

in clause 5, by which sheep must be travelled a certain distance every day.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Schedules 1, 2, and 3 agreed to.

Schedule 4:

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I move that this schedule be struck out, it being now unnecessary.

Question put and passed.

Bill reported.

ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 8:55 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Monday, 5th November, at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 1st November, 1894.

Chinese Immigration Restriction Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Lands Resumption Bill: first reading—Cost of Civil Service Commission—Railways Act Further Amendment Bill: third reading—Dentists Bill: Legislative Council's amendments—Municipal Institutions Bill: reasons for disagreeing with Legislative Council's amendments—Message from the Governor's Deputy: assent to Bills—Estimates, 1894-5: further considered in committee—Police Act Amendment Bill: Legislative Council's amendments—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): Messages from the Legislative Council—Fencing Bill: Order of the Day for the further consideration of the Bill in committee discharged—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

CHINESE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by MR. JAMES, and read a first time.

LANDS RESUMPTION BILL.

Introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.

COST OF CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved for a return of the expenses incurred up to date by the Civil Service Commission, including the cost of printing the first progress report. He thought, looking at the voluminousness of this report, it became a question of cost against value. If they were going to have many more of these reports he was certain no one was ever likely to read them, and if they did read them, the value of them would not be much. Therefore, before they went any further, he thought it was desirable they should have some idea what this Commission was likely to cost.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had been supplied with a return by the secretary of the Civil Service Commission, from which it appeared that the cost of the Commission for the six months ending the 31st October ultimo, including a sum of £175, the cost of printing the first progress report, was £439 0s. 3d. He begged to lay the return on the table for the information of the members.

Motion put and passed.

RAILWAYS ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

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

DENTISTS' BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill were agreed to without comment.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

POINT OF PROCEDURE.

On the Order of the Day for the consideration of the reasons why the Assembly disagreed with certain amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill,

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said: Before these reasons are considered, I would like to say that the importance

of this Municipal Bill becoming law at the present time is very great. There are serious difficulties existing which this Bill will cure, and unless it becomes law in a few days there may be great confusion, especially in connection with the newly created municipalities at the Murchison and Coolgardie; and it will be very inconvenient indeed if this Bill does not become law at once. So far as I can see at present, the difference that has arisen between this House and the Legislative Council in regard to the Bill, as to the powers and privileges of the two Houses, is such that there is not much chance of the Bill becoming law for some time, at any rate. Even a few days' delay would make it too late for the Bill to be availed of this year, and, under the circumstances, I wish to ask whether it would be possible at this stage to withdraw this Bill, with the view of reintroducing it in this House with the Council's amendment in the rating clause, and passing the Bill through its various stages at once? It seems to me we would get over the whole difficulty by adopting that course, if it is permissible. I believe it is a course that is adopted on some occasions. If the Bill can be withdrawn, it might then be reintroduced, with the amendment of the Legislative Council inserted—for I believe a majority of this House is in favour of that amendment (apart from the question of the rights of the Council to make such amendments); in fact, the only reason why a majority of this House are not prepared to acquiesce in the amendment is because the Speaker has ruled that the Legislative Council has no power to make such an amendment. I would like to ask, sir, whether it is competent for the Government at this stage to withdraw the Bill, with the object of re-introducing it at once, and, by suspending the Standing Orders, getting it passed through all its stages, with the amendment suggested by the Legislative Council inserted. If that course is permissible, we might get over the difficulty in which we now find ourselves, and the Bill might become law in a few days. As I have said, it is very important that it should become law, without delay, and that is the reason why I ask whether this course can be pursued. If it is competent for the Government to do that, we could then calmly consider the constitutional difficulty that has arisen

during the recess; and, for my own part, I would be quite prepared to ask, through the Imperial authorities, for the opinion of the Speaker of the House of Commons on the point in dispute. I believe that is not an unusual course, when questions of grave constitutional difficulties arise between the two branches of colonial Legislatures. Our Speaker has given us his ruling on the subject, to which I humbly submit, as I think it is the duty of the House to submit. At the same time, my own opinion is that the question raised is not free from doubt, and I should like very much to have the opinion of the Speaker of the House of Commons on the subject, for our guidance in the future.

THE SPEAKER: I am afraid there is some little difficulty in the way of withdrawing this Bill at the present stage. If this House, when the Bill came back from the Legislative Council, had there and then laid it aside, it would have been quite within its power to have done so, and for the Government to have brought in another Bill, as suggested. But the House has adopted a resolution, and appointed a committee to draw up reasons for disagreeing with the Council's amendments, and we are now on the Order of the Day for the consideration of those reasons. It seems to me that we have now reached a point from which we cannot retrace our steps. Of course it is competent for the House, by a resolution, to rescind the resolution already passed.

MR. SOLOMON: Would it be competent, in the event of the other House throwing out the Bill altogether, for the Government to introduce another Bill?

THE SPEAKER: No.

MR. TRAYLEN: I wish to refer to this point: the Bill, I think, is not now in our possession.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, it is.

MR. TRAYLEN: I understood it was not in our possession while it was going through the other House, and that the fact of its having been returned to us, with a Message from the other House asking our concurrence in certain amendments, does not put this House in possession of the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: The Bill is in our possession, and we can do what we like with it. I may say that if the Bill had been sent down with this amendment in the rating clause inadvertently inserted,

I, myself, would have recommended that this course should have been adopted: that the Bill be laid on one side and another one brought in. My reason for not doing that was because the Bill was sent down here, with this amendment in it, inserted in defiance of the intimation conveyed to the other House that the amendment was not in order, and a breach of the privileges of the Legislative Assembly. Under the circumstances, I do not see why we should indirectly give way to the other House now, in the way proposed.

MR. JAMES: I rise to speak on this question with some diffidence, as I may enjoy the proud distinction of being one of the "wolves in sheep's clothing" referred to by the Premier in his speech at Northam yesterday. But it seems to me that we are in this position: the other House claims the absolute right of amending a rating clause, and they have thrown down the gauntlet to this House, and I do not think we ought to retreat. We are acting in this matter under the authority of the Speaker, and I think if we adopted the course suggested by the Premier we should be wanting in respect to the Speaker himself.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I desire to express a similar opinion to that expressed by the hon. member for East Perth. I am aware that it is of great importance that this Bill should become law, but I think it is of infinitely more importance that this House should maintain its privileges. So far as my knowledge of Parliamentary procedure goes, I do not think it is possible for us to carry out the Premier's suggestion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not agree with you.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I suppose not. It is not often you do, nor I with you. I do not agree with your utterances at Northam yesterday, for one thing.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The point seems to be this: putting aside the constitutional question for the moment, an occasion may arise in which the Legislative Council may adopt a course which is a breach of the privileges of this House, but at the same time involving an amendment which this House itself desires to make. Assuming for the moment that we unanimously desire that this 2½ per cent. be increased to

3 per cent., and that there is not a dissentient voice against it—I think I am right in saying that a large majority do desire it—why should we cut our noses off to spite our faces, and say we won't have it, because the other House has done what we ourselves desire to see done? We want this amendment, and it appears we cannot get it, because the other House has made it. That seems an anomalous position to be in. I do not for one moment wish to see the other House infringing upon the privileges of this Assembly, but there are occasions when they may do so to our advantage, and this seems to be one of them. They have done what we ourselves desire to do, but which it appears we are now unable to do. If otherwise unobjectionable, I believe the House of Commons often accept amendments made by the Lords, though not strictly regular, and they justify their conduct by an entry in their journal, explaining the motives of their agreement, and justifying the course adopted. I think that in a case like this we also might waive our privilege, accept this amendment, and record on the minutes of the House our reason for adopting this course, namely, that the amendment carries out the intention and desire of this House. The difficulty at present is that we want this Bill passed through, this session, very much indeed. If it does not pass, I don't know I am sure what is going to happen. I am not prepared to accept the responsibility of it, myself. While we are quarrelling over a constitutional point, the country is waiting for this Bill. The Upper House, so far as the amendment is concerned, has done nothing but what we ourselves approve of. Putting aside the infringement which is involved in it, they are simply doing what we ourselves desire to do. If there is no way at all, under our Standing Orders or by following parliamentary practice, for attaining our desire, the sooner we provide some means out of the difficulty the better. I hope that some member will be able to show us some way by which this Bill may become law without delay, because there are municipalities that cannot move hand or foot until the Bill does become law.

MR. TRAYLEN: I rise again to a point of order. I have some recollection that two Bills of similar import were

introduced in the House of Commons concurrently. If that be so, is it not possible, assuming that we are in possession of this Bill (which I thought we were not), for the Government to introduce another Bill of similar import, but slightly varying from the present Bill, and to lay this Bill aside.

THE SPEAKER: There is not the slightest doubt that a Bill can be laid on one side, and another one brought in, which is what is usually done when an amendment is made in the other House which is an infringement on the privileges of the Lower House, but which the Lower House wishes to see adopted. But that is when the amendment is made by the other House, through inadvertence. Here the amendment was made in defiance of an intimation conveyed to the other House that it was a breach of the privileges of this House, which intimation the other House deliberately disregarded. I do not wish to interpose any obstacles in the way of this Bill becoming law, but I think it would be very irregular to lay this Bill aside now, without a distinct resolution of the House rescinding the motion already agreed to.

MR. MORAN: Can I move a resolution to that effect now?

THE SPEAKER: It cannot be done without notice, and with the concurrence of a majority of members.

MR. MORAN: It would be a thousand pities if this Bill did not become law this session. The newly created municipalities on the goldfields cannot move without it. I am not disposed myself to split straws, as some members are, in matters of this kind. Could I give a notice of motion now for to-morrow?

THE SPEAKER: I do not object to its being given now, but it ought to have been made before we proceeded to the business of the day on the Notice Paper.

MR. RANDELL: It appears to me we would be moving somewhat in the dark in this respect. Although there may be precedents for it, we would be approving of a principle which seems to me to be fraught with very great danger, and I think we should be very careful how we move in this direction. I can sympathise with the Government in their desire to provide for the requirements of new municipalities; at the same time I think it is very undesirable for this

House to depart from recognised principles, laid down in our standing rules and orders, one of which distinctly provides that no measure of the same import as one upon which the House has already expressed its opinion shall be brought in during the same session. The suggestion made in this instance seems to be sailing very near to the wind, in that respect. There is another important point to be considered—we do not know whether the Council would accept any other Bill if we passed it through, because we may make other amendments which they may disagree with. This House having taken up its stand on the question of privilege, it seems to me it would be extremely inadvisable to depart from it, whatever may be the consequences. I think we have a right to expect that the Upper House will recognise that it owes a duty to the country as much as we do, and no doubt they will recognise it, rather than jeopardise the passage of the Bill, which is so much needed at the present moment. I think it would be easy for them to revert to the original minimum. I say that all the more confidently, because I myself proposed it should be 3 per cent., but it seemed to be the almost unanimous wish of this House that it should be reduced to 2½ per cent.

MR. LOTON: It seems to me that our duty is clear in this matter. Unless this House is prepared to disagree with the ruling of the Speaker, there is only one course open to us, and that is to support that ruling. So far as I am concerned, having carefully thought over the reasons that have been given for adopting the course we propose to take, I am fully prepared, with the information before me, to support the ruling of the Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: If I may be permitted to say so, I think the most dignified course for this House to pursue, at this stage of the proceedings, is to send back the Bill to the Legislative Council with the amendments that are disagreed to, and the reasons for this House disagreeing to them. I presume the other House then, if they do not accept those reasons, will adopt the usual course, and ask for a conference, and when that conference takes place it will be for the members appointed to discuss

the matter, and see if they cannot arrive at some agreement.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Could this House then give way?

THE SPEAKER: Not unless you disagreed with my ruling. The parliamentary course is not to appoint any member to a conference who does not agree with the ruling of the Speaker.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): How could we give way then?

THE SPEAKER: I do not think you could give way. The conference might induce the other House to do so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am afraid they would not.

THE SPEAKER: I do not wish to express any opinion upon that.

MR. LEFROY: I quite endorse what has been said by members on this side of the House, that we should support the Speaker's ruling. [THE PREMIER: Not only on that side of the House.] I think we should show the greatest possible respect for the ruling of the Speaker. If the business of the House is to be conducted at all, we must support the Speaker's ruling. We must, in a sense, regard it as infallible. If the Speaker, whoever he may be, has not the confidence of the House, the work of the country cannot be proceeded with satisfactorily. Thinking over this matter carefully, and having heard all that has been said on the subject, I had made up my mind when I came here this afternoon to support the view taken of this question by the Speaker, in his ruling; and I am surprised that there should be any difference of opinion on the subject, because I think it is most important that the House should support the ruling of its Speaker.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who suggested anything else?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You did.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not at all.

MR. SOLOMON: I do not think it is the other side of the House alone that is loyal to the Speaker; I think every member on this side is equally prepared to support the ruling of the Speaker.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We judge you by your speeches.

MR. SOLOMON: I think we are equally loyal as the other side. There is no doubt that unless we have absolute

confidence in the Speaker, the business of the House could not be carried on.

MR. MORAN: The Speaker himself has pointed out the course open to us, and we are prepared to follow it; therefore it is nonsense to talk about any disloyalty to the Speaker.

REASONS FOR DISAGREEING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), on behalf of the committee appointed for the purpose, then brought up the following Reasons for the disagreement of the Assembly to amendments 17, 18, 36, and 42 of the Legislative Council:—

As to No. 17.—These words are calculated to interfere with the secrecy of the ballot.

As to No. 18.—This amendment would put the poorer candidate at a disadvantage in comparison with the richer, as the latter might be more able to hire conveyances for voters than the former, thus securing more votes.

As to No. 36.—This amendment alters the amount of a rate for purposes of local taxation, and thus infringes the privileges of this House.

As to No. 42.—This amendment makes an alteration in the mode of levying and collecting the rate, and thus infringes the privileges of this House.

Reasons adopted.

Ordered.—That a Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Assembly had agreed to certain of their amendments in "The Municipal Institutions Bill," had amended one, and had disagreed to others, and forwarding the Reasons for such disagreement.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR'S DEPUTY: ASSENT TO BILLS.

The following Message was delivered to, and read by, the Speaker:—

"Alex. C. Ouslow,

"Governor's Deputy.

"The Governor, by his Deputy, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has this day assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the undermentioned Bills:—

1. "An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of One

hundred thousand pounds to the Service of the Year ending 30th June, 1895."

2. "*An Act to amend 'The Homesteads Act, 1893.'*"
3. "*An Act to authorise the Transfer or Removal of Colonial Prisoners from any one Gaol to any other Gaol.*"
4. "*An Act to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Celebration of Marriage.*"
5. "*An Act to amend the Law relating to Explosive Substances.*"
6. "*An Act to amend the Law relating to the Recovery of Small Debts and Demands.*"
7. "*An Act to authorise the Closing of a certain Street in the Township of Busselton.*"

"Government House, Perth,
"1st November, 1894."

ESTIMATES, 1894-5.

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

Lands and Surveys, £27,342 10s. :

MR. A. FORREST said the Minister representing this department—with the authority of the Government, he presumed—had thought fit to refuse to lease for pastoral purposes any land within the Coolgardie and East Coolgardie goldfields. He did not think it was the wish of the members of that House, or of the mining community, or of any man in the colony, that all this land should be cut off from pastoral purposes. At the present time these goldfields provided one of the best markets this colony had for its stock, yet those engaged in pastoral pursuits were unable to get a lease of any portion of this large area of country for their sheep. These sheep would not eat the gold, nor interfere in any possible way with the development of the mines, or the interests of the miners. In fact, it would be altogether in the interests of the miner if these lands were thrown open to the stockowner; and he failed to see on what ground those who applied for pastoral leases were debarred from getting what they wanted, the same as in any other portion of the colony. This prohibition did not occur with respect to land on the Murchison goldfields, where pastoral leases were granted to those who applied for them; but at Coolgardie, for some

inscrutable reason or other, unknown to anyone but the Commissioner of Lands and his colleagues, no application for a pastoral lease would be entertained, however *bona fide* the application might be. Applications had been made for leasing some of this saltbush plain country, which was no use for gold mining, the intention of the applicants being to sink dams or wells and try to procure water; but they were refused.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Who are "they?"

MR. A. FORREST said there had been many applications made, to his own knowledge. Within the last few days applications had been sent in and the money paid down, but the department refused to accept it. He had never yet heard any good reason for this refusal to lease this saltbush country for pastoral purposes. The pastoral leaseholder obtained no right to the gold on his land. One of the best pastoral districts in the colony was to be found to the Eastward of Coolgardie; the only drawback being the want of water. But the Commissioner refused all applications, from people who were prepared to spend their money in trying to get water, and so utilising this country, which was no good for anything else. He could not understand it, and he did not think the colony was going to stand it very much longer, even from his friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who always looked with suspicion upon any application made for land, his idea being that there must be something wrong behind it. The moment you sent in an application for land, the Commissioner pricked up his ears, as much as to say, "What's up here; what do these people want this land for? There must be something about this land more than we know about." That was the way his hon. friend viewed all applications for land. He thought the House would be glad to see this land utilised, and money spent in trying to discover water on it, so that it might carry stock, to supply the goldfields markets, and the country become occupied. It was never intended that the whole of this country should be monopolised by the miner. The miners did not want to occupy this pastoral country at all. What was the use of it to them? None whatever. But it was excellent country for pastoral

purposes, if water could be found; fine saltbush plains, well clothed with grass. So long as people applied for this land with the *bona fide* intention of utilising it for stock, and sinking for water, and otherwise improving it, there was no reason in this world why it should not be let for pastoral purposes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said his hon. friend, who had just sat down, had given him timely warning that he intended to bring this matter before the House. It was true the Government had received several applications for pastoral leases within the limit of the Coolgardie and East Coolgardie goldfields, but, in the exercise of their discretion and judgment, the Government considered that for the present it was inadvisable to grant such leases. He might say, before going any further, that one of the first applications they received was for 1,500,000 acres from a modest gentleman in Victoria, which would have taken up all the country in the immediate vicinity of these goldfields. Of course he saw at once what the object was. The hon. member gave him credit for looking through peculiar-coloured spectacles at all applications for land; but, as a rule, he could see as far as the hon. member himself could, in these cases. He had a pretty good idea what the motives were that prompted these applications for large areas of land. They were not always philanthropic motives, nor a desire to see the country occupied. As a rule people who made these applications had something else in view, which would benefit themselves a great deal more than it would benefit the colony. He was not dealing now with any individual cases; he had no wish whatever to deal in personalities. He was dealing with the question as it affected the whole country. Having brought the matter before his colleagues, he suggested it would be inadvisable that these large areas in the vicinity of our goldfields should be leased in this way, thus depriving the mining community of a free run for their stock—their horses, camels, sheep, cattle, or other stock. He thought it would be inadvisable to allow this country to be taken up by pastoral leaseholders until such time as the mining features of the country were more clearly defined, and the boundaries of its mining areas more definitely ascertained;

so that the Government might declare sufficient reserves around these mining centres, when their locality was more definitely fixed than they were yet. These applications generally were for land where there was a prospect of obtaining water, and were in the very best localities, and it would be against the interests of the mining community to permit this land to be taken up at present by leaseholders. He had already mentioned one application, for the modest area of a million and a half of acres, embracing the whole of the country in the immediate vicinity of the goldfields.

MR. A. FORREST: He was a lunatic.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I wasn't lunatic enough to let him have it. This was only one application. Nearly all the applications that had come in were for the very best country, the very eyes of the country, places which had been indicated by explorers and others as being the choicest pieces of land in the neighbourhood, where water was likely to be easily obtained, and where surface water existed in some of these places. These leases also were always in the vicinity of some great rush, where the country gave indications of being auriferous, and where there was likely to be a large mining population. The Government thought it was inadvisable to allow this country to be taken up for such purposes, in the present early stage of the development of the mining industry, until the various mining centres could be more definitely located. In the meantime the mining community had the free run of the country for their stock. There was nothing to prevent his hon. friend or anyone else from running their stock over this country at present.

MR. A. FORREST: Where is the water?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Why did the hon. member himself make an application for some of this country if he thought there was any difficulty about finding water? There was a particular mine, commonly known as the Wealth of Nations, discovered a short time ago, and his hon. friend, with that acumen which always distinguished him, having looked around for a favourable spot in the neighbourhood, and got his eye on some country where he thought there would be

no great difficulty about the water, made up his mind to apply for a pastoral lease. He told his hon. friend at once that he wouldn't get it; and no doubt the hon. member felt a little bit sore. But he could not help that. If the Government had acted wrongly in this matter, they had simply done what in their judgment was best in the interests of the community, and he hoped and believed that the House would agree with their action.

MR. A. FORREST said it was evident that his friend the Commissioner knew nothing about the land regulations; if he did, he would have known that there would be no difficulty in the way of the Government resuming any portion of these pastoral leases after they were granted. Some years ago they resumed 20,000 acres out of the Attorney General's run, at the North, without compensation, and they had resumed thousands and thousands of acres in the Kimberley district, without any compensation. They could resume portions of people's runs whenever they liked, without paying sixpence of compensation. Surely the Commissioner ought to know that. They could do the same with these Coolgardie leases. Why, then, should the Government refuse to allow people a chance of occupying this country, and making some good use of it. Surely it would be to the advantage of the mining community if this country were stocked. As to the land referred to by the Commissioner, he denied *in toto* that he ever applied for the land in question for himself; it was for a client, and personally he was not interested to the extent of one sixpence in the transaction. The country he referred to as being good pastoral country was no good for mining purposes; there were no reefs there, nor anything indicating the existence of gold, but there was a chance of getting water, and, if they found water, it would be one of the finest pastoral countries in the colony. No doubt the mines were very valuable to the colony, but the mines might give out some day, whereas if this pastoral country were occupied and stocked, it would always provide freight for the railway. He saw no reason why the Coolgardie district should not carry millions and millions of sheep, if water could be found. But who was going to the expense of sinking for water, unless they were in a position to

fence in their land, and secure the water for their own purposes? If the Government resumed it then, they would have to pay for the lessees' fences and wells. If they could get men to spend £5,000 or £10,000 in developing this pastoral country, what harm could it do to anybody? On the contrary it would benefit the whole colony, and no one more so than the miner himself. It was the best pastoral country he had seen in the colony; it would keep more stock than any other part of the colony he knew of, provided they could obtain water; and he believed if people were encouraged to put money into it that water could be obtained—at least, he hoped so. No injury would be done to anybody. He would be the last man in the world to suggest it, if he thought it would do any injury to the mining industry. It would be the other way round; the mining community would be benefited by having stock for their market close to their doors. He saw no reason whatever why the Government should keep this land locked up from the pastoral lessee. If they liked, they could charge double rent for it, and have a stocking clause in the leases, the same as was done with the Kimberley leases.

MR. LOTON thought it was necessary that facilities should be given, as early as possible, for people to take up land for pastoral purposes. At the same time, he could understand that it was not desirable in the first instance to lease land for pastoral purposes in the neighbourhood of our goldfields, until the area of the auriferous country was ascertained as near as possible. He did not think it was desirable, either in the interests of stockowners or of the miners, that this land should be stocked until the character of the country was ascertained. It would not be very pleasant to have mining rushes taking place on people's runs every time they moved their stock; nor would it be an easy task to prevent the miners from trespassing on these leaseholds. Still the question was—how much longer was the Government going to take to decide the extent of the auriferous country in this part of the colony? There had been money enough expended, and surveyors and prospectors enough on it, to enable them to know the character of the country by this time,

pretty well. Cue was in the centre of a pastoral lease.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): It was leased before it was known to be a goldfield.

MR. LOTON was not aware that it had given rise to any serious difficulty. The Government could at any time resume any portion of a lease, if they required it, for mining purposes. He thought the Government should hurry up these matters. We wanted the country settled and the land occupied. But, as the hon. member for West Kimberley had said, the moment an application for land was sent into the Commissioner, that land assumed an extraordinary value in the Commissioner's estimation, and he looked upon the application with a certain amount of suspicion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I deny that, *in toto*.

MR. LOTON said it was no use denying it. Why, the Government were actually afraid to put their own home-
stead leases law into operation. It was a dog-in-the-manger sort of policy, and he had no sympathy with it. What was the use of spending money in surveys and refusing to part with the land and let it be utilised? Thousands of pounds had been spent in surveys, from which the country had derived no benefit.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was very easy for people to find fault. The hon. member said that money had been thrown away on surveys. He (the Premier) denied it. They would see who was right by-and-bye, as time went on. He believed that as a general rule the action of the Government would be found to be for the benefit of the country. You could never settle this colony without survey before selection. With regard to this question of pastoral occupation, he would be the last one to interfere or to throw any obstacle in the way of the occupation of the land. But, as to this Coolgardie country, he was quite sure that nearly all the applications—he did not say that every one of them, but nearly all of them—were not made with any intention of occupying the land. The intention was to sell these leases again, and to take up the land for speculating purposes. What else could a man want a million and a half of acres for?

They also knew there was another case in which a member of the Upper House applied for nearly all the country between Southern Cross and Coolgardie, and, when the Commissioner made the necessary reserves of a mile on each side in order that people might be free to travel over the country, this gentleman grumbled. However, he took up his leases, but he had done nothing with them, and never would, unless he succeeded in selling them. That was the object, he believed. The Government must be very careful how they dealt with land in this waterless goldfields country. If a squatter held land under pastoral lease, he had a pre-emptive right to the natural water on that lease before anyone else, unless the land was reserved. The Survey Department did not know everything about every acre of land in the country. They could not, in anticipation, reserve every piece of rock or other likely place for water; and, unless this was done and water was found, the squatter could turn off everyone else and sue them for trespass.

MR. LOTON: It would take him all his time to turn off a lot of miners.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes; the probability was the miners would turn him off. He did not think they should be in too great a hurry in leasing these lands, though he concurred with the hon. member for the Swan that it should not be dealt with in a dog-in-the-manger spirit, while, on the other hand, they ought to see that the land was not taken up simply for speculative purposes. In a little while they would have more knowledge of the character of this goldfields country, and, as soon as the auriferous areas were well defined, they would withdraw the order with regard to the refusal of pastoral leases. But the time for doing so had not yet arrived. The Government were as desirous to see the land occupied as the hon. member was, but they wanted *bona fide* occupation.

MR. MORAN referred to a case of a Mr. Jeffreys at Coolgardie, the wells on whose land had been resumed by the Government under their statutory power. While this was perfectly legal, he thought it was not equitable. At the same time he gave the Government credit, in this matter of pastoral leases, for desiring to act in the interests of the mining com-

munity, and he thought that, considering the fewness of the watering places and the importance of the water supply question, it was as well that the Government should do as they were doing for the present. But, when the land came to be thrown open for pastoral occupation, the first applicants ought to have prior rights of consideration.

MR. RANDELL believed there was a custom in the Government offices of sending round a subordinate officer to obtain quotations from storekeepers and tradesmen for work to be performed, and complaints had reached him that the work was not properly distributed. He thought the proper way was to invite tenders. He believed his remarks applied particularly to the Works Department, and also to the Police as well as other Departments.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said no injustice from this practice had arisen in his Department. There were many small services which could not be dealt with in the way suggested, time being of importance, and in some cases the value of the service was too small to justify the expense of calling for tenders.

MR. A. FORREST again referred to the pastoral lease question, and urged the Government to throw these lands about Coolgardie open for pastoral occupation, without unnecessary delay. The Government seemed disinclined to encourage pastoral occupation. That was shown by their action in regard to the Homesteads Act. With the exception of allowing people to take up homestead leases on the railway between Meckering and Southern Cross, they had done nothing to encourage people to take up homestead leases. If to enable the Government to do this cost money, and the Government could not afford it, why did they not allow people to take up the land under the Land Regulations?

MR. ILLINGWORTH said it was somewhat amusing to hear the "sixth Minister" laying an indictment against the Ministry, and he was certain it would be more effective than any indictment that could be laid by any member on that side of the House. He commended the Ministry for rejecting the application for a million and a half of acres; but, at the same time, he urged that while pro-

tecting the interests of the miners the Government ought to consider the suggestion of the member for West Kimberley, which was well worthy of consideration.

Vote agreed to.

Mines, £13,181 16s. 4d.:

MR. MORAN hoped the Minister for Mines would see that more despatch was used in surveying mining leases.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it was found that the number of surveyors for this work was too limited, and the regulations had been altered to enable the number to be increased. He believed, at the present time, as the number had been increased, there were sufficient surveyors to cope with the work.

MR. A. FORREST understood that the Mining Registrar, Coolgardie, was to have received a higher salary than the amount on these Estimates. He was a superior class of man, and his work was so important that he ought to receive at least £300 a year. He had been a warden in the other colonies. The work of the registrars on the other goldfields was not so great, and yet they were put on an equality, as regards salary, with the officer at Coolgardie, where living was twice as expensive.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. E. Marmion) agreed with the hon. member as to this officer's capabilities, but he had only lately joined the service, and he was quite willing to accept the office at £200 a year. This year it was proposed to increase it to £225. No doubt this gentleman would by-and-by find his services would be better paid, or, if he deserved it, he would probably obtain promotion. It must be borne in mind that this officer was junior in point of service, that an assistant and a clerk were to be appointed, and moreover, there were to be registrars at Kalgoorlie and Kurnalpi, by which the work would be lessened. At the same time, where it was possible he should like to see these officers receive increased salaries, and no doubt they would.

MR. MORAN supported the suggestion of the member for West Kimberley, that the salary of the registrar at Coolgardie should be increased. He hoped the Minister of Mines would soon have an opportunity of promoting this officer

to a wardenship, a position which he well merited. He had occupied that position in Queensland, and was a gentleman of large mining experience, whose services must be very valuable to the Government.

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

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

MR. A. FORREST asked for a promise that the salary of the Mining Registrar at Coolgardie should be increased, he being an able officer of good standing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said good service would be recognised in every way, but it was not advisable to move in this matter at present.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion), referring to Item 44, "Warden, Yilgarn Goldfield, forage allowance, £50," moved that the item be struck out. He said this item was otherwise provided for, as the same officer received £100 a year for forage allowance in his capacity of Stipendiary Magistrate.

Put and passed, and the item struck out.

Vote, as amended, agreed to.

Fisheries, £2,384:

Agreed to.

Railways and Tramways, £166,647 10s.:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said: It has been my practice, during the last three and a half years, to make a statement at this stage of the Estimates, previous to a general vote being taken, on the matter of railways and tramways; and I take this opportunity of again placing before the committee some figures of a comparative nature, showing why this vote should be passed. I will also take this opportunity of replying to some remarks and criticisms which different hon. members have made, in reference to the railways, from time to time during this session, and I have pleasure in replying at this stage, when the Estimates are before them. First of all, in regard to the charge of mismanagement, or disorganisation, made against the department: I deny the mismanagement entirely, and I say there is no disorganisation in the

department. There was some misunderstanding; but whatever misunderstanding did exist some time ago, I hope the employes in the department—and I feel sure this is so—are now able to see and appreciate the advantages of the system that has been adopted, and that they are conscious of the endeavours of the General Traffic Manager to do what is right towards the country, and what is just and reasonable towards all who are engaged in the railway service. It has been impossible to reorganise the system formerly in vogue—if it could be called a system—and to inaugurate a new system by sweeping away some old ideas and introducing new methods, without meeting with many objections; and hon. members will recollect that when the General Traffic Manager commenced this reorganisation of the service, he was fresh from England, and had not acquired colonial experience in railway management, although he was known to be a very capable man, and had been recommended for the position by Mr. Finlayson, who had also recommended Mr. Eddy to be the Chairman of the Railway Commissioners of New South Wales. Hon. members will be satisfied now that the good results of Mr. Davies's system of management will be more and more appreciated as time goes on, and I think the great services he has rendered to the colony will become increasingly evident. Mr. Davies is a great disciplinarian, and I am sorry to say there have been complaints from some of the men who have been long in the service, that they were put under too much restraint, as compared with the old system; but it is natural to expect that men who have been brought up in a service without discipline will chafe under the stricter methods of a new and improved system, until they get accustomed to it. But these objections are gradually disappearing, and the employes are recognising and appreciating the improvements which Mr. Davies has introduced. I can give my impartial testimony that the Government and the country have, in Mr. Davies, a really efficient manager of the railways. He is inaugurating a system of accounts by which fraud can be detected; and I can assure hon. members it is necessary to have some efficient system for checking and detecting fraud

throughout the railway service for the protection of those employed. Mr. Davies's endeavours in this direction are becoming more apparent to me, and are appreciated by those who are interested in the proper working of the railways. I take an active and living interest in the railways, and I do not think there is any Minister of Railways in Australia who identifies himself so much with the detailed working of the railways under his charge as I do in the railways of Western Australia. Many of the reforms in the railway system of this colony have been looked into and started by myself, in the first instance; so that when a charge is made or suggested in this House that I do not understand the details of the railway system, I can assure those who make the charge that they do not know what they are saying, because if there is any question raised or any inquiry put to me in this House which I am not able to adequately answer, in reference to the railways, I have not yet met with it. I say again we have a most efficient, loyal, and active man in the present General Traffic Manager of Railways. Coming now to general matters, one evening recently, when the hon. member opposite (Mr. Loton) had just risen from a bed of sickness, he came into this House and made a general charge against me, as the Commissioner of Railways; and he particularly criticised some figures put forward by the Engineer-in-Chief, in regard to the estimated amount and value of the coal traffic, in relation to the proposed railway to the Collie coalfield. I did not then attempt to reply to what the hon. member said, for I thought that when a man did not feel well in health he became irritable, and probably said what he would not say under other circumstances. The hon. member for Yilgarn, also, and I think one or two other hon. members, said the principle on which the railway charges were framed was that the longer the distance travelled, the less the rate per ton, and that if the distance travelled were extended far enough, the charge per ton would be reduced to nothing at all. That was also very much to the same effect as some remarks made by the hon. member opposite (Mr. Loton), in saying the longer the distance that goods were carried by

railway, the less was the charge proportionately, until, as he supposed, the railways would run goods for nothing, over long distances. In reply to these remarks, I would remind hon. members this reduction of charge in proportion to distance or quantity is a principle which applies to every commercial transaction in ordinary life. For instance, take a transaction in sugar, as an article of commerce: if you purchase a small quantity from a retail dealer, you will get it over the counter at so much per lb.; if you go to a larger store and purchase a wholesale quantity, say one ton, you will get it at a cheaper rate; if you go to a merchant and purchase five tons, the proportionate charge will be still less; or if you deal on a still larger scale by purchasing a shipload of sugar, the proportionate reduction in price will be considerably more; so that the price charged per pound over the counter does not represent anything like the lowest charge per pound at which sugar may be purchased in the largest wholesale quantities. And there is nothing wrong in the principle of proportionate reduction according to the quantity sold, or according to the distance over which goods may be carried by railway. The hon. member for Yilgarn should surely recognise this when he contends that the principle of the goods tariff now charged on the Yilgarn Railway is, the greater the distance the less the charge per mile, so that by continuing the distance long enough the charge would be reduced to nothing.

MR. MORAN: You are wrong, sir. I did not say that.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): Perhaps I did not understand the argument correctly, but that certainly appeared to be the contention. The traffic charges for carrying goods over the first stage of one to 10 miles are at a higher rate, proportionately, than for a long-distance charge of 350 miles, and necessarily so. In like manner, the charge for a small quantity of goods, say one ton, carried hundreds of miles, is necessarily greater in proportion than is the charge for carrying several truck loads of the same class of goods over the same distance. That principle is recognised, in railway charges and in commercial transactions,

all over the world. If a trader in this colony imports goods from England in large wholesale quantities, he will pay very little for shipping charges in comparison with the cost of carrying the same goods in a smaller ship from Bunbury to Fremantle. For instance, the cost of carrying railway rails between Fremantle and Bunbury is more than the cost of carrying them from England to Fremantle, a distance of 16,000 miles. We have brought rails from England for 13s. 6d. a ton freight, and when the ship came within sight of the jetty we had to pay 6s. a ton more for landing the rails. Hon. members will find that the railway classification sheets in all the colonies very much resemble each other, and they will see that, for the purpose of encouraging the growth or production of some commodity, it has been placed in a comparatively low class for cheapening the cost of transit, as hon. members know has been done in this colony also, in the case of breadstuffs and cereals, which are carried at a much lower rate than any other commodity in order to assist the farming industry and increase the productions of the soil. There may be a few anomalies in our classification sheet, and particularly in reference to the traffic on the Yilgarn railway, and these are receiving my attention with a view to alteration at an early date. There are also some anomalies in "smalls," to which the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) recently directed attention; and I intend to have these altered as soon as I can devote sufficient time to the matter after the session of Parliament. Some alterations in the charges for hard-wood and soft-wood timbers are also desirable; and when these several alterations have been made, I think the classification and the rates will be found to work fairly well. Now with regard to the past year's working of the railways, and their present comparative position, I will, as in my previous statements, quote some figures which will be interesting to hon. members. In the year 1890, just prior to the introduction of Responsible Government, the total revenue received from the Government railways amounted to £45,113, and, in order to compare the volume of railway business in that year with the business of the current financial year, upon which the estimates before you

are based, I may say the revenue for 1894-5 is estimated to reach £220,000—an estimate which I feel satisfied will be realised—and this total represents an increase of 400 per cent. within four years. As to the proportion of revenue to working expenses, I may repeat that in 1890 the working expenses showed a loss, on working alone, of £6,500, whereas for the twelve months ended June 30th last the railways have shown a profit on the working of nearly £30,000, and it is satisfactory to be able to add that the profit on the working during the current twelve months is estimated to exceed £55,000. Therefore, if the estimate for this year be realised, the profit on the working will be equal to four per cent. interest on a capital expenditure upon railway construction and equipment amounting to £1,375,000, in comparison with a direct loss on the working for the year 1890. This great change from loss to profit is not the result of a mere increase of traffic, but can be traced to more expert and careful management—to what I may call an economy in management, and, which I shall be able to show to hon. members, by percentages in the figures I have before me. And, in reference to some remarks which have been made, alleging inaccuracy in the railway returns as published periodically, I may say I should be sorry to place before hon. members any figures that were not reliable, and I think there is the best evidence that the figures are correct. It is proved conclusively, by the returns now in my possession, that in the year 1890 the railway management expended at the rate of £114 to earn £100, whereas, in the twelve months ended June last, we expended only £77 to earn £100, and for the current financial year we expect to expend only £74 to earn £100, or a decrease in expenditure for this year, as compared with 1890, of no less than £40 per £100 of revenue earned. The contention of some hon. members, that the railway returns are credited with a fictitious revenue, will not bear investigation, as the returns which have been laid on the table, at the request of the hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Loton), will conclusively prove. In regard to the amount credited as received by the Railway Department for the conveyance of mails, I am advised that the Post Offices

in the other colonies pay as high as £25 per train mile, whereas the rate paid in this colony for the conveyance of mails by railways has not been more than £4 to £5 per train mile. Therefore, hon. members will see, from our returns, there has been no fictitious revenue from that source; and, of course, the Post Office run their mails as often as they choose to do so. I think the lowest rate per train mile paid in other colonies is £7 10s. Then as to the revenue received for the carriage of contractors' plant, about which so much has been said, this material has been carried at a rate that barely covers the working expenses. The charge is a fair and legitimate one for the work done; otherwise, if it were not made, we should have to deduct the cost of the working expenses incurred in carrying this material, in order to show a fair balance in the account, and to present a return showing the exact working of the railways. When some hon. members say there is a fictitious revenue credited for the carriage of contractor's plant or other materials, they are not speaking correctly, inasmuch as no one would expect this material should be carried for nothing, and it is charged for as a proper source of revenue in other colonies. But even if no credit were taken for this kind of traffic on our railways, the results of the past year's working would still show a great improvement over the returns of any previous year. The Estimates for the current financial year, now before you, are based on a scale still more economical than last year. We expect to earn a revenue of £220,000, and to expend £164,505, and thus to show a credit balance of £55,495 as the result of the year's working. The Estimates, on this scale, provide for an expenditure of 74·77 per cent. of the estimated revenue, as compared with 77·85, which was the actual percentage of expenditure in the year last past. In estimating the cost of working the Yilgarn and Mullewa Railways, as new lines, a little more in proportion has to be allowed for their maintenance and upkeep, especially in the first year or two; and I feel sure that if on these lines the ordinary rate of expenditure will be exceeded this year, I hope the estimated revenue will also be exceeded. But I may say here, as I stated last year, if the esti-

mated revenue on any of these railways is not reached, the estimated expenditure, which is based on the percentage of earnings, will also not be reached. In preparing the Estimates now before the committee, there has not been any haphazard guessing at results, but the figures have been arrived at by careful actuarial estimates. And, as regards the details, I may say the estimated expenditure in all the branches, taking every contingency into consideration, has been framed with a desire to reduce the working cost down to the lowest possible percentage. To do this is no small labour; but we have worked into a system, during the last year or two, which enables this to be done more readily and accurately than was the case previously. When I submitted the first year's Estimates to this House, in 1891, I never had to tackle such queer figures in my life, and I certainly had some difficulty in understanding them; and when I tell hon. members that one or two of the estimates had to be cut down, probably by £16,000 to £25,000 straight off, you may be able to imagine how such estimates had been arrived at. If you look through the railway estimates as they were submitted to Parliament in years gone by, you will see the great discrepancies which resulted as between the estimated and the actual receipts, and as between the estimated and the actual expenditure. You will also see the probable receipts were always estimated at a very high total, and the estimated expenditure was always very low. However, in regard to the Estimates now before you, the Traffic branch is estimated to expend 20·37 per cent. of the revenue, as compared with 22·28 per cent. actually expended last year, and this will be a reduction of about two per cent in working cost. The Locomotive branch is estimated to expend 33·15 per cent., as against 36·31 actually expended last year, this also showing a small reduction. The Way and Works branch is estimated to expend 17·26 per cent., as compared with 15·45 actually expended last year; and this increase, though slight, is necessitated by the extra expenditure which is certain to be required in the maintenance of the Yilgarn and Mullewa railways, and also in the maintenance of the other new railway to Busseton for an estimated period of nine

months. The general expenses are estimated to be 3·97 per cent., as against 3·81 actually expended last year. The reason why the Way and Works branch shows a small increase in the percentage for this year is, as I have said, that for the first year or so the cost of maintaining new lines is relatively high, and the traffic earnings are relatively low. As to the general expenses, I may say, up to recently, there was no separate charge under this heading, and the Eastern Railway was wrongly charged with the whole of the general expenses for management; but, under the new system of accounts, the expenses of the head office and of the general management are now apportioned over the various lines which make up the railway system of the colony. Having commenced this apportionment last year, we are now in a fair way of being able to charge each line with its proper share of the general expenses of management. In conclusion, the following comparison of the average working expenses to revenue, on the railways in all the Australian colonies, for the financial year 1893-4, as compared with the estimated results in this colony for the present year, will be of interest to hon. members:—

Traffic.—The actual average in other colonies is 18·36 per cent.; in Western Australia it is estimated at 20·39.

Loco.—The actual average in other colonies is 24·85 per cent.; in Western Australia it is estimated at 33·15.

Way and Works.—The actual average in other colonies is 21·05 per cent.; in Western Australia it is estimated at 17·26.

General Expenses.—The actual average in other colonies is 2·85 per cent.; in Western Australia it is estimated at 3·97.

Total.—Taking the whole of these actual results in the other colonies, the average is 67·11 per cent.; in Western Australia the average estimated for the year 1894-5 is 74·77 per cent.

This comparison shows that the Way and Works branch is estimated for this year to be worked at 3·79 per cent. less than the average cost actually incurred on the railways of the other colonies. The traffic branch is estimated to be worked at only slightly more than the average cost in the other colonies, namely two per cent. more. But the Locomotive branch—and this is the most unfavourable comparison—is estimated for this year at a great deal more than the average cost in the other colonies; that is to say, it

will exceed that average by 8·30 per cent. If the existing circumstances were to continue—that is, if we were not to make necessary alterations in our locomotive workshops nor to obtain improved machinery—this large comparative loss would certainly increase with the increase of our opened railways. So deficient are the conveniences in the locomotive workshops, that during the last two or three years we have had to invite tenders for constructing trucks by private contract, and this work had to be done outside, exposed to the weather, whereas there should be conveniences for doing such work inside, at a much lower cost. The existing heavy grades do also very materially increase the expenses of the Locomotive branch. The tunnel now being constructed on the deviation up Greenmount is completed only to the extent of one or two chains, at present, and some time must elapse before the improved grade will become available for traffic on that portion of the line; but, on those portions of the deviation that are now completed, the difference in the haulage power for traffic is very material, and I anticipate an appreciable reduction in our locomotive expenses, on that account. Yet, while allowing for a considerable difference resulting from the improved grades, and taking credit for a great improvement already effected in the locomotive expenses as compared with past years, we cannot do away with the fact that our locomotive percentage, as shown by the workshops return, is still very high, and must continue high so long as we have not the conveniences which are necessary for economical working. So that besides the improved grades, we must have improved workshops also. I hope hon. members have been able to follow my figures, and I might say they are actual or real figures, and in no way fictitious. I hope also that hon. members will recognise that they indicate an improved and improving state of things. The department, as far as I know, are doing whatever is practicable in the circumstances for meeting the requirements of the public. We have great difficulty at present in carrying on the Yilgarn traffic through a dry period, for hon. members may be aware that for every 50 tons of goods hauled to Southern Cross we have to carry 100 tons of water

for use on the double journey, and I am sorry to say this large requirement of water is making a visible impression on the Burlong pool. We have found the water was very good for locomotive engines, but some trouble is caused now as the pool becomes lower, when this water is mixed with other water. The mixture creates chemical action, not developed when the Burlong water is used alone, and the result is injurious to the engines. Hon. members will understand that a large expense is being incurred in carrying on the traffic under these conditions, and that expense will be increased through the summer, unless thunder showers fall and fill the tanks which have been so long made for the purpose. But for this exceptionally large expenditure, the revenue resulting from the Yilgarn traffic would be far more satisfactory than it is at present; and if the expected supply of rainwater had fallen last winter, the Government would probably have been able at a very early date to make some reduction in the charges for traffic. However, I have not heard lately any complaint as to the charges. Indeed the complaints now are about the stoppages and detention of goods, through not being forwarded beyond the railway terminus at Southern Cross to various parts of the goldfields as quickly as is desirable. These blocks occur through the goods and machinery being pushed into Southern Cross in great quantities within a short time, so that the carters are unable to take them away and distribute them with the promptness and regularity which might be expected if the traffic were regular and continuous. Of course the Railway Department cannot regulate that state of things, and can only do what is possible in the circumstances. In working the traffic over an unfinished railway we have to do the work at night, the contractor having the use of the line in the day time for completing his necessary work. Having now made my annual statement on the railway estimates, I shall be happy to answer any questions which hon. members may put, and I hope the statement I have made will be satisfactory.

MR. RANDELL said it was satisfactory to learn that some reductions were taking place in the expenditure,

and especially in the locomotive branch, where the cost had always been excessive, and appeared to be mainly due to the limited supply of large-power appliances in the workshops, and to the want of facilities for repairing the engines. The deficiency of rolling stock was also answerable for a great deal of the excessive ratio of expenditure. The Commission which lately inquired into the matter found that the expenses of the locomotive branch were very much higher than in almost every one of the other colonies, and very much higher than in some. The working cost must continue high for a considerable time, because members could not expect that the railways in this sparsely settled country could be worked as economically over long distances as were the lines in countries having a greater population. He was glad to find that the efforts of the Commissioner and his subordinate officers were directed to the reduction of these high charges. It was desirable to reduce the cost of working the railways as much as possible, consistently with efficiency. The Workshops Commission had ascertained that many leakages in expenses which had occurred in the past had been prevented, and would not be likely to occur in the future. From what the Commissioner of Railways had just stated, this appeared to be the case; and it was satisfactory to learn that the railways were likely to yield a good profit on their working in the present year, although he presumed the estimated revenue would include the carriage of material required in the construction of new lines of railway, and of traffic incidental thereto. It would be interesting to have a statement showing the revenue received from these sources, as distinguished from the revenue received from the general public. With regard to the classification of goods, it was too complicated, because in some cases three or four different prices had to be paid for the same article booked to the same destination, thus indicating that the servants of the department could not readily interpret the classification sheets. He thought about a dozen different classifications ought to suffice for the traffic of this colony; for although there were these numerous classifications in other parts of the world, so complicated a system was

not required in a new country like this. He did not know whether it was right even for the Government to carry goods of one description at very much lower prices than were charged for others, even with the object of assisting the development of industries, although he knew that was the policy of the department. He knew that, in the past, there had been stuff carried at prices which would not pay for putting into the trucks and taking out again—much less pay for the wear and tear of working, and the cost of fuel. His remarks as to classification would apply especially to the line from Northam to Southern Cross, where the traffic would admit of a greatly reduced classification, and this would tend to remove the complaints now made by miners, storekeepers, and managers of the larger companies. He had been glad to hear the Commissioner refer to "smalls," the charges for which had been simply prohibitory. He knew that communications had passed between the Perth Chamber of Commerce and the Traffic Manager, though, it must be said, the latter had explained some of the points very satisfactorily. It was suggested that a luggage van, one or more, should be attached to each train between Perth and Fremantle, to carry small goods quickly at a moderate rate of charge. He had been convinced for a considerable time that the first-class passenger fares between Perth and Fremantle were too high, and he believed a reduction would benefit the revenue, as more people would travel first-class if the charge were reduced. A fare of 2s. return would be quite sufficient, and 1s. 6d. for the single journey; these fares being more in harmony with those charged in the Eastern colonies. The large increase shown in the last year's revenue indicated progress, and he hoped it would continue. It was reasonable to hope that the goldfields traffic would be a large factor in the increasing productiveness of the railways. He sympathised with the Commissioner in the opinion that the removal of the railway workshops to a larger situation would result in a great saving in the cost of working, and he was certain that, whatever might be the expenditure of money in Fremantle, it was necessary to remove the workshops to a new position, in view of the continual enlargement of the railway

system. However much they might regret that Fremantle would be deprived of that expenditure, still the general interests of the colony demanded that this question should be seriously considered by whatever Ministry might be in power. The Government should look the question fairly in the face, and decide it upon general considerations, in the interest of the whole colony.

MR. MORAN said he was not one of those who had blamed this department or accused it, as some persons had done, in unmeasured terms. He took the view that, when enormous public expenditure was going on for developing the colony, at least fifteen shillings of every pound had to be spent on railways. The Commissioner had a most difficult department to administer, in managing the opened railways, and at the same time had to stand more abuse than any other Minister, although he certainly took the abuse very well, and seemed to go on as if almost oblivious of the "rumours of war" that circulated around him. On this occasion the Commissioner had "come up smiling" to explain the annual estimates. What he (Mr. Moran) had objected to was the system of charging double freights for goods on the Yilgarn line, being twice the amount as compared with other railways. He still contended that there was, in the large traffic to Yilgarn, sufficient freight one way to pay for the haulage of trucks both ways, and that the quantity of freight for earning a sufficient revenue was more, in proportion, than was carried both ways on other lines in the colony. The Commissioner having promised that the charges on the Yilgarn line would be reduced as soon as he was satisfied the large traffic would warrant it, he (Mr. Moran) now wished to remind the Commissioner, in this connection, that the increased paying capacity of the Fremantle section of railway was due to the existence of the Southern Cross and Coolgardie goldfields; therefore that factor should be taken into account in considering the question of reducing the charges on the Yilgarn section. The iron horse was penetrating the wilderness in various directions, and the department had to contend not only with the difficulty of making the traffic pay in newly opened districts, but with the serious difficulty of obtaining water along rail-

ways in the interior. Unless rain fell along the Yilgarn line, the traffic would have to be stopped before next summer; and he was afraid that when the railway was pushed on to Coolgardie the difficulty of obtaining sufficient water would be increased, unless the Government pushed on vigorously with the work of sinking for underground supplies. It was to be hoped they would be successful in the boring operations which were about to be commenced. When work was going on he was not one to hamper or hinder; but if it were possible for the people on the Eastern goldfields to have their goods carried by railway at rates equal to those charged in other parts of the colony, that would be a good work accomplished. The railway porters at Southern Cross were paid the magnificent wage of 7s. a day for working very long hours, often 16 hours a day, in a district where the cost of living was very high, and where ordinary labourers got 10s. a day. The Commissioner would, no doubt, remedy this anomaly at once.

MR. A. FORREST said the last speaker should remember there were some other places in the colony besides Coolgardie. He was pleased to have heard the interesting speech of the Commissioner, and it was satisfactory to find the railways were now yielding a small profit. He asked, however, whether the charges for the immense amount of repairs to rolling stock came out of the general revenue of the colony; whether the repairs of engines, &c., were charged against the railway revenue, or were paid for out of loan funds. He asked also what proportion of the railway revenue was received, on paper, for carrying Government material. The railway accounts should show what proportion of revenue was received from the people of the colony as distinguished from that which was credited for services rendered to Government departments. These amounts should be distinguished in the railway returns. He agreed that the railways should charge for the mails and for other services rendered to the Government; but such revenue should be shown separately in the returns, as the doing of Government work, though necessary, was not earning a revenue, in the ordinary sense. The Commissioner had taken great credit for the more economical working of the railways; but

in going about the country he (Mr. A. Forrest) never saw any signs of economy. He noticed many works of improvement going on, but if the railway estate belonged to him he would certainly not make many of the improvements that he had noticed. At Northam, for instance, the station was at one end of the town; and he was informed, by a large firm in that town, that although they sent away by railway 800 to 1,000 tons of goods per annum, yet they had not been able to obtain a siding for their mill, and were obliged to cart their produce over a mile to the station. The department had not granted a siding because, as was stated, the Yilgarn section was still in the hands of the contractor. Siding accommodation ought to be granted, in such a case. In the Perth station, nothing had been done towards erecting a shelter over the platform. This structure ought to have been included, or arranged for, in the original contract for building the station. As to the demand for a reduction of the goods charges on the Yilgarn section, the hon. member for Yilgarn had said the traffic must soon cease if no rain fell. If so, that was a reason why the department should get as much revenue as possible before the traffic stopped.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn), in replying to the remarks of hon. members, thanked the hon. member (Mr. A. Forrest) for his moderate criticism on the present occasion, because every year that hon. member had had something to say about the railways, and his remarks were not always complimentary to the department. He (the Commissioner) hailed with pleasure the hon. member's speech on this occasion, and could only infer there must have been some improvement to account for the marked change. He assured the hon. member there was not one item, not a single shilling, being charged to loan account that was not a proper and legitimate charge, in the working expenses of the railways. He had an opportunity, some time since, of looking through the reams of figures showing the working of the railways, and with this knowledge he was able to give the assurance which he had done. There was no item in the working expenses charged to loan account that ought properly to be charged against revenue.

The hon. member for the Swan had raised the point previously, but he (the Commissioner) was happy to say he had not found any item of that nature, and he believed no such thing had occurred. With regard to the siding at Northam, it was a fact that the Flour Milling Company did apply for a siding, but at that time the whole of the working space was occupied by the contractor for the Yilgarn line, and a siding could not then be given without interfering with the contractor's operations. That trouble would cease very shortly. A siding had now been put in, but not connected, and he regretted there had been delay. With regard to a shelter over the platform in the Perth station, the original design included a large covering over one or two lines of rails, but this could not be put up until the Beaufort Street bridge was finished and the rails were re-adjusted to the new platform, the present wooden platform being then removed. The original design embraced a complete and efficient covering over the platform and one or two lines of rails.

Mr. LEFROY said the traffic rate for sheep was very high, being about four times as much as the rate for carrying chaff, say for a distance of 100 miles. Sheep, being an agricultural product, should be carried at the cheapest rate, to encourage agriculture.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that, in carrying sheep, the truck had to be sent up empty before it could be brought down full, and the double journey had to be reckoned in the charge.

Mr. LEFROY said four times as much was too great a difference. The cost of trucking sheep from Geraldton to Perth would be about 3s. a head, at the present rate, which would be practically prohibitive in the case of that traffic; and he hoped the Government would reduce their rate for sheep, and so influence a reduction in the rate charged on the Midland Railway. The latter rate, he knew, was higher than that charged on the Government lines; but if the Government reduced their rate for carrying sheep, the Midland Company would have to adopt the same rate, when their line was opened through to Geraldton. He knew there was a reduction on the present rate for a number of trucks.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said this question of railway rates for live stock had received his attention, and it was possible there would be some reduction made. But for short distances of 50 to 100 miles, the charge for sheep trucks would always appear comparatively great, because this kind of traffic was only one way, and the double journey must be reckoned in the charge. The same reason applied to this traffic in all the colonies. He hoped it would become practicable to run stock by train load, which would effect a wonderful difference in the charge, the train-load charge being very low indeed, and much less than the charge for carriage by water in the coasting traffic. If fat stock could be run from Mullewa or Mingenew for anything like these train-load rates, there would be nothing to complain of. The charge over the Midland line to Perth would be a through charge.

Mr. A. FORREST said the rates for live stock were rather high, but the charge for sending sheep by coasting steamer from the Kimberleys was 4s. or 5s. a head on shipboard. A reduction of the charge, even a fraction per head, would make a great difference to the pastoralist on a large number. The sheep were driven into the railway trucks, and the department had no expense on that account, and the same applied to the unloading; so that there was quick despatch, and no expense for storage.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH asked if there was any record showing the actual cost of the railways constructed up to date. [THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes; on the table.] The country was taxed generally for the interest on the railway expenditure, and that interest did not come out of the railway revenue. What return was given to the country for the interest paid on the money? Those persons who used the railways were not always fair and just in reference to the question of railway management, because the Railway Department was a distinct charge on the general revenue of the country; and, in reply to the question why those who used the railways should not pay the actual cost of such use, the only answer was that the cheapening of products was one item of charge in which

all persons in the country should bear their portion. One matter of complaint in Perth and at Coolgardie was the high price of butcher's meat. Some persons attributed the dearness to a butchers' ring. He did not think there was much foundation for that idea, though there might be a little. His idea was that the high cost to consumers was caused by a vast amount of wasteful expense in getting the stock to market. The Railway Department had to be managed on the basis of a commercial concern, and where a large amount of traffic was to be secured by special concessions, and such traffic could be worked at a profit, however small, it was the duty of the department to secure the traffic. Therefore, when there was competition, whether by coasting steamships or by road, the one thing the Railway Department should study was to secure the actual traffic for the railway. The question of price, in such competition, might be carried to an extremity that would be dangerous, even to the department. In Victoria, the railways had to compete against teams on the roads, in consequence of the railway rates causing some people to use teams, and it was found as a fact that a large quantity of low-priced goods was being carried by road at a lower rate than that charged by railway. Still, the railways were in existence, and all the working expenses were going on as if there were full traffic in those districts; so that the only possible way to reduce the average cost was to increase the volume of traffic in any practicable way. The high percentage of 54 or 55 of working expenses would be ruinous if long continued in this colony, as it would be in any country where the State owned the railways. In Victoria, the actual amount of money borrowed for railway purposes was charged against the Railway Department as the cost on which interest had to be earned. It was possible to be too economical in railway management, because there must be efficiency. The Commissioner had struck a chord, in his remarks on the railway workshops. While these remained at their present site, the loss on the working must be a vast amount. The Commissioner had shown nearly half a million of money, capitalised, which was being lost through the mere fad of retaining the work-

shops in the present position. He (Mr. Illingworth) would suggest to those hon. members who were interested in retaining the workshops at Fremantle that a suitable site, not far away, might be found a short distance up the Swan River, on the ground which was being cleared at Rocky Bay by quarrying stone for the breakwater. That land belonged to the Government, and the foundation would be solid for heavy machinery. He would prefer to see the workshops removed to the Midland Junction, for his personal interest, but he did not think that would be the best situation for the workshops, in the interest of the country. Many of the workmen had their own little homes at Fremantle, and any loss caused to individuals by removal would fall on the country eventually, because all interests were part of a great pool. The Government should decide on a comprehensive scheme for new workshops, the scheme to be carried out in portions, from time to time; and this would be better than spending money on temporary expedients at the present site. Some new site should be fixed on, and as the new machinery came in it could be fixed at the new site, and the transfer be made gradually. The land now occupied by the workshops was too valuable for the purpose. This country was going to grow, and the town of Fremantle would want space for expansion. No better space than that at Rocky Bay could be cleared for workshops and other purposes. The Government should decide on a comprehensive scheme, and not fix any more heavy machinery on the present site. In Victoria, there was a large deficiency in the railway revenue, amounting to over £350,000 a year during the last three or four years. In South Australia, strict economy had helped to make the railways a comparative success. He looked forward to a time when the railways in this colony, even those that were to be constructed, would not be a charge on the revenue of the country, but might be a source of additional revenue. He expressed his conviction that the Railway Department was as well managed as were those in other colonies; but, in saying that, he admitted a good many defects, and the only way to cure them was to keep on hammering at them. Of course, these faults were made to appear as

large as possible, in order to have them remedied.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that, as to securing traffic by making the railway rates specially low, that could not be done in the case of Government railways, but only in the case of privately-owned railways. If the Commissioner of Government Railways did make any concession of that kind, he would get into trouble immediately; but when large parcels had to be carried, he would be glad to consider any application with a view to special rates, but must be careful not to get into trouble by making concessions in particular cases.

MR. MORAN asked whether the Commissioner had considered the advisability of applying the ordinary passenger rates to the Yilgarn railway? There was passenger traffic both ways, as many persons going one way as the other.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that subject had received attention, and the Government hoped to be able to do something in a short time, not far hence. He considered that on all railways, here or elsewhere, whatever amount was required for working expenses and interest on capital should be obtained by adjusting the rates and fares accordingly, on commercial principles; but the moment the income exceeded the amount so required, the principle of reduction should come into force.

Vote put and passed.

Works and Buildings, £119,571 5s.:

Agreed to.

Roads and Bridges, £48,641:

MR. MORAN asked whether the cost of the proposed stock route by way of Cue to Coolgardie was included in this vote.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that work was provided for in the Loan Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Water Supply, £13,500:

MR. PIËSSE, referring to Item 3 (Caretakers of tanks on goldfields), asked what check there was for securing a proper accounting of the money received by caretakers from travellers who used the water?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said there

was a difficulty in devising an efficient check, and trust had to be placed in the caretakers. Lately, printed cheque books had been provided, and the caretakers were required to give a cheque to each person paying money. The cheque showed the amount received, and the counterfoil in the book ought to show the same. Actual fraud might take place, and he would be glad to receive suggestions for checking it.

MR. RANDELL asked how many caretakers were employed at tanks on goldfields, and what was the amount of revenue.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said he could not answer at present, but would ascertain.

Vote put and passed.

The annual Estimates being now completed, the resolutions of the committee were reported.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

“*Mr. Speaker,*

“The Legislative Council acquaints the “Legislative Assembly that it has agreed “to a Bill intituled ‘An Act to amend “The Police Act, 1892,’ subject to the “amendments contained in the Schedule “annexed; in which amendments the “Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

“GEO. SHENTON,

“President.

“Legislative Council Chamber, Perth,
“1st November, 1894.”

Schedule of Amendments made by the Legislative Council in “The Police Act, 1892, Amendment Bill.”

No. 1.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 5:—“Every person “under the age of fourteen years “smoking in any street shall be “liable, on conviction, to a penalty “not exceeding Forty shillings.”

No. 2.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 6:—“Every person “pointing any firearm at any other “person shall be liable, on conviction, to a penalty not exceeding “ing Ten pounds.”

No. 3.—Add the following new clause, to stand as No. 7:—"This Act shall come into operation on and after the first day of January, 1895."

C. LEE STEERE,
Clerk of the Council.

1-11-94.

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the foregoing Message be made an Order of the Day for Monday, 5th November.

LOAN BILL.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

"Mr. Speaker,

"The Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly, in reply to its Message No. 23, that it has passed the following Resolution:—

1. "That the Legislative Council cannot admit that there is no obligation on the part of the Legislative Assembly to give reasons for being unable to agree to the suggestions of the Legislative Council under Section 23 of 'The Constitution Act, 1889, Amendment Act, 1893.'
2. "That the reasons given by the Legislative Assembly cannot be entertained by the Legislative Council as valid. The Legislative Council claims the fullest power, even if the works are important features in the policy of the Government, and such a policy as a whole has been approved by a majority of the Legislative Assembly, to make suggestions to the Legislative Assembly to strike out of the Loan Bill the items for such works.
3. "The Government, however, through the Colonial Secretary, having given an assurance to the Legislative Council that each proposed Railway in the Schedule to the Loan Bill shall be the subject of a separate Bill for the consideration of Parliament, the Legislative Council agrees to the Loan Bill being passed.

"The Legislative Council respectfully points out that in exercise of its powers under Section 23 of 'The Constitution Act, 1889, Amendment Act, 1893,' whereby it may return any Bill at any stage with suggestions, the Legislative Council has taken the earliest opportunity of intimating to the Legislative Assembly the Legislative Council's views on the Blackwood and Collie Railways, so that if the Bills for the construction of these works are introduced for the consideration of the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly will be acting with a full knowledge of the feeling of the Legislative Council in regard to them.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber, Perth, 1st November, 1894."

THE SPEAKER: I ought to point out to the House that in this Message the Council are claiming the right to make suggestions in any Bill, at any stage. The clause in the Constitution Act, giving power to the Council to make suggestions, only gives power to make such suggestions of amendments in a Bill as by law must originate in the Assembly. Therefore I think it would be advisable that a Message should be returned, in answer, pointing this out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the Message be taken into consideration on Monday next, 5th November.

Motion put and passed.

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the foregoing Message be made an Order of the Day for Monday, 5th November.

FENCING BILL.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the Order of the Day for the further consideration of this Bill in committee be discharged. He said the House could not make progress with the Bill, at this stage of the session.

MR. PIESSE hoped the Government would again introduce the Bill next session, and suggested that its provisions should be published in the *Government Gazette* prior to the next session of Parliament, with the amendments which the Attorney General intended to introduce, in order that those persons who were

most interested in the subject might have ample opportunity of seeing the clauses, and advising their representatives upon them. A Fencing Bill was very necessary, and such a measure as this, containing many good provisions, might be made more suitable to the country if the amendments of which he had given notice were embodied in it.

MR. JAMES asked why the Bill was to be discharged at this stage. The Bill had been before the House during the last three months, and he assumed that this period was long enough for enabling people in the country to become acquainted with its provisions. In proposing now to discharge the order, the Government were simply trying to back down, as they had not the pluck to go on with the Bill. He presumed the Government would not have introduced this Bill unless it had been called for by some influential portion of the public; and, if so, why not go on with the Bill? It should, at least, go through the stage of committee, as that course would ensure a thorough discussion of the clauses; whereas, if the Bill were now suspended until next year, it would not contain any of those amendments which the practical knowledge of hon. members might suggest. It would be better to carry the Bill through the committee stage, even if it went no farther this session. Considerable expense had been incurred in having the proposed amendments printed in the Notice Paper. [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Who put them there?] The hon. member for the Williams was the author of many of them, and he (Mr. James) had put down some practical amendments. The Bill had been introduced by a strong-minded Government, comprising Ministers who, when they attended banquets at Newcastle or Northam, made strong speeches; and, if the Government knew their own mind, what was the good of introducing and then withdrawing an important Bill like this, which had been brought forward by the Attorney General in answer to a general demand from the public? Some sort of Fencing Bill was necessary, and he could not see why this Bill should be discharged now, after having been held in suspense three months.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. E. Burt) said the hon. member (Mr.

James) had himself, and no one else, to thank for the stage at which the House had arrived with this Bill. The hon. member had never resided in a country district; and while the Government were pleased to consider amendments suggested by country members, it did not follow that amendments proposed by town members in a Fencing Bill could be regarded as having the same importance. The hon. member was a little out of the track when he said the Attorney General had told the House this was a Bill very much demanded by the country, because the Attorney General had not spoken on the Bill at all. The Bill was introduced by the Premier. At this late stage of the session, a strongly contentious measure of this kind had very little chance of passing through this House and also through the Legislative Council. The Government had introduced the Bill thinking it would be acceptable to country members; but at the fag-end of the session country members would not attend in such numbers as they did in the earlier part; therefore the Government were of opinion that fencing legislation would not be satisfactorily settled by a lot of town gentlemen like the hon. member for East Perth, and that it would be better to put off the Bill until its provisions could be discussed with advantage. With regard to inserting the Bill in the *Government Gazette*, its circulation in country districts was not such as would achieve the object of the suggestion. As to obtaining suggestions from country districts, the result of the discussions and correspondence on this Bill, after being so long before the country, was *nil*. If the Bill were published in newspapers having the largest circulation in the country—and he did not know of any paper that did not claim to have the largest circulation—the Bill might in that way reach the hon. member for East Perth, and next time the House would have the benefit of the hon. member's experience. If the Bill were published in a local paper in each district, it would be more likely to reach the country settlers. At this period, it would be unwise for Parliament to remain longer in session for the purpose of farther discussing or passing this Bill. He had taken an opportunity, early in the session, of mentioning that the Fencing Bill

would provide a good deal of amusement to hon. members, and that they would not get rid of it in a hurry; and he thought that forecast was now verified. In dealing with this question, every member claiming to understand it would want to put forward his own plan, and to argue the case in reference to his own particular fence; so that, with all this inevitable discussion, many sittings would be required for dealing with this Bill. It was better, at this period, to discharge the order from the Notice Paper.

MR. LEFROY said the withdrawal of the Bill would meet with the approval of the country. The fact of the Bill having been on the Notice Paper three months did not prove that the Bill had been before people in the country, because they did not see the Notice Paper, and he did not think the provisions of this Bill were well known in the country districts. When members of this House returned to their constituencies, they would be able to make known the provisions of the measure, and obtain opinions upon it. He would not say the Bill was excellent, but it was important, and the people whom it most affected were not generally aware of its provisions. The Government were acting wisely in withdrawing the Bill for this session.

Motion put and passed.

Order discharged.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:53 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 5th November, 1894.

Municipal Elections: participation in by Civil Servants—
Droving Bill: third reading—Railways Act Amendment Bill: second reading; committee—
Municipal Institutions Bill: Message from Legislative Assembly; ruling of the President—Insect Pests Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS—PARTICIPATION IN BY CIVIL SERVANTS.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES asked the Colonial Secretary whether the Government civil servants were permitted to take any active part in municipal elections.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): At present there is no rule on the subject, nor do I know anything to prevent civil servants taking an active part in municipal elections. The matter will, I hope, shortly engage the attention of the Government, and, in the meantime, I think it would be well if persons occupying positions in the civil service were not to take prominent part in such elections.

DROVING BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, and passed.

RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): The purport of this Bill is to repeal section 10 of the Railway Act of 1878, and to substitute another section for it. By section 10 of the principal Act it is made compulsory on the Commissioner of Railways not only to deposit plans certified under his hands at his own office, but with the Resident Magistrates of all districts through which the railway passes. There is absolutely no reason for this, and it involves a great amount of expense to prepare the plans. This Bill proposes now to repeal this, and make it sufficient if the plans are deposited in the office of the Commissioner. It is further provided that the Com-