

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 23rd September, 1896.

Statutory Declaration Bill: report of Select Committee—Meat Supply: report of Select Committee—Jetty construction on Swan River—Exportation of Guano: prohibition of—Victorian Butter: Analysis of—Streets and Roads (Greenmount and Marble Bar) Closure Bill, third reading—Streets and Roads (Mullewa and Busselton) Closure Bill: third reading—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill: suggestions of Legislative Council—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: Legislative Council's Amendment—Judges Pension Bill: inadvertently Passed by Legislative Assembly—Customs Duties Repeal Bill: first reading—Tobacco (unmanufactured) Duty Bill—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4:30 o'clock. p.m.

STATUTORY DECLARATIONS BILL— REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE HON. R. S. HAYNES brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into and report upon the provisions of "The Statutory Declarations Bill," and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Report received and ordered to be printed.

MEAT SUPPLY—REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into and report on the question of meat supply, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

JETTIES ON SWAN RIVER.

THE HON. F. M. STONE asked the Minister of Mines:—

1. If the Government had granted any right to any person or company to construct jetties on the River Swan.

2. If so, what was the nature thereof, the terms and conditions.

3. If the rights of the public had been protected in granting any such right, and to what extent.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied as follows:—

1. Yes; rights to erect 15 jetties and boat-houses on different parts of the river have been granted.

2. The terms and conditions vary in different cases; most of the holders are merely tenants at will, subject to removal at short notice, but application for five-year leases in the case of four jetties on the Southern side of Melville Water is under consideration.

3. On eight of these rights rent is paid, varying from two to forty pounds per annum, and the holders have exclusive right to the use of the jetties and buildings; but with regard to the remainder there is nothing to prevent the public using them.

EXPORTATION OF GUANO—PROHIBITION OF.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I move, "That in the interest of land settlement and agriculture generally, this Council is of opinion that no further leases or concessions be granted to any company or individual with the idea of exporting guano from any islands within the jurisdiction of the colony." I do not think I need say much in regard to this motion. My object is to stop the further leasing of deposits of guano. There has been a large amount of correspondence with regard to purchasing the lease which is now held by Messrs. Broadhurst and McNeil to the rights of the deposits at the Abrolhos Islands, but so far nothing has come of it. In my opinion the present Commissioner of Crown Lands made a serious mistake when he, soon after assuming office, further leased the islands without taking into consideration the necessity that existed for holding the whole of the deposits for the benefit of our own farmers. I cannot conceive how the Government permitted a further lease for ten years to be granted. It is well known that the Government are trying to induce settlement on the soil, and their efforts will be in vain unless a cheap manure can be obtained so as to increase the fertility of some of our second class lands. From information I have received there are guano deposits further North than the Abrolhos Islands, and the object of my motion is, if possible, to prevent the Government from granting further leases. With the exception of about 25,000 tons, all the guano on the Abrolhos Islands has gone, and even if it were practicable to save this for the benefit of

our farmers, I think the Government should do so.

THE HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I have much pleasure in seconding this motion, because I think it is most desirable that the guano deposits should be secured to those who are residing in the colony. It has been proved that guano is a useful fertiliser, and if it can be applied to our second class lands, it will do much to assist the agricultural prosperity of the colony.

THE HON. R. S. HAYNES: I should have much pleasure in supporting this motion if I could see that it would do any good. As far as I know the only available guano deposits are those at the Abrolhos Islands. I understand that the deposits at the Lacipede Islands are worked out, and, if so, we need not urge the Government not to grant any further leases. In these circumstances it seems to me that the motion of the hon. member must be a barren one. I quite agree with the object of the hon. member in wishing to stop guano leaving the colony. To my mind it is a suicidal act to allow a fertiliser which we want more than any other place, to go out of the country. I believe the lessees are sending 10,000 or 12,000 tons of guano out of the colony every year, so that in a short time the deposits will be worked out because, as I say, our only source of supply is from the Abrolhos Islands, and perhaps Sharks Bay.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: There are deposits further north.

THE HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Islands I should like to see struck at are the Abrolhos, and I should like to know how it was that the Commissioner of Crown Lands came to lease them. If the Hon. Mr. Burgess will introduce a motion in favour of cancelling the lease (I do not say that it should be cancelled without reasonable compensation) I shall give him my support.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Government will not listen to that.

THE HON. R. S. HAYNES: That seems to me the only way out of the difficulty, I think the present motion is worthless. Leasing these deposits is very much like a farmer having on his land what manure he requires, and then selling it to someone else. The action of

the Government in the matter seems to me to be wholly indefensible. I could understand the granting of a lease years ago, but lately, seeing the large demand there has been for agricultural produce, it seems to me to have been suicidal to have extended the lease as the Government have done.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM): While assuring the hon. member who has brought forward this resolution that I have every sympathy with his object, there is a certain amount to be said in justification of the action of the Government in the past. The Hon. Mr. Haynes has expressed surprise that the Commissioner of Crown Lands has further leased the islands. Now, it must be admitted that the guano deposits must be worked by someone, and I do not know that it was unwise to allow them to be worked by a private firm who were in a position to find all the appliances and the shipping, and supply the fertiliser at a fairly low cost. The lease was granted at a nominal rent, so that the deposits could be sold cheaply. The result has been, however, that instead of the people of this colony taking advantage of the opportunity and using the guano, it has been taken to Germany, Mauritius, and other places. If the farmers desired to obtain this fertiliser they have had every opportunity to purchase it at a reasonable price. I have had an opportunity of seeing many of the account sales of the lessees and I know that their profits are small and that the only way anything is made out of the business at all is by the quantity which is sold. The lessees have spent a good deal of money at the islands. They have laid down tramways and jetties and have provided facilities for shipping the guano as cheaply as possible and instead of the people here taking advantage of it the lessees have been forced to ship to Germany, the Cape, Mauritius, and other places. If it pays the people of those countries to take the guano it should surely pay our farmers here. I may say that the Commissioner of Crown Lands has had under consideration the question of the re-purchase of the rights of the lessees, but the price asked is hardly justifiable when we take into account the quantity of guano which is left on the islands.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: It occurs to me that it is always easy to be wise after the event and to cast blame where none attaches. I think, however, it would be wise to pass this motion because it would show to the Ministry what is the feeling of this House, if in the future a request is made for a lease in connection with some other deposits.

THE HON. H. BRIGGS: I shall vote for the resolution although, at the same time, I do not think it would be wise to stop large firms engaging in this business. If we do we shall have no one who will prosecute the search for further deposits when the present ones have been worked out. It was only through Mr. Kanoope, a German chemist, and a relative of the German Consul here, that the present deposits were able to be worked because the demand for guano in this colony was not sufficient to induce anyone to bring it to the mainland. It was only by exporting it that the industry could be in any way developed.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: The Minister for Mines says that there is no necessity for this motion because the farmers will not buy the guano. I may remind him, however, that agriculture is only just beginning to make rapid strides and the farmers are only just beginning to find a use for this fertiliser. I myself used it only two years ago. When the demand for agricultural produce began to increase so enormously we found that we could not get land cleared fast enough and the only way in which we could increase the crops was by the use of fertilisers. Guano was tried and was found to be very effective. In a few years time the Government will find that there is a demand for every ton of guano there is on the islands. The object of my motion is simply to urge the Government to keep all further deposits for the benefit of those who settle on the land in the colony.

Motion put and passed.

VICTORIAN BUTTER—ANALYSIS OF.

THE HON. R. S. HAYNES: I move, "That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that provision should be immediately made for analysing all butter imported into this colony from the colony of Victoria, before the same is allowed to be sold to the public." I do

not think any words of mine are necessary to support this motion. We already have on the table a report by the expert to the Bureau of Agriculture of the analysis of some Victorian butter which was imported into this colony and from that analysis it appears that the butter in question did not come up to the standard which is required in London. I am aware that an expert from Victoria was despatched to this colony to ascertain whether there was any truth in the statement made by our analyst, and that he satisfied himself that our analyst was wrong, but I may point out that it is not the people of Victoria who have to be satisfied but the people here who wish to see that the butter which is sent to us is of good quality. If hon. members will consider for a moment they will see how it arises that the inferior butter is sent to this colony. Victoria exports quantities of butter to London and, of course, if any were found to be of inferior quality it would be condemned and there would at once be an outcry and the trade would be seriously injured. There must be some inferior and scraggy lots and for these Western Australia is made the dumping ground. I for one object to have the refuse butter of Victoria imported here. Then again it is a strange thing that Victoria is the only colony which has a factory for the making of oleomargarine. I look on this factory as a fraud upon the public. It is only a skilled expert who can detect the difference between oleomargarine and butter. Mr. Harper, who is a good judge on matters of this kind, says he is unable to distinguish between the two. It is true that in Victoria oleomargarine, before it can be sold, must be branded as such; but I may remind hon. members that the Victorian Act which compels this to be done does not apply here, and, as far as I know, there is no Act in Victoria which will prevent oleomargarine being exported as butter, although it may not be sold in the colony as such. It may be said, why direct this motion against the colony of Victoria only? My answer is that that colony is the only one which has committed a fraud on the public. In these circumstances I hope hon. members will support the motion.

There being no seconder, the motion lapsed.

STREETS AND ROADS (GREENMOUNT AND MARBLE BAR) CLOSURE BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, and *passed*.

STREETS AND ROADS (MULLEWA AND BUSSELTON) CLOSURE BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, and *passed*.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

SUGGESTIONS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:—

Message No. 24.

“Mr. President,

“The Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council, in reply to Message No. 15, That it has made the ‘amendment in ‘The Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill’ proposed in Suggestion No. 1, but has disagreed to Suggestion No. 2.

“The Legislative Assembly returns the ‘Bill amended accordingly.

“JAS. G. LEE STEERE,

“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber, Perth, “3rd September, 1896.”

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:—

Message No. 26.

“Mr. President,

“The Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council, in reply to ‘Message No. 18, that ‘The Act to ‘further amend the Constitution Act, ‘1889,’ and to amend ‘The Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1893,’ required, ‘in accordance with Section 66 of the ‘Constitution Act, that it should originate in the Legislative Assembly, and in ‘such case, in accordance with Section ‘23 of ‘The Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1893,’ the Legislative Council ‘may, by message, submit proposed ‘amendments for the approval of the ‘Legislative Assembly, who can make the

“amendments, or any of them, with or ‘without modification. The Legislative ‘Assembly informs the Legislative ‘Council that it has made the amend- ‘ment proposed by the Legislative ‘Council, and returns the Bill amended ‘accordingly.

“JAS. G. LEE STEERE,

“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber, Perth, “15th September, 1896.”

JUDGES' PENSIONS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:—

Message No. 27.

“Mr. President,

“The Legislative Assembly acquaints ‘the Legislative Council that ‘The Act ‘providing for the Pensions of the ‘Judges of the Supreme Court’ was ‘inadvertently passed by the Legislative ‘Assembly and transmitted to the Legis- ‘lative Council, without having been ‘recommended by message of the ‘Governor, as required by Section 67 of ‘the Constitution Act. And the Legis- ‘lative Assembly requests that the Bill ‘may be returned to it, in order that it ‘may be dealt with in accordance with ‘the provisions of the aforesaid section ‘of the Constitution Act.

“JAS. G. LEE STEERE,

“Speaker.

“Legislative Assembly Chamber, Perth, “17th September, 1896.”

CUSTOMS DUTIES REPEAL BILL.

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

TOBACCO (UNMANUFACTURED) DUTY BILL.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House, at 5:30 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Thursday, 24th September, 1896, at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.