hitch had occurred in the arrangements that would prevent his coming immediately. He wished it to be understood that the Government, in bringing over this gentleman, to report on the proposed re-organisation of the system of keeping the railway accounts of the colony, did not wish to reflect upon the professional ability of the present railway accountant; but it had been deemed necessary, in consequence of the enormous increase in the work of the Railway Accountant's Department, to devise some means of altering the system in vogue in that office. As to the delay in the preparation of returns asked for, concerning the business done on the railways, and also in the issuing of the official reports—which delay it had been said was caused by the railway accountant not having his accounts up to date—he promised that the reports in future would be issued regularly every year, and that they would be more voluminous than they had hitherto been.

MR. MAXMION said there could be no doubt as to the great responsibility resting upon the officer holding the position of railway accountant; and as to the necessity of having a capable officer in the position; and, granting that the present occupant of the office was a capable officer, he considered the suggested salary (£400 a year) was not too large. Personally, he knew nothing of the capabilities of Mr. Fuchs, but he was aware that the business of his department had increased enormously during the time he had held the position of Railway Accountant. It was, therefore, satisfactory to learn that the services of an expert in railway accounts were to be secured, because it was of the greatest importance that the railway accounts of the colony should be kept accurately and up to date. Hon. members had heard from time to time that irregularities in the railway accounts did exist, but he did not

believe, himself, that if those irregularities did exist, they were not caused through any want of capacity on the part of the present Railway Accountant, but, on the contrary, arose through the enormous increase of the work of the department. He would be glad to see the report of the expert whom it was proposed should come to the colony, and give an opinion as to the best method to be adopted for effectually coping with this increase of business, while, at the same time, he would be gratified to learn that that expert was of opinion that the present Railway Accountant was a capable officer.

At 6.30 p.m. the Chairman left the chair.

At 7.30 p.m., the Chairman resumed the chair.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item 6 (Railway Accountant, £400; increase, £50), moved that the amount be reduced by £50. He had been pleased to hear the Commissioner of Railways state that the accountant's branch was to be put on a better basis. If the accountant's work had been efficient and up to date, the report on the working of the railways during the last three and a half years would doubtless have been presented earlier. Indeed, if the accountant's work were kept properly up to date, this officer might then be regarded as efficient, and deserving of a salary of £500 a year. It was notorious that the work of this office had not been done promptly, efficiently, or accurately. The Auditor-General, in his last annual report, stated at page 142:—"It is with much regret that I am obliged to 'point out the serious, not to say grave, 'irregularities which have taken place at this, 'the Central Railway Station of the colony, 'in connection with cash receipts. However, 'every opportunity has been afforded the 'officials concerned to explain matters; but 'unfortunately, notwithstanding the fact that 'the original deficit of £324 14s. 7d. had been 'reduced to £293 1s. 7d., still further discoveries were subsequently made, disclosing 'that the actual amount of the deficit in 'in question had increased to the sum of '£607 2s. 8d.'" It appeared that the accountant had a staff of about 22 officers, and yet all the returns were behind, and the accountant, when called upon, had not given any satisfactory explanation with regard to the total deficiency of £607 2s. 8d. beyond stating that he suspected certain persons, but he had not been able to sheet home the deficiencies to any particular officers.

In view of the unsatisfactory state of the railway accounts, and the failure of the accountant to keep the work up to date or to explain the deficiencies, it was not a proper principle to increase his salary. No private firm would do it, in such circumstances. If the accountant had been overworked, the fact should have been discovered earlier and remedied; but, if he was not overworked, why should the accounts and the returns be so much in arrear? It was no satisfaction to discover errors and deficiencies after the defaulters had left the service. It had been one of the duties of the accountant to collect moneys from the public for work done by the locomotive branch; and, to give an instance which occurred in his (Mr. George's) own business, so far back as December last, a small sum became due for work done by the locomotive branch for his firm, before he became a member of this House. But the account was not rendered from the accountant's office until the 4th or 5th of September, instant. If other accounts were delayed so long before being rendered, there could be no surprise if the Government lost money in this way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said there was a feeling among the public that the railway accounts were kept in a most unsatisfactory manner; and if the principal accountant's salary was to be increased, in these circumstances, the effect must be demoralising to the whole service. Whether the accountant was responsible for the irregularities or defalcations which had occurred, did not appear; but some sufficient assurance should be given by the Commissioner that this sort of thing would not continue. If subordinate officers could commit defalcations, and get away before the discovery, and before any penalty could attach, this sort of thing would be demoralising to the whole civil service.

MR. A. FORREST said that, after the remarks made by the hon. member for the Murray, the Commissioner should have risen at once, and either have refuted such damaging statements or said he would agree to the reduction of this item. If the statement was true, as to delay from December till the following September before an account for work done was rendered, the case showed gross irregularity. Whispers were abroad that the Railway Accountant's Department was not conducted as it ought to be; and it behoved the Government to allay this feeling, and to

pay some one who would at once carry out these duties properly. There had been irregularities in this branch, and officers had been charged, not only in the department, but in the Supreme Court, with misappropriation of money. There appeared to be a want of proper supervision; and, unless the Commissioner gave satisfactory assurances, he would vote for the reduction.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the continual increases of officers and salaries in the Commissioner's department should at least secure efficiency. Comparing the Railway Accountant's salary with that paid to a very old and responsible officer in the Lands Department, he found this old officer's salary was £375 last year, and was increased this year to £385; so that the Railway Accountant would, if now raised to £400, be receiving more salary than that old officer. This difference of treatment was unfair to the old officer, who was particularly efficient. He (Mr. Sholl) must support the reduction of the item before the committee, though he would have preferred to reduce the amount by £25, rather than take off the whole of the increase.

MR. MORAN said the position taken by the mover, in proposing this reduction, was untenable. Nearly £300,000 a year in railway receipts were passing through the hands of the Railway Accountant, and the amount for the current year might reach £360,000, and the head of this important branch ought to be paid an adequate salary. If the charges which had been stated in vague terms, by the member for the Murray, were correct, this officer was unfit for his position, and to retain him in that position at even a reduced salary, as was proposed by the hon. member, would be inconsistent and impolitic. If, on the other hand, this officer was efficient, and if the alleged irregularities were not due to him in any way, as he (Mr. Moran) believed was the true position of the matter, then this officer would be underpaid, even at £400 a year. As high as £600 a year was paid to Under-Secretaries of departments, whose duties were not so responsible or so arduous as those of this officer. The indefinite charges made against this officer by the hon. member for the Murray were unproven and unsupported by any tangible facts; therefore, to reduce the accountant's salary upon unproven charges would only bring obloquy upon those members who took this line of action. No matter how stringent the regulations might be, some

reliance had to be placed on the honesty of subordinate officers in handling the cash; and the fact that small defalcations had occurred in the railway accounts would not be extraordinary, in comparison with the larger and more frequent defalcations occurring in the public service of other colonies. He hoped the Commissioner would be able to show that, so far as the Railway Accountant was concerned, no charge could be laid against him.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that as the hon. member for the Murray had stated, at an earlier stage that evening, that he would not believe any statement which he (the Commissioner) might make in contradiction to statements made by that hon. member, probably the hon. member would hardly be satisfied to accept any statement which he (the Commissioner) might now make in refutation of what the hon. member for the Murray had just alleged against the Railway Accountant, upon information which the hon. member might consider to be more accurate than that which he (the Commissioner) possessed. The statement made by the hon. member as to the long delay in rendering an account could not be answered exactly at present, in the absence of information; but the delay might have occurred in the locomotive branch. He had already stated that a thorough investigation of the Railway Accountant's office was to be made; but the necessity for this might not have arisen from any doubt on the part of the Government as to the ability of the Railway Accountant to fulfil the duties properly, but it might be deemed advisable because the old system of keeping accounts here was not up to the most improved systems in vogue elsewhere. He was apt to think so from the many conversations he had had on this subject with the General Traffic Manager. The present accountant might be quite capable of working another system, if once put in possession of it. There were difficulties attached to the present system which could not be easily overcome; and, in order to place the Department on a more satisfactory footing, the Government had already sought the services of an officer to be lent by the New South Wales Government, and he was expected to arrive here shortly. As would have been seen in the report of the Auditor-General, some deficiencies or defalcations had occurred in this department; but in a large system of account keeping there might be

errors likely to arise in the combination of accounts from different stations on the various railways, though they might not be defalcations. There had been some deficiencies, which had not yet been sheeted home to any individual officer, although there might be strong suspicions; and, although the amount would be lost to the country, still that might be due not entirely to a want of ability on the part of the accountant, but might be more due to a system of account keeping that was not sufficiently in touch with the increasing railway business of this country. He believed the present accountant had worked honestly and fairly; and, this being so, he hoped the hon. member would be satisfied with the strictures he had passed on the Department, and withdraw the motion for reduction. He (the Commissioner) would not have recommended to this House an increase of salary, unless satisfied that it was well merited. This officer, Mr. Fuchs, had been in the service since 1884, and, up to the present, there had been no reason to suspect that he was unable to deal properly with the accounts of the colony.

Mr. GEORGE said that, in disagreeing with any statement made by the Commissioner, this did not necessarily imply that he disbelieved the Commissioner's word. He did not think the Commissioner would knowingly make a statement in this House that was untrue. He objected to the remark made by the hon. member for Yilgarn, in saying that he had made unproven statements against the Railway Accountant. Before making statements in this House, he took care to ascertain that they were true; and the statements he had made in this matter were based upon certain evidence which had been taken, and the report of which would be before hon. members in a few days. Therefore, in speaking on the railway accountancy, he was speaking on a matter which he understood, and on which he was entitled to speak with authority. The General Traffic Manager had said, in his evidence, that, if the accountant's department were in his hands he would get rid of some worthless men in it. As to the old system of keeping accounts being a cause of the errors or deficiencies, that system had been altered during the last two years, as stated by the General Traffic Manager; and the accountant had admitted, in his own evidence, that the improved system introduced by the General Traffic Manager would preclude, in the future, such irregularities as had occurred.

He (Mr. George) did not intend to withdraw his motion.

Mr. WOOD said the motion should be withdrawn, because it would be invidious to single out one officer for the reduction of his salary. The faults which had occurred were due to the system, more than to the accountant. He wished particularly to say that members of the House were at a disadvantage in discussing this and other matters on which evidence had been taken by the Civil Service Commission, because the members of that Commission were in possession of evidence which other members of the House had not yet seen. Such evidence should not be quoted in these discussions, until it had been presented to the House in regular course.

Mr. MORAN said the hon. member for the Murray had replied, in a rather heated manner, to some remarks made by him on this question. That reply was characterised by audacity, and what might be called consummate cheek. After all that had been said, there was not sufficient evidence to warrant the Committee in passing what would be regarded as a grave vote of censure on the Railway Accountant, if the motion of the member for the Murray were carried. They should not convict a man, and hang him, before they tried him in a regular way.

Motion (to reduce the item by £50) put and negatived on the voices.

Mr. GEORGE (having called for a division, and none being taken, there being only one voice) said that as Item 6 had been disposed of in that manner, and as he could not get a division on it, he must move for a reduction of the next item. He much regretted to have to do this, in order to emphasise what he considered a principle that should obtain support in disposing of his last motion.

THE CHAIRMAN said there was only one voice, in the call for a division, therefore no division could take place.

Mr. GEORGE said the one voice was the voice of the hon. member for the Murray. As to Item 7 (Paymaster, £300; last year, £230), there was an increase; and he found in the Auditor-General's report, at page 41, that the gross traffic earnings—

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot read that, unless it relates to the Paymaster.

Mr. GEORGE: It does refer to the Paymaster.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must keep to the subject of Paymaster.

MR. GEORGE: I am doing so.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must direct the hon. member to sit down, unless he speaks to the question of Paymaster.

THE PREMIER (to Mr. George): You had better sit down,

MR. GEORGE: I appeal to the Chair. Am I to be told—

THE PREMIER: You know you are wasting the time of the House.

MR. GEORGE: I ask the protection of the Chair against interruptions from the Treasury bench.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must either sit down or address himself to the question of Paymaster.

MR. GEORGE: If you, Mr. Chairman, will protect me against the unmannerly interjections of the Premier, I will speak on the question of Paymaster. As to the proposed increase, we may fairly infer that if the head of this department has not carried out the duties correctly, the Paymaster cannot be entirely free from —

THE CHAIRMAN: Unless you can directly connect that with the Paymaster, we must pass on to the next item.

MR. GEORGE (referring to interruptions from several members): I must claim the protection of the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must resume his seat. The next item.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I must protest, Mr. Chairman, against your treatment of the hon. member.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member (Mr. Sholl) must sit down. If he wants to call my ruling in question, there is a legitimate way of doing so.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I protest against the way in which members are interrupted by members on the Treasury bench.

MR. MARMION said he did not rise with the view of taking any exception to the item, but merely with the object of eliciting information. He noticed that, in 1892, this officer was receiving a salary of £200. In 1893 he received £225, and this amount was increased in 1894 to £230. This year the salary was proposed to be raised to the extent of £70 in one jump, and the reason for this should be explained.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that this particular

officer had been in the Department since 1887 and, until this year, his duties had not been of such an important character as they were at present. The Hon. the Premier had informed the House of the change made in connection with the Advance Accounts, and it had become the duty of that officer to control that branch of the payments, in addition to what he had previously done. His responsibilities were greatly increased, and the work of his office was generally of such a responsible character that no private firm would dream of expecting anyone to do the work for such an excessively low salary as that previously received by this officer. Even £300 a year was a very low rate for a gentleman who had carried out the responsible duties of the office so well, who had proved his general capability for the position, and who had the full confidence of his superior officers. He trusted the committee would allow this vote to remain as it stood on the Estimates.

MR. GEORGE, referring to the item "Travelling Auditor, Railway Accountant's Office, £200," said he regretted not being in the position of being able to place before the House certain information affecting these audit officers. He was not at the present moment prepared to do so. He had not anticipated the discussion taking the turn it did, otherwise he would have furnished himself with the proofs of facts within his knowledge, and which facts ought to be known to hon. members. The report of the Auditor-General showed that these travelling auditors had done their work in a most inefficient and faulty manner, and many inaccuracies had been discovered. References had been made to the fact that certain members were making use of the evidence given before the Civil Service Commission. He had been particularly careful to avoid this until the hon. member for Geraldton had done so the other evening and then he (Mr. George) felt it his duty to put the House in possession of facts very necessary for hon. members to have in their possession in order to arrive at a just decision. The evidence given before the Commission on these question of the travelling auditors showed that the work had been inaccurately done, and in a faulty manner generally. He moved that the item be reduced by £20.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. GEORGE said he also desired to refer to the next item on the vote—that of

"Travelling Auditor, Railway Accountant's office, £200." This was an additional officer, apparently, but the report of the Auditor-General showed that the work of the department in respect to the auditing at country stations was performed by very inefficient officers. He saw no reason for raising the salary.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) remarked that he would be most happy to give the hon. member every possible information, but he could not agree with the suggestion that this officer was inefficient. As a matter of fact, that officer had been placed on this particular work at the request of the General Traffic Manager, who had strongly recommended the salary proposed in the Estimates. This particular officer had only been a short time in the office of Travelling Auditor, but had already given much satisfaction to the General Traffic Manager, under whose control these travelling auditors were.

MR. A. FORREST remarked that charges had been continually made that evening by the hon. member for the Murray against certain officers in this department, and many of these charges were of a grave character. The members of the House, he was sure, did not like to doubt the hon. member's statements, but they had not the advantage of possessing the information known to him as a member of the Civil Service Commission; consequently, considering the gravity of the charges, it would be advisable, in his opinion, for the debate to be adjourned until the evidence taken by the Civil Service Commission was in the hands of every hon. member.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that, if it was the general desire of hon. members, he would raise no objection to the adjournment; but, at the same time, he was quite unable to see what good effect an adjournment would have. To wait for the evidence of the Commission might mean waiting for an indefinite period, and the Estimates had already been very much delayed. So far as the statements of the hon. member for the Murray were concerned, he (Mr. Venn) had been informed by other members of the Commission that counter evidence had yet to be taken, and that, until this was obtained, no reliable opinion could be pronounced. While he had no desire to do anything other than to meet the wishes of hon. members as to adjourning the consideration of the Estimates, they must recollect that no

charges against any particular officer could affect the Estimates. A sum would have to be voted for the office, no matter what occurred to the person who was now filling that office. Under the circumstances, he thought the consideration of the Estimates might be proceeded with.

MR. GEORGE desired to impress upon hon. members the fact that the statements he had made could be fully borne out by the evidence given to the Commission. He did not say there was room for a positive charge against a particular official, but the whole branch had been faulty, and the remarks of the Auditor-General showed that some of the officers must be both incompetent and inefficient. He had no personal feeling against any official, but, in view of the statements of the Auditor-General, it did appear a strange thing to raise the salaries of officials whose work had been described as faulty.

MR. MARMION said that with regard not only to this item, but the item following it (which provided for a third travelling auditor), it appeared that the officials occupying these positions were new to the service. The positions of auditors required to be filled by those who were not only skilled accountants but who should also have a complete knowledge of the system of the department. The fact that these gentlemen made an audit of the country stations meant that these accounts would not afterwards receive the same close scrutiny as they would have been awarded otherwise; therefore, it would be a serious thing if the audits carried out by these officials in the department were incomplete or faulty in any way. He should like to know whether the Commissioner had been satisfied that the persons occupying these positions really were capable of performing the duties appertaining to their office.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that one of these officers had entered the service in July, 1894,—Mr. Smith. [AN HON. MEMBER: Not Mr. Allison Smith?] No. He was known to the General Traffic Manager to be a thoroughly capable man, and, whatever the increases were, they were being made on the strong recommendation of the head of the Traffic branch. The other officer referred to was first engaged in January, 1895, and he was also recommended by the General Traffic Manager. So far as the work of these officers was concerned, he was given to understand that the Auditor-General

had already referred to the wonderful and marked improvement that had taken place; and this was owing to the new system of auditing adopted, and to the manner in which the travelling auditors were performing their duties. He could assure hon. members that the General Traffic Manager was most careful in satisfying himself that the officers discharging these responsible duties were thoroughly capable and trustworthy men.

Mr. GEORGE considered some information should be given hon. members with regard to a new item on the Estimates "Stores Manager, £400." He would like to know what the intentions of the Department on this matter were. He found in the very interesting report of the Engineer-in-Chief some references to the subject. That gentleman said:—"As regards the Stores Department, the modification made therein, on 1st January, 1894, at the instance of the Auditor-General, may possibly have had the effect of facilitating the audit business, but, be this as it may, it has certainly had the effect of altogether depriving the Public Works and Railways Departments, since 1st January, 1894, of the assistance of a stores organisation, for all the more important purposes of administration for which such stores organisation is requisite, namely, *inter alia*, the careful studying of what is required by all branches of the service, in conjunction with indents current, and stocks in hand, and the meeting of all requirements with economy and promptitude, while at the same time avoiding so far as is possible, the creation of dead stock. Just, in fact, as a capable merchant provides for the probable requirements of his trade, while relegating to subordinates the routine work of receiving the stock, when it arrives, and disposing of it when it is asked for. This routine mechanical operation, of receiving and issuing (as a locker of a bonded store receives and issues) is, in fact, all that the existing stores organisation does, or attempts to do, and the necessity for some much more expert and efficient administration (of the very large mercantile business which the purchase and custody of stores and materials for the Public Works and Railways Departments is developing into) must therefore be very obvious. Besides this, too, the Western Australian system of Railways is the only system of railways in the world, so far as I am aware, which is

"endeavoring to work without the aid of a skilled Stores Branch, under the immediate control of the head of the Railway service; and I am glad to find that this dangerous experiment, of attempting to perform miracles, which cannot have failed to have caused some waste in the past, and which would necessarily involve enormous waste in the future, is not any longer to be continued." The only information he (Mr. George) required was, whether this item on the Estimates was identical with the appointment foreshadowed in the Engineer-in-Chief's report, and, also, who had been doing this work before. They know that some time ago there was a separate stores system, and it would be interesting to know why, after that system had been altered, the old system was being reverted to.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that it was not the intention of the Government to interfere, in any way whatever, with the position or work of the Government Storekeeper, Mr. Pether, who had hitherto also filled the office of Railway Storekeeper. At present the whole of the stores were under the control of the Treasury Department, the change from the dual system having been made some time previously, at the suggestion of the Auditor-General. The whole of the stores were treated by the Treasury as an asset, but they were not charged to the various departments until they were required and obtained from the Government Storekeeper on requisition. This had been found very impracticable, so far as the Railway Department was concerned. There was really no intention to create a separate department, but it was thought far better to have an official specially appointed to protect the railway stores, so far as the issue and re-issue of goods was concerned. According to the present system, if a diving-dress, for instance, was required for work at the Bunbury jetty, the cost would be charged to the jetty. That particular article might not be used for more than a couple of days, and it was necessary to have some place where it could be returned, and some officer to see that it was returned, when it was not further required. There was no return of goods under the existing system, for the reason that, when stores were issued and charged against a particular vote, the matter had no further concern for the Government Storekeeper. It was just as necessary

to have proper supervision over the stores, after they had been given out, as it was to exercise care in bringing them into the Stores branch in the first instance. The railway storekeeper would be required to see that supplies did not run short, to see that requisitions were in proper form, and, generally, to act as a medium between the Railway Department and the Government Storekeeper. Besides this he would require to prepare the indents, and this would necessitate great care in order to prevent a great quantity of stores being dumped into the colony before they were wanted. Considerable expert knowledge was requisite to carry out the duties of this office, and, consequently, the position was an important one in every respect. The appointment of such an officer was necessary in the interests of the Department and of the country. The Colonial Treasurer quite agreed with the suggestion that the issue of railway stores to the various branches of the service should be made through an officer wholly responsible for the proper performance of the work of issuing stores, in the first place, and then of taking care that stores not required, or for which there was no further use, were returned.

MR. SOLOMON asked whether this office had been filled? If not, he trusted the Government would appoint some one who had already done good service for the country, if there was anyone with the requisite experience to fill such a post.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that, at present, he had no one in his mind who was likely to be appointed. If anyone could be obtained who was already in the service, he was not likely to go outside to fill the vacancy. Personally, he did not care where a man came from—even if it was the North Pole—so long as he was thoroughly capable and experienced in the work.

MR. CONNOR enquired whether any applications had been received for the position.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No; I have had the name of a gentleman mentioned as being suitable, but no direct application has been received.

MR. CONNOR desired to emphasise the suggestion of the hon. member for South Fremantle; if there was a capable officer already in the Department he should be appointed to the new position.

MR. MARMION did not agree that such an officer as the one proposed to be appointed was

at all necessary. He did not believe in the system at all; it was simply returning to the old state of affairs, which had given rise to so much trouble in the past.

THE CHAIRMAN desired that hon. members would observe the rules laid down in dealing with these items. If the hon. member desired to do more than ask a question he would have to move an amendment.

MR. MARMION was quite prepared to move, *pro forma*, that the item be struck out. He objected to the system altogether, and, if better supervision was required over re-issues, that could surely be obtained by appointing someone under the Government Storekeeper to do the work. If two separate branches were created in the manner proposed, then it would resolve itself into a question of conflicting interests. The whole of the stores for the colony should undoubtedly be under the control of one storekeeper, and he should be held responsible. It was an extraordinary thing that the gentleman who now filled the position of Government Storekeeper, and who had been in the service for years, received only £400 a year, while the proposed Railway Storekeeper, an entirely new officer, was to receive the same amount upon his entering the service. What the creation of a separate Railway Stores Department meant was that there would be really two Kings of Brentford. Each would be pulling against the other. If any person was appointed at all, he should be subordinate to the Government Storekeeper. Having said this much, he would like to withdraw his amendment that the item be struck out.

Upon the question, that leave be granted to withdraw the amendment, being put,—

MR. R. F. SHOLL objected to the withdrawal. He could not agree with any proposal which meant a return to the old system of issuing stores. Neither could he understand why the gentleman who was to occupy this position, was to receive £400 a year, while the Government Storekeeper, with much more responsible duties, only received a similar salary. The evils of a separate system of stores for the railways had been clearly shown in figures quoted by the hon. member for the Murray, the other evening, showing the unfortunate position of Victoria, under Mr. Allison Smith's régime, and how hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of stores had been imported, and were lying unused and value

less. Such a system as this was not wanted in Western Australia.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought there could not be the same objection to this item, when it was explained that a separate department was not to be created. The present system was proving most awkward in many ways for the railway department. It had worked very well until the development of the railways, and of the colony, had become so rapid; but, now, the necessity for requisitioning the Government Storekeeper for every little thing required in the railway service was attended with many difficulties. The officer proposed to be appointed would not interfere with the work of the present Government Storekeeper in the slightest. What he supposed would be done would be that the Government Storekeeper would issue a certain amount of stores to the Railway Storekeeper, who would re-issue them to the branches of the service, as the stores were required. The Railway Storekeeper would also be required to prepare indents, and present requisitions in proper form, as well as take care the supplies of the department did not run short. There were two ways of obtaining the same results. One would be by appointing someone directly under the Government Storekeeper, and merely create a branch of that department; and the other would be by appointing someone more directly in touch with the Railway Department, and more under the immediate control of the Minister. At present, the system of issuing stores was satisfactory; but there was no supervision over them after they had left the Government Storekeeper. In this way many valuable articles had been lost. For instance, a boring machine had been lent to some people at Robe River, and it had been left there. As soon as the goods were issued and charged by the Government Storekeeper to some particular vote, they did not concern him further. What had struck the Government was that it was equally as necessary to properly supervise the use of the stores after they had left the Government Storekeeper, as it was while they were in his possession; and this would be the work of the proposed new officer. The position was one which would require an experienced man to fill properly. The Government had agreed that while everything would still have to come through the Government Storekeeper, it would be more advantageous to the Railway Department to have a storekeeper under its own

control, to take the responsibility of the re-issuing of these stores.

Motion to strike out the item put and negatived.

MR. RANDELL asked the Director of Public Works whether it was intended to appoint a local or an imported officer to the post under discussion (Railway Storekeeper). There was a general opinion that no West Australian need apply for an appointment in this department.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that, until the committee passed the vote, it would have been premature for him to have selected any officer for the appointment. If he could find a good man in this colony he should be glad to give him the preference.

MR. GEORGE was of opinion that, as the Government Storekeeper only received £400 per annum, the Stores Manager of the railways should not begin with more than £300 per annum. He moved, as an amendment, that the item be reduced by £100.

MR. A. FORREST pointed out that the Government Storekeeper was a very old and efficient officer, who had been many years working up to a salary of £400 per annum. It would be manifestly unjust to place upon an equal footing with the Government Storekeeper, the Stores Manager of the railway branch of the public service, whose chief duty (from what he understood from the explanation of the Director of Public Works) would be the taking care of second-hand material. As far as he was concerned, if the post was intended for some pet of the Engineer-in-Chief, who was to be brought from New Zealand, he would be glad to vote for the reduction of the item, in order that it should not be too valuable a piece of patronage.

Amendment (to reduce the item by £100) put and passed.

MR. RANDELL, referring to Item No. 29 (Cadet, £40), said that the Engineer-in-Chief, on page 21 of his report, recommended that cadets entering the railway service should have a University training similar to that which cadets received in the adjoining colonies. He (Mr. Randell) was quite in favor of cadets being well educated, but, in Western Australia, they could not attend a University. He would like to know whether the cadets already admitted to the railway service had exhibited defective education.

Moreover, he would ask whether the cadets had to go through any special examination before they obtained an appointment in the department.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the cadets in the service had been found to be very capable young men. A board, of which the Engineer-in-Chief was a member, examined the candidates for cadetships, and those who passed with the most credit were chosen to fill the vacancies.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to item No. 32 (Outdoor Superintendent, £250), asked what the duties of the superintendent would be, and who would get the appointment.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said an officer named H. C. Davies—who, by-the-by was not a relative of the Traffic Manager—had been appointed from the Traffic Manager's office, in order to cope with the pressure of outside work. The outdoor superintendent was really the senior inspector. Mr. Davies, who had been in the service since 1884, was credited with being a very capable man, and the General Traffic Manager had every confidence in him.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item No. 100 (materials and incidental expenses, including claims for loss or detention of and damage to goods during transit, £4,500), desired to bring under the notice of the Commissioner of Railways a case in which the department had, on a quibble, refused to compensate a consignee whose produce had been damaged while it was lying on the Fremantle Wharf. The attention of the goods agent and of the stationmaster at Fremantle was called to the damage, and the goods agent promised that a claim for compensation would be recognised. On this understanding the consignee took away his goods, and then he was told that, as he had taken them away, the department declined to recognise any responsibility in the matter.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that if a consignee gave a clean receipt for goods, and afterwards claimed compensation, alleging that the goods were damaged while they were in the care of the Railway Department, it was difficult to see how the claim could be recognised. If compensation was paid under these circumstances, some unscrupulous persons, finding that their shipments did not sell as profitably as they had anticipated, might lay the blame at the door of the department, and ask for recom-

pense. At the same time, he (Mr Venn) had always been ready to recognise *bona fide* claims for the loss or damage of goods during transit, and he would be glad to talk over with the hon. member (Mr. George) the case which had been brought under the notice of the Committee. It might be added that pillage had been so rife, especially on the goldfields line, by organised bands of thieves, who took away cases of whisky and tobacco and other valuable merchandise from the trucks, that it had been found necessary to appoint a number of detectives, who had put a stop to a great deal of the plunder.

MR. GEORGE, in thanking the Commissioner for his reply, said it was to be regretted that he (Mr. George) was so often interrupted by interjections from the Premier, when bringing before the committee matters which he considered it was his duty to have ventilated.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You should not speak so often; we get tired of you.

MR. RANDELL asked the Commissioner of Railways whether it was his intention to provide the department with weigh-bridges.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) stated that suitable weigh-bridges would be provided as soon as possible.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, referring to Item No. 139 (Wages, guards, porters, etc., also overtime and extra labor, £18,305), urged that, considering the cost of living in this colony, the wages paid to guards and porters were too low. He was aware that these ill-paid men were anxious to work overtime, but the department should not be willing to overwork the staff, which had life and property in its hands. It would be very much better to have to employ sufficient men to do the work, in relays, upon the eight-hours system, instead of keeping guards and porters on for twelve, fourteen, or sixteen hours, as was now often done. The working of overtime was not a good thing for the department.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that in the railway departments of Victoria and South Australia the eight hours system was adopted, but, in New South Wales, guards had to work fifty-five hours per week, and porters sixty hours per week. A comparison of the wages paid in the other colonies showed that the guards and porters in this colony had not

much to complain of. In West Australia the minimum wage of a porter was 6s. per day, and the maximum 6s. 6d., while guards earned from 7s. to 10s. per day. In South Australia porters were paid from 6s. to 7s. per day, and guards from 7s. 6d. to 10s. per day. In Victoria a porter began at 5s. per day and could rise to 7s. per day, while a guard was paid 7s. 6d. to 10s. 6d., according to his grade. In New South Wales, as he had said, porters worked 60 hours per week for from 6s. to 7s. 6d. per day, and guards got for 55 hours per week from 8s. to 12s. per day. He hoped that, consequent upon the establishment of markets and the increase of competition, the cost of living in this colony would be very much reduced in the next twelve months. As regards the overtime question, he was not in favor of the staff working unduly long hours. He would prefer the men to earn a reasonable wage in reasonable hours of labor; but, in order to overcome the pressure of work, it was sometimes necessary to work overtime. Whenever the eight hours system was advocated, he always said that it was a very good system, and would have his support, so long as the men did not expect nine hours pay for eight hours work. He did not very much care how short the hours were, so long as a man was only paid according to the number of hours he worked.

MR. MORAN referring to Item No. 182 (Wages—drivers, stokers, mechanics, classified according to regulations; also overtime and extra labor, £19,785) desired to draw the attention of the Commissioner of Railways to the fact that 7s. per day was a very inadequate wage to give to railway men on the goldfields line, as they had to live expensively in an almost tropical climate (which was inimical to health), and to do a great deal of heavy work in the goods branch, which was generally very busy in equipping the mines. When a miner got 10s. a day, surely a railway man was worth more than 7s. a day.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it would be very difficult, where a large body of men like the railway staff was concerned, to treat some of them better than others in the matter of wages. The Department strove to do justice to them all by transferring them from place to place, from time to time, so that the easy and the hard places should equally fall to every one. The staff was governed by regulations,

which were admitted to be very fairly drawn up.

Vote (£226,800) agreed to.

Works and Buildings, £445,136 13s. 4d. :

MR. GEORGE referring to Item No. 1 (Under-Secretary for Works, £450) asked the Director of Public Works who was to be appointed to the office.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that he had had much pleasure in offering the appointment to Mr. Jull, the chief clerk of the department, one of the most reliable and able men in the service, and one in whom he had every confidence. Mr. Jull had been in the service for four years. He was a first-class accountant, and had a thorough grasp of the work of the department. There was no officer in the department he (Mr. Venn) and the Engineer-in-Chief had more respect for or greater confidence in. Mr. Jull was now receiving £350 per annum, and the £450 that was set down for the Under-Secretaryship was not in keeping with the abilities of that officer nor the importance of the duties he would have to perform. Other Under-Secretaries were receiving higher salaries, and he hoped that next year, or later on, the House would be prepared to make a corresponding increase in the salary of the Under-Secretary for Works.

MR. GEORGE knew Mr. Jull to be a first-class officer and a first-class accountant. Why was he not appointed to the Under-Secretaryship of Railways?

THE CHAIRMAN ruled the question to be out of order, as there was no motion or amendment before the chair.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Item No. 3 (Accountant, £350), asked whether it was contemplated to increase this item, which did not appear to him to be an adequate remuneration for so important a post as that of accountant of so large a branch of the public service as the Works Department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the accountant of the department had resigned, and his resignation had been reluctantly accepted. The accountant was a very able officer, and, after he had been ill-paid for several years, and was about to leave the service, it would not be fitting to offer his successor a larger salary. Personally, he thought that Mr. Simmonds, the gentleman in question, did right in leaving Government employment. It was a miserable thing to see men of ability given a petty

increase of £10 or £15 per annum, and he had told many of them that they could do better outside the service. To many of the applicants who came to him for a Civil Service post he said: "If you have no ability I do not want you here; and, if you have ability, you can find a better career."

MR. MORAN said that every officer in the accountant's branch, even the accountant himself, had been very much overworked without receiving extra pay, and he knew that one man in particular, who was then very ill—in fact was lying at death's door—had worked for no less than twenty hours out of the twenty-four. He thought it behoved the members of that House to insist that the officers of the Civil Service should only be expected to do a fair day's work, of eight hours, because it was not possible to obtain good results when the employees in any department, or in any other business, had to work so much overtime as they had to do in this department. In spite of the heavy strain put upon the employees in the Accountant's branch, he had every reason to believe that the accounts were accurately kept, and that no complaint could be made against the officers in that respect; and the least hon. members could do was to see that those officers—whose work was really worthy of commendation—should be better treated in the future.

MR. JAMES said he would like the Director of Public Works to state whether he was aware that the clerks in the Accountant's branch were overworked to the extent that the hon. member for Yilgarn had stated, because, if they had to work so much overtime, it clearly showed that that particular branch of the department was undermanned.

MR. SIMPSON said that, according to the "Interim Report" on the Public Works Department, there were twenty-two accountants employed in the accountant's branch of the Department.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said they were not all accountants, most of them being clerks. He believed that the accountant's branch of the Department was undermanned, and he regretted exceedingly that the employees of that branch had been so much overworked, which he thought was partly due to the accountant himself, who was a veritable whale for work, and probably expected the smaller fish in the branch to be whales also. He hoped, however, that the system of over-

time, which had prevailed for the last 12 months, would cease in the future, and that, beyond those times when the scheduling of accounts for payment demanded extra exertions on the part of the employees, it would not be necessary for them to work overtime at all. He had at all times been anxious to show some consideration for those officers in his department who had been overworked, by granting them leave of absence to recoup themselves, when the business of the department was slack. At the same time, he did not believe one bit in the wholesale system of overtime that had, through force of circumstances, existed in the department under his control.

MR. MORAN: It is caused by bad management.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was not so; because even he himself and the accountant also had had to work overtime, owing to the constant interruptions by callers during the day preventing them from doing their work. The hon. member, therefore, could not say that the overtime system was caused by bad management.

MR. WOOD said he was opposed to a system of overtime in any Government department, and, if the department in question were properly manned, there should be no occasion for the employees to have to work overtime at all. He considered it was the incompetency of some of the employees of this particular branch that had given rise to the overtime system. It could not be expected that grocers' assistants, or any young and inexperienced men who were pitchforked into positions in the office, could do the work of accountants.

MR. JAMES said he agreed in all that had fallen from the hon. member for West Perth, with one exception, and that was with regard to his statement that grocers' assistants could not be competent accountants. He believed that many of them were quite as competent as the present employees of this branch of the service were.

MR. MORAN said that a grocer's assistant could be secured at a salary of £70 a year. If hon. members wanted to see brilliant officers—

THE CHAIRMAN: We are discussing the item "Accountant, £350," now.

MR. MORAN said he thought he heard grocers' clerks mentioned.

MR. A. FORREST said that no one who had had any practical experience of accountants

or of any other class of clerical employees, would say that it was a desirable thing to work them at night as well as in the day time; but he did not think that any of the civil servants were so much overworked as had been stated, because they could shirk their duties if they liked, and still get as much credit as those who conscientiously did a fair amount of work for the pay they received. If, however it were true that the employees in the accountant's branch of the Public Works Department were really overworked, he was inclined to think there was a screw loose somewhere.

MR. SIMPSON said he entirely agreed with what the hon. member for West Kimberley had said, in regard to the undesirableness of working clerks at night, because he had found, after some years of commercial experience, that to do so had the effect of deteriorating a man's powers to work in the day time. He had learned that over £3,000 a year had been paid to the Department under debate for overtime, and he thought that better results would be obtained if the work were done in daylight.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said there were many men in the civil service who did the work of others as well as their own, and he considered that, if a little more supervision were exercised over the drones, there would be little necessity for overtime being worked in any of the departments.

MR. GEORGE, referring to the item, "Engineer-in-Chief, £1,200," said he would like to know if it would be possible in future that, in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, the Engineering branch and the Architectural branch should be treated separately, so that hon. members would be able to ascertain the percentage of cost incurred by the Architectural branch of the department in the erection of public buildings.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he had had a return prepared which showed that the percentage of cost incurred by the Architectural branch in designing and supervising the erection of public buildings was about 9 per cent.

MR. MORAN: That is a very high percentage.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the percentage he had mentioned included every bit of work, great or small, carried out by the Government

on distant goldfields, and at the other centres of population.

MR. MORAN said he was of opinion that the percentage mentioned by the Hon. the Director of Public Works was very high, as compared with the cost of supervision incurred by private individuals in erecting buildings, which was never more than 5 per cent. Probably the reason for the high percentage of cost in the erection of public buildings by the Government was, that there was too much supervision exercised. This, as a rule, hampered the contractors, and protracted the completion of the works to an unreasonable length of time.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members are now getting very wide of the question. The proper time to discuss the question of Government architecture will be when the vote for the architectural staff is reached.

MR. GEORGE said, with regard to the Chairman's ruling, that he had asked the question in regard to the cost of the Architectural branch, because the Department of which the Engineer-in-Chief was the head, included the Architectural branch, and the item now before the Committee was that of the Engineer-in-Chief.

MR. SIMPSON said, with regard to the percentage incurred by the Architectural branch in the erection of public buildings, he was sceptical as to its being only 9 per cent., as the Director of Public Works had stated. He was inclined to believe it was even higher than 9 per cent., and he had figures in his possession relating to the matter. He might mention that the percentage in New South Wales was exactly one half, namely 4½ per cent.

MR. LEAKE said he was sure that the announcement of 9 per cent. as being the percentage of the cost of supervision, in erecting public buildings, had come as a surprise upon hon. members, and he moved that progress be reported, in order to allow hon. members to think over the matter, as it opened up a very wide field for discussion.

Motion—to report progress—put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

TRUSTEE ORDINANCE, 1854, AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Council, and, on the motion of MR. JAMES, was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.34 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 17th September, 1895.

A Correction—Personal Explanation—Coolgardie-Kalgoortie Railway Bill: third reading—Parks and Reserves Bill: consideration of committee's report—Copyright Bill: second reading; in committee—Fencing Bill: second reading—Estimates, 1895-6: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

A CORRECTION: PUBLIC WORKS, SUPERVISION OF.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that, at the close of the debate in the Public Works vote, when the Estimates were under consideration the other evening, he inadvertently made a mistake in stating that the percentage of the cost of designing and supervising public buildings amounted to about 9 per cent. He had since had a return prepared, showing the exact percentage of the cost of plans, supervision, etc., which he would lay on the table for the information of hon. members. It would be seen from that return that the actual percentage was only 4.60 per cent., including the cost of supervision, and that, excluding supervision, the percentage of cost for preparing designs or plans did not amount to more than 3.1 per cent.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said his attention had been called to the fact that the hon. member for North Fremantle (Mr. Moss) felt himself somewhat hurt and aggrieved at some remarks which he (the Commissioner) made the other evening, in the course of his speech on the Railway Workshops question. He wished to assure the hon. member that, in what he said,

he had no intention whatever to cast any personal reflection upon the hon. member. It was not customary with him to make any remarks of a personal character, and he desired to assure the hon. member that any observations which fell from him on the occasion in question were merely of a general character, and had no personal reference to the hon. member in any way.

COOLGARDIE-KALGOORLIE RAILWAY BILL.

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

PARKS AND RESERVES BILL.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration of the committee's report on this Bill,

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved a consequential amendment, in Clauses 3 and 5, to provide for the establishment of zoological gardens in connection with public parks or reserves.

Amendment put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), in accordance with notice, moved, without comment, that the following sub-clause be added to Clause 3:—

(3.) A Board may sue and be sued, and all legal proceedings may be taken by and against a Board in the name of the President of the Board.

Put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) also moved the insertion of the following new clause, which he said, was introduced to meet a suggestion thrown out by the hon. member for Albany, when the Bill was under discussion:—"The owner of any cattle within the meaning of the Trespass Act, hereinafter cited, which are found trespassing on any enclosed park or reserve, whether damage is proved to have been committed or not, shall forfeit and pay to the Board the like sums as mentioned in the Trespass Scale of the Cattle Trespass, Fencing, and Impounding Act, 1882, in respect of trespass on a public street or thoroughfare in a town or city, or in an enclosed public cemetery."

Clause put and passed, and committee's report adopted.

COPYRIGHT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S.