

## PAPER PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Report of the Public Works Department for 1896-7.

Ordered to lie on the table.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:43 p.m. until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th November, 1897.

Absence of Mr. Speaker (Deputy named)—Papers Presented—Question: Registration, &c., of Voters for North Murchison—Noxious Weeds Bill (No. 2): first reading—Motion—Agricultural Bureau to be a Government Department: Amendment, Select Committee—Adjournment.

## ABSENCE OF MR. SPEAKER.

The Clerk of the House reported that he had received a letter from the hon. the Speaker, which he read as follows:—

November 18th, 1897.

SIR,—In accordance with Standing Order No. 21 I have to inform you that I am unable to be present at this day's meeting of the Legislative Assembly, and the Chairman of Committees will act as Deputy Speaker until the next meeting of the House.—I remain, yours faithfully, JAS. G. LEE STEERE, Speaker.

MR. HARPER accordingly took the Chair.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Amended Regulations under Defence Forces Act; Municipal by-laws, Fremantle.

By the DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Report of Public Works Department, 1896-7.

Ordered to lie on the table.

## QUESTION—REGISTRATION, &amp;c., OF VOTERS FOR NORTH MURCHISON.

MR. KENNY, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier:—1. Whether the names of those persons on the Nannine municipal roll entitled to be transferred to the electoral roll for the North Murchison district were so transferred by the court held at Nannine on June 4th last. If not, why not? 2. Whether the names of those persons residing at Peak Hill, and making application to be registered as voters for the North Murchison district, were received and placed upon the electoral roll by the court held at Nannine on the 4th June last, in accordance with Section 44 of the Act. If not, why not? 3. What names of electors had been struck off the North Murchison electoral lists since May 1st last, and for what cause? 4. Whether notice was given to electors so struck off, in accordance with Section 30, sub-section 2, of the Act? If so, when and where the said notices were posted? 5. Whether the electoral list, when compiled, was publicly exhibited as provided by Section 25, sub-section 1, of the Act? If so, when and where?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied—1. Yes. 2. Yes. 3. The following persons have been struck off the roll for North Murchison since 1st May last:—Patrick Dunne, Hugh Fraser, Arthur Henry, Joseph Hopkins, Patrick Hayden, Charles Hannan, Oscar J. Jones, Charles Jessop, William Lewis, Edward Lillas, Arthur Macey, Henry Marshall, John Matthews, Chas. McCarthy, J. E. McDonald, Donald McGillivray, H. S. Molyneaux, Dennis Mahon, M. O'Brien, Alfred Liftwich, and Abraham L. Evans. The causes for striking these persons off the roll were in every case (except that of Liftwich and Evans) that, their qualification being that of residence, they had left the district, and it is believed the colony. Liftwich had died, and as regards Evans, his qualification referred to property which entitled him to be on the roll for the Central Murchison, and he was therefore struck off the roll for North Murchison and placed on the roll for Central Murchison. 4. Notice was not given. The registrar reports that the time between the compiling of the rolls for the general election and the holding of the Revision Court was so brief that he

found it impracticable to serve them. In consequence, only the names of such persons who had left the district were struck off the roll. 5. Yes; in the office of the Electoral Registrar.

# NOXIOUS WEEDS BILL (No. 2).

Introduced by the PREMIER, for Mr. Harper, and read a first time.

## MOTION—AGRICULTURAL BUREAU TO BE A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT.

### AMENDMENT—SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. SIMPSON (Geraldton) I rise to move the following motion:—

That this House, whilst recognising the valuable and disinterested services of the gentlemen forming the Board of the Agricultural Bureau, is of opinion that the best interests of the country will be secured by placing that institution entirely under the control of a Minister responsible to Parliament. I will ask the House to make a slight alteration in the motion, if I am in order. It has been suggested that the matter be referred to a select committee to report to the House, that select committee to have an opportunity of pointing out to the House the various avenues for the development of the resources of the country that are open to persons coming to settle on our lands. It will be noticed that the sum of £7,000 a year has been appropriated by Parliament, and has been spent by the bureau, in carrying out the work entrusted to it; and I believe that the bureau contemplates incurring an expenditure of £10,000 a year in the performance of the duties; so that hon. members will realise that this is an institution which should be placed under the control of the Government. So far, the work has been done under the auspices of men of independent means and of leisure, who have given their time to the duties without compensation, and I am not sure they are likely to find gentlemen who would care to take the duties off their hands. It will occur to any members of this Assembly who have watched the development of the Agricultural Bureau, that its success or failure is entirely dependent on the enthusiasm and energy thrown into its work by members of the bureau. I know they have given considerable time and valuable experience in guiding the operations of this institution. I have no doubt it will be suggested in this

debate that the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia is run for about £1,000 a year. At the same time, that Agricultural Bureau does not attempt to do anything like the work attempted by the bureau in this colony. If I may express my own opinion, and I think it will agree largely with that of other members, the action of the bureau alone in bringing into notice the nature and extent of some adulterations, and the practice of giving short weight or measure in our food supplies, with some facts relating thereto which appear in the annual report of the bureau recently placed before us, will amply justify the existence of the bureau and the public money that has been expended by that institution. Facts were there given which certainly were not generally known, and which, when considered in connection with the food supplies, point out that the public are being robbed. It also appears that this matter has been going on year after year, and yet no attention was drawn to it until the bureau pointed out that the public were getting adulterations or short weight in respect of everything they bought of the necessities of life. But I fear that, in the future, the bureau, under its present constitution, may not be quite as manageable as we should like it to be. I imagine that, if this motion be adopted by the House, the functions of the bureau will be carried out by the Minister of Lands, who will act also as Minister of Agriculture. I believe this system will be found less expensive, more effective, and more likely to accomplish good for the agricultural industry. I wish the House to distinctly understand that, in moving in this matter, I have not the faintest desire to cast any reflection on the bureau. I have watched its work for years; and having, at its annual conferences, represented certain country associations, I have an exact knowledge and experience of the operations of the bureau, and wish to speak in the highest possible terms of the work it has done. I know it is customary, on occasions, to laugh at the bureau: but when its functions are seriously considered, the bureau will be found to have been a useful adjunct for the development of the agricultural industry in this country. If I may be allowed to call it so, the bureau is practically a school-master to the farmers. The "school-

master is abroad," under the auspices of this bureau, inducing farmers to adopt more up-to-date methods, and suggesting to the Government and to the country expedients by which the producer and consumer can be brought more closely in touch. I ask the permission of the House to alter the motion, so as to permit of the matter being referred to a select committee, by adding the words, "and that with the object of accomplishing this purpose, the question be referred to a select committee." I beg to submit the motion for the consideration of the House.

**THE PREMIER** (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not propose to object in any way to the proposal of the hon. member to refer the question to a select committee, but I do object to the motion as it stands being agreed to; because, if we pass the motion in that form, we will be approving of its terms, and, as hon. members will see, its terms are that "the time has arrived when the Agricultural Bureau should be placed under a Minister responsible to Parliament." That is the motion; and I do not know why the hon. member adds the provision for referring the matter to a select committee. It seems to me that the latter part does not fit well with the former part. First of all, we are asked to approve of the principle that the time has arrived when this bureau should cease to be controlled by an independent board, and should be placed under the control of a Minister; and we are asked, at the same time, to refer the matter to a select committee. If the hon. member had moved that the organisation of the Bureau of Agriculture should be referred to a select committee, with a view of considering whether any improvement could be effected in that organisation, or whether it was desirable that it should be placed under a Minister, then I think we would understand what we were doing. But when we are asked to affirm that we think the Bureau of Agriculture should be placed under a Minister, and that the present board should come to an end, and then to say that we desire to have the matter referred to a select committee, I do not think the resolution is quite comprehensible.

**MR. SIMPSON:** What harm could a select committee do?

**THE PREMIER:** A select committee would do no harm at all, if the hon. member would move for its appointment in a proper way; and we should be all delighted, I am sure, to refer such an important matter to a select committee. But we are not asked to refer the organisation to a select committee. We are asked to approve of the proposition: "That the best interests of the country will be secured by placing that institution entirely under the control of a Minister responsible to Parliament." I am not prepared, at the present moment, to approve of that proposition, although I am quite willing that the whole question of the organisation of this Bureau should be referred to a select committee. I do not know what the object of the motion is. The hon. member has not levelled any charge against the Bureau. On the contrary, he has extolled its work and its efforts. Well, if the members of the bureau are doing such good work in the colony, what reason is there to interfere with them?

**MR. SIMPSON:** I do not think it would interfere with them.

**THE PREMIER:** My idea is that, if they have been able to do good work in the past, this certainly is an argument that they may be expected to do good work in the future. If, on the contrary, we think they have not done well in the past, that would be a good reason why we should wish that some different arrangement should be made for the future. I am not going to argue that this institution, if placed under a Minister of the Crown, would not be supervised efficiently. The system of Ministerial control is that under which we are living; and it provides that the departments of the State shall be controlled by Ministers responsible to Parliament. But there are exceptions to that rule, not only here but elsewhere. In fact, there is a growing feeling—at any rate, there is a strong feeling—in the public mind in all these colonies, that independent boards, as they are called, are very good things. My idea is—and I am supported in my opinion by the mover of this motion—that the Agricultural Bureau has done good work in supplying useful information to cultivators in the colony, and in trying to prevent disease in the agricultural districts; so that I hardly think

there is any cause for complaint at the present time. We contribute £7,000 a year to the Bureau for carrying on its work; and while I admit this is a large sum, yet up to the present I have not heard any great complaint as to the efficiency of the Agricultural Bureau. It must be borne in mind that the members of the bureau are gentlemen of experience and knowledge, who give their services gratuitously to the country; and I think if you can get gentlemen of experience and knowledge and enthusiasm to take an interest in the matter, we should be very grateful to them, and seek to obtain a continuance of their services. I am not at the present moment inclined to make this board a department of the Government. It has its advantages as at present conducted. We often hear it said that responsible departments, under Ministers of the Crown, are more subject to political considerations than others that are not so constituted; and it is a good thing occasionally to have boards of management that are, to some extent at any rate, free from political control. I should like to encourage everyone who desires to work for the colony to do so, and to continue to do so; and for that reason I am not very much in favour, at the present moment, of transferring to the Government the duties which this board carries out. If this House thinks, in its wisdom, that the time has arrived when the control of the bureau should be taken from gentlemen who work gratuitously in order to hand it over to the Government, then steps will have to be taken to carry out the wishes of the House; but that is a matter which we do not want to force on at the present moment. I would rather let the bureau work on for a time independently of the Government, to some extent; although it is not altogether independent of the Government, as Parliament provides the funds for carrying on the work of the bureau, and it is in our power, therefore, if we are dissatisfied with the way in which those funds are expended, to refuse to provide any more. The whole department will have to be reorganised if we decide that the bureau, as at present administered, shall come to an end. I am inclined to advise that we should not do so at the present time. I can see no necessity for it, and unless members of

this House can give some reason for the change, no such change should be made. The only reason that could be given is that the subsidy of £7,000 a year is not economically expended, or not satisfactorily expended, in the interests of the country. When hon. members say that straightforwardly, then will be the time for taking the administration of the bureau out of its present hands, and we should then be justified in referring the matter to a select committee; but so long as we are disposed to praise the action of the bureau, and to say that its members have done and are doing good service, it seems to me a peculiar thing that we should desire, at the same time, to have a committee of inquiry in regard to the management of this independent board. I think the hon. member is altogether inconsistent in the action he has taken. If he wants to do away with the bureau, he should say so. If, on the other hand, he is satisfied with the action of the bureau, and thinks its members do their work satisfactorily, then we do not want the committee of inquiry. I certainly think the House ought not to agree to the motion in its present shape. If we want a committee of inquiry, say so, and let us have it; but do not let us say the bureau is no longer necessary, ask for a committee of inquiry, and at the same time admit that the bureau has done good work. The two things do not go together. I hope the hon. member will either withdraw his motion, or else put it in a shape to which we can all agree.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I do not think it is intended, by the motion before the House, to do away with the bureau, but to increase its efficiency. I agree with the right hon. gentleman opposite that the wording of the motion hardly meets the case; but I think the time has come when an institution of its kind, which expends so large a sum every year, should be placed under Government supervision. I say that, without casting the slightest reflection whatever on the bureau. I believe it has done excellent work; but there comes the question, how far are we justified in voting sums of money to be expended outside our control? Here is an organisation sustained by Government money. [THE PREMIER: The accounts are audited.] I am aware of that, but

they do not come before this House in any other form than as a grant of £7,000 or £10,000, as the case may be. Hon. members are placed in the position that they must either take action to destroy the bureau altogether, or pass the amount placed by the Government to the credit of this institution. The management of the bureau ought to be under the control of Parliament, and this should be a part of the institutions of the colony. I suggest that the member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) might accept this amendment, or something like it, which I accordingly move:—

That all the words after "that," in the first line, be struck out, and the following words be inserted in lieu thereof: "In order to still further secure the efficiency of the Agricultural Bureau, a select committee be appointed to report on the advisability or otherwise of placing it under direct Government control."

MR. SIMPSON: I accept the amendment moved by the hon. member.

Amendment put and passed, and the motion, as amended, agreed to.

A ballot for the select committee having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover (Mr. Simpson), were elected: Mr. Harper, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Lefroy, and Mr. Mitchell.

Ordered, that the committee have power to call for persons and papers; and to report to the House on Thursday, 2nd December.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5:20 p.m. till the next Monday.

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 22nd November, 1897.

Message (appropriation): Loans Reappropriation Bill: first reading—Paper Presented—Question: Whitby Lunatic Asylum—Question: Erection of Gates at Railway Crossings, Perth—Question: Post and Telegraph Officials on Goldfields—Question: Wages of Electric Linemen—Bills of Sale Bill: first reading—Divorce Act Amendment and Extension Bill: first reading—Dentists Act, 1894, Amendment Bill: first reading—Industrial Statistics Bill: Amendments on report—Employment Brokers Bill: recomittal—Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Bill: Amendments on report—Annual Estimates: Debate on Financial Policy: motion to adjourn debate; Division Early Closing Bill: second reading—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Immigration Restriction Bill: second reading (debate concluded)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### MESSAGE—LOANS REAPPROPRIATION BILL.

A Message from the Governor was presented by the Premier and read, recommending a reappropriation from the General Loan Fund to works stated in the Loans Reappropriation Bill.

At a later stage,

Bill introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Report of Metropolitan Waterworks Board for 1897.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—WHITBY LUNATIC ASYLUM.

MR. LYALL HALL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, Whether he was aware that, in the transfer of a number of lunatics from the Fremantle Asylum to the new asylum grounds at Whitby, an officer was appointed in charge of the latter place who had been but a short time in the service; and, if not, would an inquiry be instituted as to why such appointment was made over the heads of competent officers of many years' service.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: The officer appointed was Warder Gallagher, for eight years employed in asylum work in New Zealand. He was also, for two years, a gaoler at Derby. He was specially recommended