

purpose of having the same transferred to the Local Register under the above Act.

As witness my hand, at \_\_\_\_\_, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_.

For the Company,  
A.B.,  
(Attorney).

Note.—This Deposit-note must be returned to the Office before a Certificate of the Shares under the above Act can be issued; but it is not to be considered as a guarantee that the shares will be so transferred, and attention is directed to Section 4 of the above Act.

Put and passed, and the schedules added to the Bill.

Preamble:

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved, as an amendment, that the words after "same," in the third line to "companies" in the fourth line, be struck out.

Put and passed, and the preamble as amended agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and report adopted.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

HON. G. RANDELL moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until 5 o'clock on Wednesday.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned at 9-20 p.m. until the next day at 5 o'clock, p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 14th December, 1897.

Message: Assent to Bills—Papers presented—Noxious Weeds Bill: third reading—Registration of Firms Bill: third reading—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: Correction of clerical error—Dog Act Amendment Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments; in committee—Immigration Restriction Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments; in committee—Early Closing Bill: in committee—Public Notaries Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments; in committee—Annual Estimates, in Committee of Supply: Statement by Commissioner of Railways on working of Railways—Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

#### MESSAGE—ASSENT TO BILLS.

A Message from the Governor was received and read, assenting to the following Bills:—1. "An Act to confirm certain Expenditure for the Year ending 30th June, One thousand eight hundred and ninety-six." 2. "An Act to amend the Law relating to Hawkers and Pedlars." 3. "An Act to provide for the issue to the Public of Local Inscribed Stock, and for the application of the moneys therein invested." 4. "An Act for the reappropriation of portions of certain Moneys appropriated by the Loan Act of 1896, and by the Loan Consolidation Act of 1896, respectively." 5. "An Act to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds to the Service of the Year ending 30th June, 1898."

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: Papers re Administration of Stock Diseases Act.

By the PREMIER: (1.) Perth Hospital Report and Regulations. (2.) Loan Estimates of Expenditure for 1897-8. (3.) Correspondence re alleged Prosecution of Water Sellers at Kanowna.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AT PORT HEDLAND.

MR. HOOLEY, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works:—1. The names of the contractors for the road over the Marsh at Port Hedland. 2. The names of the sureties for the work. 3. Whether he was aware that the work was at a standstill. 4. Whether he was aware that the contractors were in financial difficulties, and that they had offered to pay arrears of wages at the rate of 6s. in the £. 5. What steps the Government proposed taking in order to speedily complete the work. 6. Whether any steps were being taken to erect stock yards for shipping purposes on the Port Hedland jetty.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—1. William Dunsford, Marble Bar. 2. Andrew Elliott, publican, Marble Bar; Thomas Burke, mine owner, Marble Bar. 3. Yes. 4. I am aware that the contractor is in financial difficulties, but have

no advice of the terms of any proposed composition. 5. The Government have under consideration the question of transferring the contract to other persons, who have expressed their willingness to take up the work. 6. Yes, and plans showing proposed alternative sites for cattle yards at Port Hedland have been forwarded to two of the principal residents, so that local opinion may be obtained.

#### QUESTION—SPARROWS IN PERTH.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands:—1. Whether he was aware that sparrows had made their appearance in Perth, and had been breeding in the Government Gardens? 2. Whether he proposed to take any, and if so what, steps to prevent the spread of these pests?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell) replied:—1. Not aware of it. 2. Will take steps to ascertain if this is so, and if it is, will instruct Agricultural Bureau to take necessary action to deal with the matter.

#### NOXIOUS WEEDS BILL.

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

#### REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### CORRECTION OF CLERICAL ERROR.

The Order of the Day, for consideration of the committee's report, having been read,

MR. JAMES said the section of the principal Act which really ought to have been amended by the new clause proposed by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) was Section 185, which limited the power of the municipality to borrow. Section 183, which appeared in the amendment of the hon. member, gave the municipality power to borrow for certain purposes, and if that clause were amended in the way proposed, it would look as though Parliament were giving the municipality power to borrow for other purposes than those mentioned in the Act. The object of the new clause was not to enable the municipality to borrow for purposes other than those now pro-

vided, but simply to extend their borrowing power as to the amount.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): The hon. member for East Perth was quite right. Section 185 was really the one intended to be amended by the new clause.

THE SPEAKER: This being a clerical error, it might be corrected.

Clerical error corrected accordingly, and the report adopted.

#### DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

A Message from the Legislative Council, previously received, was now considered as follows:—

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has considered the Legislative Assembly's Message No. 8, with reference to "The Dog Act Amendment Bill," and has agreed to the Amendment made by the Assembly on the Council's Amendment No. 1. The Council, however, insists on its Amendments Nos. 3 and 6, with which the Legislative Assembly has disagreed. The Bill, and a Schedule showing the Amendments insisted on by the Council, are enclosed herewith.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BURT (in charge of the Bill): The measure was introduced by the Government, in order to allow roads boards to collect the dog-tax for themselves in their own districts. The Legislative Council had taken the opportunity of amending certain portions of one or other of the Dog Acts, and these two amendments, on which the Council were insisting, had been sent back to the Assembly for the second time. By one amendment it was sought to repeal Section 23 of the Dog Act of 1883, which provided that in proceedings for injury from dog bite it was not necessary for parties seeking damages to prove previous mischievous propensity in the dog to the owner's knowledge. Everybody knew that dogs had a propensity to bite, and the section in effect said so; but the Council sought to repeal the section, and say, "No; let the dog bite once, free." The other amendment provided that dogs should wear collars; but that had been found impracticable in South Australia. Owners neglected to put collars on, and the law became inoperative. He did not feel inclined to argue further about such

matters, and he therefore moved that the Chairman do leave the chair.

Put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN left the chair (no progress made), and the House resumed (no report presented).

# IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION BILL.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The following schedule of amendments made by the Legislative Council was considered:—

No. 1.—Clause 6, line 2, after “Act” insert “that he does not come within the meaning of any of the sub-sections (c), (d), (e), or (f) of the third section of this Act and.”

No. 2.—Clause 6, sub-clause 6, lines 2, 3, and 4, strike out “and that he does not come within the meaning of any of the sub-sections (c), (d), (e), or (f) of the third section of this Act.”

No. 3.—Clause 16, line 4, between “fishery” and “regulating” insert “or upon the Abrolhos Islands.”

No. 4.—Clause 16, line 17, between “shall” and “have” insert “if not inconsistent with this Act.”

No. 5.—Clause 19, line 6, between “fishery” and “and” insert “or upon the Abrolhos Islands.”

No. 6.—Clause 19, line 6, between “fishery” and “or” insert “or on such islands.”

## IN COMMITTEE.

### Amendment No. 1:

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The first amendment was an improvement on the Bill as it left this House, as it prevented the entrance of any person who, though possessed of the necessary property qualification, was an idiot, or suffering from a loathsome disease, or had been convicted of crime. He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Put and passed.

Amendment No. 2—agreed to.

Amendment No. 3:

THE PREMIER: The object of this amendment was to provide that persons imported as labourers on the Abrolhos Islands should not be subject to this Bill, but that the Governor might make regulations for the registration of such persons, to prevent their entering any portions of the colony beyond the

limits mentioned in the Bill. In fact, it was proposed by the Council that the privileges given to persons engaged in the pearling industry should be given also to persons working on the Abrolhos Islands. He (the Premier) could not perceive why the Abrolhos Islands should be singled out for special treatment, more than any other islands of the colony. Supposing guano were being shipped from the Monte Bello or Lacepede Islands, or any islands in the Dampier Archipelago, then under this Bill coloured labourers could not be introduced to work such deposits, whereas this amendment would admit them to the Abrolhos Islands. No doubt this Asiatic labour was useful for guano digging, but so it was for many other purposes; and, if we were to consider only the question of the usefulness of such labour, and not the fact that it interfered with white workers, the matter might be easily settled. The Abrolhos Islands were 35 miles to the westward of Champion Bay; they were about 20 to 30 miles wide and 50 miles long; and a proposal had recently been made in London to float a company for the purpose of cultivating mother-of-pearl shell upon the reefs surrounding them. In such case, the proposed amendment would enable Asiatic labour to be employed on the islands for this purpose as well as for guano digging. The guano deposits on the islands had been there for ages, and had been worked by a local firm for years, first by white labour, and afterwards by Asiatics. While he could not agree with the principle of the amendment, he would rather allow it to pass than lose the Bill. The fact that there was no opposition to this amendment in the Upper House might indicate that its members felt somewhat strongly on the point. He therefore awaited the opinion of the committee in regard to this amendment.

MR. MITCHELL: Why should this concession be made to the Abrolhos Islands more than to any other portion of the colony? The employment of coloured labour meant that white labour was practically shut out there.

MR. JAMES: The committee ought to refuse to consent to this amendment on the ground that, if any exemption ought to be made, it should be effected by an amendment in the Imported Labour Re-

gistry Bill, and not in this Bill. Section 19 of this Bill provided that nothing therein contained should affect the provisions of the Imported Labour Registry Act of 1884, or any future Act dealing with the registration of imported labour. Therefore there was really no power to make a provision in this Bill to the effect that any class of undesirable immigrants should be allowed on the Abrolhos Islands without restriction as to employment or removal.

**THE PREMIER:** Regulations could be made for that purpose.

**MR. JAMES:** The Bill did not give power to make regulations to secure the return of the immigrants to their own country; but in the Imported Labour Registry Bill provision could be inserted permitting the importation of men for employment only on the Abrolhos Islands, and providing for their return after a certain time; so that, even if the committee agreed that some provision should be made in favour of the Abrolhos Islands, this was not the Bill into which it should be introduced. Even if this were the proper Bill, it would be seen, from Clause 16, that further amendment would be required to meet the case of such persons employed on those islands, because Clause 19 dealt with persons employed or kept employed at fishing, and also in temporary employment on shore. So far as the Abrolhos Islands were concerned, there was no suggestion that the immigrants should be allowed, even temporarily, to go on shore.

**THE PREMIER:** Those engaged in pearling could come ashore.

**MR. JAMES:** But there was no provision to permit of persons coming ashore from the Abrolhos Islands; and, as the Bill stood as amended by the Upper House, such persons could come ashore, say to Geraldton, and the employer could neither be made responsible for damages nor for the expense of capturing and returning them. The committee should suggest to the Council that the object of this amendment would best be attained by an alteration in the Imported Labour Registry Bill.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** A further danger in this connection was that Australia as a whole was beginning to be seriously troubled with escapees from New Caledonia; and it would be quite

possible, if the Bill were passed with this amendment, for such people to land on the Abrolhos Islands and escape without difficulty to the mainland. We had to guard not merely against the influx of Asiatics, but against all undesirable Europeans. The police might easily track a Chinaman or a Malay, but it would not be so easy to follow up a Frenchman escaped from New Caledonia. Therefore, the suggestion of the member for East Perth (Mr. James) was entitled to serious consideration; and the Council's amendment, if made at all, should not be made in this Bill.

**THE PREMIER** moved "That amendments Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6 be not agreed to."

Put and passed.

Resolutions reported to the House, and report adopted.

On the motion of the **PREMIER**, Messrs. James and Wood, with the mover, were appointed a committee to draw up reasons for disagreeing with certain of the amendments.

**THE PREMIER** (after an interval) brought up the committee's reasons, as follow:—

The proposed amendments 3, 4, 5, and 6 are not in keeping with the provisions of this Act, and, if required, should be provided for in the Imported Labour Registry Act, which regulates the importation of labourers and contains ample provision to secure the return of such labourers.

Committee's reasons adopted, and a Message in accordance therewith transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## EARLY CLOSING BILL.

### RECOMMITTAL.

Clause 5—Act to be in operation only in proclaimed districts:

**MR. JAMES** (in charge of the Bill) moved, as an amendment, that in line two the words "declare certain places to be" be struck out, and the words "define and declare the boundaries of" inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6—Act to be in operation in Metropolitan District on 1st February, 1898:

**MR. JAMES** moved, as an amendment, that the clause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—

This Act shall come into operation on the 1st February, 1898, within the "Metropolitan,"

"Kalgoorlie," and "Coolgardie" districts. "The Metropolitan District" includes and is comprised within the boundaries for the time being of the Municipalities of Perth, Fremantle, Leederville, Subiaco, Victoria Park, North Fremantle, and East Fremantle. "The Coolgardie District" includes and is comprised within the boundaries for the time being of the Municipality of Coolgardie, and the "Kalgoorlie District" includes and is comprised within the boundaries for the time being of the Municipality of Kalgoorlie.

There was a desire to extend the provisions of the clause to North-East Coolgardie and Bulong.

THE PREMIER: That could be done by proclamation.

MR. JAMES said he would submit the new clause as drawn.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) asked whether the attention of the hon. member in charge of the Bill had been directed to a contention in the Press, that suburban shopkeepers should not be compelled to close as early as those in the more central parts of the city. He (the Premier) was not there to advocate the claims of any particular class of people, but he had received some letters on the subject. Suburban shopkeepers, as a rule, did not keep assistants, but looked after their own places of business. Perhaps the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon) knew the feelings of the people of Fremantle and suburbs on this matter.

MR. SOLOMON: The people of Fremantle were willing, indeed were rather anxious, to come under the operation of the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was a feeling that the fact of outside shops keeping open brought pressure on the central shops to keep open also.

MR. SOLOMON: The difficulty was to draw a boundary line. In Victoria, where it was tried to draw a distinction, the sight was presented at the boundary line of closed shops on one side of a street, while shops on the other side were open.

HON. H. W. VENN: The Bill might prove a hardship in the suburbs. The object of the measure was to restrict the hours of employees; and, as the Premier had said, suburban shops were mostly attended to by the owners.

Put and passed, and the substituted clause agreed to.

Clause 7—All shops to be closed at 6 p.m.; substituted half-holiday allowed:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the following proviso be added:—

Provided that on the week day next preceding Christmas Day, and the week day next preceding New Year's Day, all shops may be kept open to the hour of 10 o'clock in the evening.

MR. WOOD: The proviso should also cover Good Friday.

MR. JAMES accepted the suggestion, and altered the proviso accordingly.

Put and passed as altered, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8—Every shop shall be closed for one half-holiday per week:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that after the word "half-holiday," in the first line, the word "on" be inserted; that after the word "one," in the same line, there be inserted the word "working;" also that after the word "quantities," in the third line of third paragraph, the word "only" be inserted.

THE PREMIER: Where were newspapers provided for in the Bill?

MR. JAMES: Newspapers were provided for in the schedule.

Amendments put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9—Penalty for keeping shop-assistants after hours:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the words "in respect of each shop assistant so employed" be added at the end of the first paragraph.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—Penalty for keeping shop open after prescribed hour:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the proviso in the clause be struck out.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 12—Shop assistants in exempted shops and employees in hotel bars to be allowed a half-holiday in each week:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the word "day," in the third line, be struck out, and the word "afternoon" inserted in lieu thereof; further, that the second paragraph be struck out and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—

If any shop-keeper, licensed victualler, or hotel-keeper shall neglect or refuse to allow any shop assistant or employee respectively

one such half-holiday in any week, or shall allow any such assistant or employee respectively to continue at work during such half-holiday, he shall be guilty of an offence against the provisions of this Act.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13—Inspector or person aggrieved may prosecute for breaches of Act or Regulations:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the word "the" before "inspector," in line two, be struck out, and the word "every" inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15—Inspector to obtain authority to enter building in actual use as a dwelling:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that after the word "police," in the fourth line, the words "or resident" be inserted.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 24—Legal procedure:

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that sub-clause (2) be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—"The information may be laid by and in the name of any inspector, police constable, shop assistant, or employee." Further, that the following new sub-clauses be added:—

(7.) Judicial notice shall be taken of every proclamation issued under Section five or Section eight of this Act, and of the appointment of every inspector.

(8.) It shall be necessary for the person charged to bring himself within the terms of the proviso to Section nine of this Act.

Put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 26—Regulations:

MR. JAMES moved that this clause be struck out, with a view to inserting a new clause, which he intended to move next.

Put and passed, and the clause struck out.

New Clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added, to stand as Clause 20:—

20. Every shop, place, or building or portion of a shop, place, or building wherein is carried on the trade or business of a barber, hairdresser, or tobacconist shall be closed every evening of the week at seven o'clock except on the evenings of Saturday and the week day

immediately preceding Christmas Day, and the week day immediately preceding New Year's Day; when the same shall be closed at ten o'clock in the evening.

Every person, company, association, or partnership carrying on or conducting such business, or in the charge or management thereof, who shall neglect or fail so to close such shop or premises, or shall employ or allow to remain in such shop or premises any employee or assistant later than a quarter of an hour after the hour fixed for closing by this section, shall be guilty of an offence against the provisions of this Act in respect of every such neglect or failure, or of every person so employed or allowed to remain, as the case may be.

MR. WOOD objected to the new clause in its application to tobacconists, who should be exempted; for, if they had to close earlier than hotel-keepers, many people would purchase cigars in hotels. There seemed to be a chance that news-vendors and booksellers would be exempted; but he knew many such tradesmen who also sold fancy goods, tobacco, and miscellaneous wares. The amendment should be altered to obviate these objections.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he hoped the new clause would be carried. The keepers of many improper houses traded ostensibly as tobacconists in Perth; and it was most desirable that tobacconists should not be exempted. He hoped the member in charge of the Bill (Mr. James) would agree to an amendment to strike out the word "seven" and insert "six" as the closing hour. The words "Good Friday" should be inserted, so that these shops might be closed also on that day.

MR. JAMES: For many years past the tobacconists had been keeping open till 9 o'clock and later every night; and if the hours were shortened suddenly and to an unreasonable extent, opposition would be aroused against the Bill. By making hairdressers and tobacconists close at 7 o'clock, a great reform would be effected. People seldom went to hotels for the mere purpose of buying a cigar. Tobacconists' licenses ought to be introduced, to regulate the sale of that narcotic.

THE PREMIER: What would prevent any person who was required to close his establishment under this Bill from exempting himself by dealing in some of the wares mentioned in the schedule?

MR. JAMES: That was provided against by Clause 3.

THE PREMIER: Surely it could be evaded.

MR. JAMES said he was willing to include booksellers and newsagents in the new clause. This alteration would not affect the newspaper offices, as papers were not actually exposed there for sale.

MR. WOOD: The point was that booksellers and newsagents generally kept fancy goods of every description.

MR. ILLINGWORTH opposed the suggested amendment, as it would open the door for a wholesale evasion of the Act. A person had only to keep in stock a few cheap novels, or to have a daily paper for sale, and he could then keep his shop open in defiance of the Bill, so that it would be impossible to obtain a conviction against him.

MR. QUINLAN agreed with the objection in regard to newsagents; but booksellers shops should be included, because they were sometimes combined with circulating libraries, which it was desirable to encourage.

MR. SOLOMON: All parties would be served by inserting the words "selling exclusively books and papers" after the words "news vendors," if they were to be included in the clause.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: As the hon. member in charge of the Bill had assured him that the provisions of Clause 3 were sufficient to confine the exemption to actual booksellers and agents, he was satisfied with the new clause.

New clause put and passed.

Bill reported with further amendments.

#### PUBLIC NOTARIES BILL.

##### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The following schedule of amendments made by the Legislative Council was considered:—

No. 1.—Page 2, Clause 5—Insert the following sub-clause to stand as (a.):—  
"Is a practitioner of the Supreme Court who has served his Articles of Clerkship to a Solicitor in Western Australia."

No. 2.—Page 2, Clause 5, line 4—Strike out "ten" and insert "five."

No. 3.—Page 2, Clause 6, line 1—Between "person" and "who" insert "other than a practitioner referred to in Sub-section (a.) of Section five, or an established public notary."

#### IN COMMITTEE.

MR. JAMES moved that amendments 1, 2, and 3 be disagreed with. Amendment No. 1 had the effect of enabling any articulated clerk in this colony to become a notary public immediately on his admission. The second amendment provided that any person could be admitted a notary public within five years after his admission as a practitioner. But the object of the Bill was to place notaries public in a somewhat similar position to that which they occupied elsewhere. There were comparatively few notaries public in England, and comparatively few in the other colonies; whereas a practice had grown up in this colony of appointing every practitioner a notary public. Too great care could not be taken in insisting upon some stringent qualification being fulfilled by those appointed to this office, when it was remembered that the fact of a document being authenticated by a notary public was accepted everywhere as a *prima facie* proof of its validity. The committee ought not to agree with these amendments.

Motion put and passed.

Resolution reported, and report adopted.

MR. JAMES moved that the Attorney General and Mr. Leake, with the mover, be a committee to draw up reasons for disagreeing with the Council's amendments.

At 6:30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the chair.

At 7:30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the chair.

THE PREMIER, on behalf of the committee, brought up the following reasons:—

1. The principal object of the Bill is to raise the status of Notaries Public, and to provide a qualification which will afford an adequate guarantee of the applicant's fitness.
2. The mere fact of an applicant having served articles of clerkship locally, is not in itself any evidence of his fitness for the office.
3. That 10 years is not too long a period when regard is had to the public importance of the office, and the absolute need of that office being held by men of tried experience and character.

Reasons adopted, and a Message in accordance therewith transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

## IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Consideration of Estimates resumed.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (Minister, Hon. H. B. Lefroy).

Vote—*Education*, £49,945 :

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked for some reason for what appeared to be the high salary of £650 per annum paid to the Inspector General of Schools. In Victoria, where £600,000 was spent on education, the Inspector General's salary was not so high.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) said that some twelve months ago it was decided, in the interests of education, to send to England for a gentleman experienced in educational matters to take up the position of Inspector General. A letter was written to the Agent General asking him to select a candidate at a salary of £500 to £700 a year. Out of the many applicants, Mr. Cyril Jackson, the present Inspector General, received the greatest favour.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: An excellent man.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: Mr. Jackson refused to come to the colony for less than £650 a year, and that salary was subsequently offered to and accepted by him. Mr. Jackson had very wide experience in educational matters, and this colony would receive great advantages from his services. He was for five years a member of the London School Board—one of the greatest bodies of its kind in the world. He represented a district where the board had direct control over half a million children, and indirect control over a quarter of a million children attending church and other voluntary schools. Soon after leaving Oxford University in 1885 Mr. Jackson became a manager of elementary schools. In February, 1888, he started, and financed on his own account, and taught regularly in an East End school in London, where he had 88 boys whom he educated on lines not then recognised by the education authorities. On proving the success of his system there, it was adopted by the educational authorities in England. Mr. Jackson's system was to impart technical education; training the boys to handiwork, physical drill, carving, etc.; and he was virtually the pioneer on those lines of education.

Mr. Jackson was recommended for his present position by Sir John Gorst, Vice-President of the Council, and several other eminent men in England. At the last London School Board election Mr. Jackson was head of the poll, with 32,500 votes to his credit, with the Rev. Mr. Schnadhorst, brother of the great Liberal wire-puller and inventor of the caucus at home, second. Mr. Jackson had been offered in England, previous to his coming to this colony, an inspectorship of schools with a salary commencing at £400 and rising to £700 per annum. He had been several times asked to stand for Parliament in England, and there was no doubt that, with his great knowledge of educational matters, he would have been elected had he become a candidate. But Mr. Jackson was an enthusiast in educational matters and he preferred to retain his independence, and give his whole time to the work in which he took so great an interest. The salary given to Mr. Jackson was not at all too much for the position he held. As to the salary of the Victorian Inspector General, inquiry showed that that gentleman, who also held the office of Under Secretary of Education, had a salary of £655 a year. The only gentleman who had occupied a position analogous to that of Mr. Jackson was the late Mr. Hartley, Inspector General in South Australia, who, at the time of his death, was drawing a salary of £900 a year. It was sincerely to be hoped that Mr. Jackson would remain long enough in Western Australia to enable the Government to offer him a salary equal to that enjoyed by Mr. Hartley. He (Mr. Lefroy) had had the pleasure of working with Mr. Jackson for several months, and it was certain that in him the colony had an officer who would do the greatest good in the promotion of education.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he wanted it to be distinctly understood he was perfectly satisfied with the attainments of the Inspector General. All that had been said on that gentleman's behalf did not touch the point that, in a colony where only £50,000 a year was spent on education, it was proposed to pay the same salary as in a colony where £600,000 was spent. The officer in Victoria held practically the joint offices of Inspector General and Under Secretary, and his salary as



Inspector General was £500 a year. It was desirable there should be some explanation such as had been given, in order to justify the comparatively large salary of Mr. Jackson. Considering the great abilities of Mr. Jackson, perhaps the Government were justified in paying the salary, but in his (Mr. Illingworth's) opinion £500 was as much as this country could afford for such an official.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Postal and Telegraphs*, £282,633 8s.:

Mr. LEAKE asked the Minister in charge of the department whether he had any information in regard to the system of "urgent" telegrams. This matter was referred to in the general budget debate, but no definite determination had been come to in the matter. His (Mr. Leake's) object would perhaps be attained without testing the question by moving the reduction of any of the items, if the Minister would give an assurance that the system of "urgent" telegrams would be abolished. It was against the first principle of the telegraphic system for one telegram to have preference over another. Every telegram was in its nature urgent. There was no reason at all why the man who was unable to pay a little more than another should have his telegram set on one side. When there was a mining boom on here two or three years ago, the public were forced into the adoption of this "urgent" system. Unless people paid double the ordinary charges, they had no chance of getting their telegrams sent through. The only effect of the system was to double the telegraphic charges. Any person who was so regardless of his own interests as not to pay the double charges, had, in all likelihood, his message delayed; and in many instances telegrams were received after the letters announcing their despatch. The system gave to certain persons outside the colony a preference and advantage over others. The colony of South Australia practically commanded our telegraph lines at the expense of their neighbours in Victoria and New South Wales. Unless the Minister gave a distinct promise that the system of "urgent" telegrams would be abolished, he (Mr. Leake) proposed to test the feeling of the committee by dividing on

a great number of the items on the Estimates.

MR. GEORGE: Had the Minister any explanation to give to the committee in regard to the incident referred to in debate a few nights before, when it was insinuated that the Postmaster General, in his dealings in connection with land resumption by the Government, had not been so careful as perhaps he might have been?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: As to the question alluded to by the member for Albany, it had never really been brought before him (Mr. Lefroy) since he took over control of the Postal Department. This was one of those questions on which there would probably be great diversity of opinion. The system was established here, he believed, when business was blocked, and it was found necessary to establish "urgent messages" in order to get business telegrams through. There was not the slightest doubt that the system brought more revenue to the Post-office. He did not himself altogether approve of the system. Every telegram on the face of it was urgent, and he had often thought it unfair that a man, who could not afford to pay for an urgent telegram, should have his message blocked by "urgent" messages handed in subsequently. There were a great number of people in the colony who had not the same knowledge as business people, and were not aware of the existence of the urgent telegram system, and he did not know that they ever became aware of it. It was highly improbable that more than one-third of the population knew that there was such a thing as an urgent telegram. An ordinary man, being anxious to send a telegram, simply went to the post office and despatched it; but, if he were aware of the "urgent" system he would probably pay the extra fee in order that precedence might be given to it. There was no necessity for the continuance of this system. In New South Wales it did not exist, and he believed it never had existed there. In Victoria it had obtained, but had been abolished. In Tasmania it had recently been abolished, as he had been told last year. In South Australia the system still existed. If it was the wish of the House that urgent telegrams should be abolished in the interests of the people, it would be easy

to do so with regard to inland messages. But before doing away with the system as between here and South Australia it would be necessary to consult that colony.

MR. LEAKE: Not at all.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The Postmaster General, whom he had consulted on the subject, was very much against the system, and always had disapproved of it. He (the Minister) promised that inland urgent telegrams would be abolished; but if it was the wish of the House that the system should be abolished as between this and the neighbouring colonies, he trusted that, before deciding on the question, they would allow the department to consult with our neighbours in order to obtain their views on the subject. A distinct expression of opinion from the committee would give more weight to any action the department might take.

MR. LEAKE: All urgent telegrams should be abolished.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: It was impossible for the department to decide the question with regard to the other colonies.

HON. H. W. VENN: The leader of the Opposition was probably voicing the feelings of every man in the colony in his action on this question: at any rate, only a small minority would approve of such a system as this. When the Minister and the head of the department both disapproved of the system, there could be no reason for its continuance. The Treasurer could hardly approve of it either; for a much better way of raising revenue would be to increase or even double the charge for ordinary telegrams, and let everybody pay alike. The present system was a most iniquitous one, and the worst that could be adopted.

MR. GEORGE: Why did the Minister wish to consult the neighbouring colonies before abolishing the system? On what principle were the receipts for urgent telegrams shared with South Australia?

THE PREMIER: Half-and-half.

MR. GEORGE: Why should they get it?

THE PREMIER: Because they gave priority on their side too.

MR. GEORGE: It appeared, then, that this extra fee was charged with a view of minimising any block that might occur at this end. This colony sent the

telegrams to Eucla; and presumably South Australia sent them over its lines from that point. But where was the justification for sharing the fees with that colony? If the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) took this matter to a division, he would decidedly support him. This was another instance of the policy of giving special advantage to the man with a big banking account, which advantage ought to belong to the poorest man in the colony.

MR. LEAKE: Not having received a sufficiently satisfactory answer from the Minister, he must formally move that this vote be reduced by £10; and he would divide the committee on the question, unless the Minister would give an assurance that the system would be abolished without delay. This motion would not prejudice the vote for the department, but would give the Minister the necessary authority to do what he now hesitated to attempt.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member should remember that there had been no expression of opinion from the Government side of the House in favour of urgent telegrams. The Minister had condemned the system, and he (the Premier) had never been in favour of it. He did not know how it originated, but it probably came from South Australia; and in times when there was a great pressure of business the department made money by giving a preference to those who paid the extra fees. People who were willing to pay extra generally obtained an advantage; but he did not like the principle as applied to a public institution. Of course it had the advantage of producing a little more revenue, but the reason why the Minister did not at once agree to its abolition was because we were not our own masters in the matter. We had to deal with South Australia, which likewise charged a double rate on its urgent telegrams sent to this colony, and we were under engagement to forward them at once over our lines, giving them a preference over ordinary messages; and we received the extra shilling for so doing. South Australia was under a similar obligation with regard to urgent telegrams from this end, and received the same fee of a shilling for the ten words of which an ordinary message consisted.

No doubt an arrangement could be made for the abolition of the system. It was mainly a question of £ s. d., and this fact could not be altogether ignored. He would not divide the committee, for he thought the general feeling would be in favour of doing away with the system; and the fact that both the Minister in charge of the department and himself had expressed a hope that the matter would be satisfactorily arranged with South Australia, ought to be sufficient for the mover of the motion. He accepted the motion as an expression of the general feeling of the House, and the Government would try to arrange the matter accordingly.

**MR. LEAKE:** Having heard the opinions of both Ministers on the subject, he was perfectly satisfied with their assurance that they would take action, and he would withdraw the motion.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Seeing that this department was carried on at a loss to the State of £82,000, which had to be made up out of the general revenue, it was hardly fair that a preference should be given to individuals who were prepared to pay an extra shilling for their telegrams. Every telegram was important and urgent in the opinion of the sender; and many of them, dealing with domestic matters of life and death, had to stand over while mercantile business was being attended to. He accepted the statement of the Minister of Education as practically a promise that the system would be abolished.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION:** This question had never been raised since he had assumed control of the postal department, until within the last few days. Hon. members would understand that he could not agree to the proposal of the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) without first hearing the views of the committee in general. He (the Minister) repeated that he disapproved of the system; at the same time he would not like to abolish it without consultation with South Australia.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

**MR. KENNY:** It was to be regretted that nothing had been done in regard to the construction of a telegraph line from Nannine to Peak Hill, which would be very useful, not only to the local mines, but to the squatting interests in the far North-West. Peak Hill was situated directly upon the stock route to the North-

West of the colony; and great numbers of stock passed through it regularly. The herdsmen, to procure information, had to leave the stock at Peak Hill, and travel 120 miles to the nearest telegraph station and back again. There was more than sufficient material at present standing on the disused line from Mullewa to Cue to cover the distance from Nannine to Peak Hill. Quite recently a number of mines at Peak Hill had been floated in London for a quarter-of-a-million of money, and 1,000 tons of machinery had been shipped from London, with more to follow, for their use. The new company had over 100 men already at work, and intended to erect 50 head of stamps, and to carry on mining on a very large scale. Such an enterprise was entitled to ordinary telegraphic facilities.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The suggestion of the last speaker would have his strong support. In former years he (Mr. Illingworth) had urged upon the department the necessity for constructing this line; and he hoped it would be done during the ensuing year.

**MR. WALLACE:** The old line from Mullewa to Cue might easily be pulled down and utilised in the manner suggested by the member for North Murchison (Mr. Kenny).

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION:** It could hardly be said that the Government had been backward in extending the telegraph system throughout the colony; for it was admitted on all hands that they had done wonders in this direction. He was not in a position to state just then how much material remained on the old Mullewa-Cue line; but he had already informed the people of Peak Hill that the department would, no doubt, soon be warranted in constructing a line to that town, though they could not do so immediately. He would inquire into the matter, and, if the material was available as stated, and Peak Hill continued to develop, he would push on the work if funds were obtainable.

**MR. KENNY** disclaimed any intention of insinuating that the North Murchison district had been neglected by the Minister, who had always treated it very fairly. He only wished to point out that the line would pay.

**MR. GEORGE:** The amount for telegraph line repairs was £3,000. In the

previous year the estimate was £5,000, and the amount spent was £14,318. Did the Minister think £3,000 was sufficient for the repairs of an admittedly increasing length of lines?

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** During the last year all the old lines had been gone over; amongst these the line from Perth to Geraldton, nearly 300 miles, the whole length of which had been overhauled at the cost of a large sum. All the lines were now in good repair, and it was hoped the £3,000 would be sufficient for the coming year.

**MR. GREGORY :** The sum of £4,000 was put down as the estimated cost of telegraph lines which might be constructed. In his opinion that amount was insufficient.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** The Telegraph Department now constructed their own lines. No new lines had been asked for, nor did any appear likely to be immediately required, and it was thought by the Government that £4,000 would be sufficient. If necessary, in the interests of the colony, other telegraph lines would be constructed.

**MR. PHILLIPS :** The large sum of £28,056 was put down for telegraph lines to other parts of the colony. Did that amount include the cost of the telegraph line from Mingenew to Mullewa?

**THE PREMIER :** The cost of the Eucla line was included in the £28,000.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** The cost of the Mingenew to Mullewa line would also come out of the amount referred to.

**MR. PHILLIPS :** Was it considered a cheaper way for the department to construct their own lines?

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** Yes; that was considered to be the better course.

**MR. KENNY** asked for an explanation of the £200 put down as a bonus to J. R. Connolly for transport of telegraph material for the Eucla line.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** Mr. Connolly had a contract to convey certain telegraph material for the Eucla telegraph line. It was very important that the material should be placed as quickly as possible, and Mr. Connolly consented to distribute some of it at certain small ports on the South Coast. This entailed considerable trouble and danger—

Mr. Connolly losing two boats in the work, and it was considered a fair thing to recompense him.

**MR. PHILLIPS** asked for an explanation of the £1,000 put down as a bonus to I. J. K. Cohn for distributing material for the Coolgardie-Eucla telegraph lines.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** It was very important that these lines should be constructed as quickly as possible, and Mr. Cohn was offered this bonus if he could get the work done in a certain time short of the contract time. The colony had gained more than £1,000 by the transaction.

**MR. PHILLIPS** asked whether Mr. Cohn was supplied with Government camels in carrying out his work.

**THE PREMIER :** Mr. Cohn had to provide his own camels.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Observatory*, £3,318 4s.:

**MR. GEORGE** asked when the ratepayers were likely to receive any benefit from the expenditure comprised in items 1 to 5. He also desired an explanation of the officers described as "mechanic and clerk," "meteorological computer and astronomical observer," and also "astronomical computer and observer."

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** When the ratepayers were likely to derive a benefit from the expenditure would depend almost entirely on the brains of the ratepayers. The service could not be carried on without work, and the officers comprised in the items performed that work.

**MR. GEORGE** asked whether the Government Astronomer was now in the colony.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** The Government Astronomer was now in the colony, and at the Observatory.

**MR. WALLACE** asked whether the postmasters who were engaged in various parts of the colony to send the results of observations to the Government Astronomer, were so competent as to be reliable.

**THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :** The postmasters were paid £12 a year for their services as observers. They were considered reliable, but it was the intention of the Astronomer to send officers round the various localities in order to ascertain that the work was properly done. As to the question about

the meteorological computer and astronomical observer, that was the officer who attended to the meteorological part of the business and gave general assistance to the Astronomer.

Vote put and passed.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT (Commissioner, Hon. F. H. Piessé).

#### STATEMENT ON RAILWAY WORKING.

Vote — *Railways and Tramways*.  
£866,396 :

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS said: It appeared to be the wish of hon. members a few evenings ago, when I intended to address the committee in connection with the Estimates of my department, that the matter should be postponed until I could give some explanation in regard to the working of the Railways and Public Works Departments during the past year. I propose to deal with the departments separately, seeing that, although they are worked conjointly under one Minister, their operations are quite distinct. That the two departments are regarded as distinct may be gathered from remarks which from time to time have been made by hon. members, and an opinion has been expressed that they ought to be under separate administrations. The difficulties of separating the departments, however, have been felt more than ever during the past year, owing to the great increase of work. There are many works in hand of which the Minister at present in charge has greater knowledge than a new Minister would have, and it is thought better to continue the departments under one control for some little time longer, until conditions more nearly normal are reached. We are approaching normal conditions now; and when my statement is given and my report more closely looked into, it will be found that, although the work has been extremely heavy, the public have not suffered as much as some people would assume, owing to the departments being under the control of one Minister. Owing to the improved arrangements in the working of the department, something has been done towards bringing about a satisfactory state of things.

#### *Railways Generally.*

It is my intention to first deal exclusively with the railways; and I

approach the subject with greater pleasure this year than last. For three-fourths of last year the department was under the administration of my predecessor. This year I am accountable for the administration of the whole year; and I should like to show that there has been a decided improvement all round with the increase of business in connection with the railways. Owing to the pressure of business before the House during the last few weeks, very few members have had an opportunity of looking through the report on the Railway Department, although I have been often pressed to lay that report before the House. Why I desired, a few evenings ago, to dispense with the customary speech on this occasion, was to let hon. members read that report, and so obtain the information which I hope to-night to be able to give them, possibly in a more condensed form. I must necessarily, however, follow the pages of the report, in order to give the information they desire. I will as briefly as possible give a few figures in connection with the increased working of the railways. The mileage for 1896 was 588 miles, which in 1897 had increased to 970 miles; a difference of 382 miles. Hon. members must not run away with the idea that the great increase shown here is attributable to railway construction. During the year the Government have purchased the Great Southern Railway of 243 miles, which accounts for the increase to that extent. A number of railways are now being constructed throughout the colony, and the increase this year will be a natural one consequent on that construction.

#### *Working Expenses and Percentage.*

The percentage of working expenses in 1896 was 49.79; while for 1897 it was 63.09, or an increase of 13.30 to the bad. But that I can account for, first, by the reduction in the rates on the goldfields lines. Hon. members will remember that last year when addressing the House I mentioned it was the intention of the Government to assimilate the rates on the goldfields lines to those throughout the colony. The result of that assimilation was a very great decrease in the income. A reduction has been given to the people who make use of the railways, but

it has very considerably lessened the railway revenue which could be counted on in the past. Another cause for the increased ratio of working expenses is the scarcity of rolling stock. Men have had to be engaged for the purpose of unloading bricks, timber, and such classes of material, to enable trucks to be put into use again as soon as possible. This has entailed considerable expense, which could not be charged to the consignees, seeing that it was done for the purpose of making use of the trucks in a shorter time than is given consignees to unload. Consignees are allowed 24 hours, or 12 working hours in which to unload, but it was found expedient and necessary to unload the trucks immediately they came into a yard, so as to relieve them for traffic again. That meant doubling the handling of the freight, and, consequently, a great increase in the expenditure. Overtime had also to be paid for, and Sunday work also. When I made my statement last year, hon. members will remember there was a block at Fremantle, which caused a great deal of expenditure. The staff had to be increased considerably, and some of them had to work day and night, and also on Sundays. Those facts will, I think, show the cause of the great increase in the working expenses. Another matter connected with the expenditure is the increased payment given to lumpers for loading and unloading. The shipping companies at Fremantle amalgamated, and increased the pay to lumpers from 8s. to 10s. per day, or 1s. 3d. an hour. The Government, of course, had to follow suit, and have now to pay that rate for all labour engaged in the unloading of ships. There are other matters connected with expenditure. We all remember the fire which occurred at Fremantle, and which necessitated the payment of large amounts for compensation. The Government are even now paying claims as they are adjusted.

#### *Comparison with other Colonies.*

Although the percentage of working expenses to revenue, 63·09, appears to be high, still, on comparing our railways with those of other colonies, it will be found that we take the fourth place. In New Zealand the percentage was 63·51, in Victoria 64·40, and in Tasmania 74·98. In Queensland, South Australia, and New

South Wales the percentage was lower than ours, being 59·36 for Queensland, 59·10 for South Australia, and 53·11 for New South Wales. It is well known that the management of the New South Wales railways is all that can be desired, though it must be remembered that they have not had to face the difficulty in which we found ourselves in consequence of an increased expenditure more than keeping pace with an increase in the traffic.

#### *Revenue, Expenditure, and Profit.*

The estimated revenue for last year was £734,000, and the actual revenue received was £915,483, an increase of £181,483. The estimated expenditure was £474,000, and the actual expenditure £577,655, or an increase of £103,655. The profit on the railways was £337,828, equal to 9·04 per cent. on the capital invested, as against 11·48 per cent. for 1895-6; or, deducting the amount of interest, £138,962, a balance of £199,136 is left, equal to 5·33 per cent. on capital cost. I think that is a most satisfactory state of things; and I would like to point out that the profit, equal to 9·04 per cent. on the capital invested, is the greatest profit realised on any railways throughout the world. I have before me a statement showing the earnings of all the railways of Great Britain and Australia, as well as those in other parts of the globe, from which it appears that the West Australian railways have outstripped all the others, as regards the proportion of gross earnings to the capital invested.

A MEMBER: Your railways are more cheaply built.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Speaking of the revenue, I will show how we have earned it. We earned it by an increase of mileage, but there was not such an increase as might have been expected from what had been done during the preceding year. The train mileage for 1896 was 1,541,750; and in 1897 it is 2,537,192; that being an increase of 995,442 miles, equalling 64·56 per cent.

#### *Passenger and Goods Traffic.*

The number of passengers carried during the year 1896 was 1,679,816; and for 1897 it was 3,607,486, or an increase of 1,927,670, being a percentage increase

of 114.75. I mentioned last year that we had, during that period, moved the whole population of this colony 16½ times. This year we have done so 22 times; showing that our people are availing themselves much more readily of the facilities provided for travelling by train.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have moved some of them out of the country.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: It does not matter where we have moved them. The fact that the railways are appreciated by the people is shown by the comparative statement of the number of times we have moved the whole population. With regard to the goods traffic, an abnormal increase has taken place. In 1896, the goods traffic amounted to 427,919 tons; and in 1897 it had increased to 845,225 tons. That is an increase of 417,306 tons, or a percentage increase of 97.51. Or let us take the earnings per train mile as a better indication of the business done. In 1896, the earnings per average mile open were £913, and in 1897 they were £1,103. The expenses have increased for the reasons I have already given. The expenses per mile for 1896 were £455; and for 1897, £696. The profit for 1896 was £458, and for 1897, £407 per mile. One hon. member stated that the reason why our profits are so large as compared with our capital is owing to the low cost at which we have constructed our lines.

*Cost of Construction and Interest.*

We have admittedly constructed our railways at a very low cost. The rate for 1896 was £3,995 per mile, and for 1897, £4,499. This is a considerable increase; but it must be remembered that we are taking into consideration the Great Southern Railway, which we have purchased. A great price was paid for that railway and for the lands connected with it; and the Railway Department has been debited with the whole of the purchase money in the Auditor General's report and also in the Treasury reports, the amount paid being £1,100,000. In my accounts I have made some allowance for the land value; for, although I may possibly have no right to assume that it should be so, I take it that, as a matter of bookkeeping,

the railways should not be debited with the whole of that sum of £1,100,000; but that a proportion should be charged to the Lands Department, which receives the revenue from the sale of the lands purchased with the railway. If the Railway Department is to be debited with the whole of that sum, I take it that we should receive the income from the sale of lands; and if that were done, we should be able, no doubt, to make up the difference to be found between the income from the railways and the income from the lands, from which it appears that my department is taking charge of £850,000 for the railways, and the balance, £250,000, should go to the Lands Department, which should pay the interest upon it. The Lands Department does not pay that interest; but the railways, of course, pay it as upon the £850,000; and I take it that, until a better adjustment can be made, this is the fairest way of dealing with the matter from a railway point of view.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Who pays the other interest on the £250,000?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: It is paid in the usual way from the general revenue of the colony. Provision is made for the interest to be paid upon this loan; but I only charge myself with £850,000 in my railway accounts, because I take it that this is the amount which should properly be charged to railways, or at least that it is an equitable way of adjusting this debit of £1,100,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Lands Department have got the best of it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I think they have.

*Sources of Railway Revenue.*

With regard to the revenue from the different railways, I do not intend to deal with each line, but merely with the two railways in which I think we are most interested to-day; namely, the Great Southern Railway—our recent purchase—and the South-Western Railway, the proposal to build which, I think, was condemned more than any other railway scheme ever brought before this House. When the right hon. the Premier introduced the Bill providing for it, I think there were many persons, even amongst his own friends, who condemned

its construction. But I would like to point out that the increase in the traffic of that railway, and in its earnings, has been abnormal. About a year ago, I think the service was about one train a day for part of a week, and two trains a day for the remainder of the week; but now we have five trains running each way—four of them right through to Bunbury; and we have also several local trains running to places on the line in connection with the timber business. This indicates that a very large business has sprung up in the district, principally attributable to the timber trade in the first instance, and also to the settlement which has taken place along that line of railway. The extent of that settlement is very encouraging, and, I think, proves that this railway is one of the best works ever undertaken in this colony. The earnings of the South-Western Railway last year made a profit over working expenses and interest of £6,744, and this year (1896-7) the profit is £21,819. Two years ago this railway barely paid its way—did not pay its working expenses—and now we find it making a profit. For 1897-8 we expect a better return than we had last year, for it will be augmented by the opening of the Collie railway during the early part of next year, owing to the large coal business which must follow, provided the output of that product is all that we expect it to be, of which I have no doubt.

*Fremantle Traffic.*

With regard to business generally, I will deal principally with that at Fremantle. Hon. members will recollect that we had a great deal of trouble last year with the block at Fremantle, but I am pleased to inform them that the block has disappeared, and that we are perfectly able to deal with all the traffic which is likely to come to our shores for some considerable time.

THE PREMIER: I am very sorry to hear it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Of course I should be very sorry also if there was a falling off in the traffic; but I will show by some figures I have obtained that there is a very great increase indeed, and that the increase is continuing. It will no doubt be recollected that last

year I dealt with the imports—in fact, with the whole of the tonnage which came over the Fremantle jetty—and mentioned then that the goods traffic for the seven months ending on the 31st March of that year was 80,000 tons. But I expected that, during this year—taking it upon the basis of the increase shown by the next few months following that period—that we would be dealing with traffic to the extent of 340,000 tons. I remember that that forecast elicited some expressions of surprise, and possibly those who heard me thought it incredible; but I am glad to inform hon. members that those figures have been exceeded, and that the business dealt with for the twelve months ending 30th November of this year amounts to 433,982 tons. I think this shows that an enormous amount of business is being done. Only a year ago the business for the year amounted to about 140,000 tons. It has now increased to over 430,000 tons, and is continuing to increase. I will give you the figures for the last five months to show the actual result in the matter of tonnage. In the month of July, 1896, the tonnage which passed over the jetties was 25,917, while for July of this year it was 37,529 tons. For August of this year it was 42,010 tons; for September 45,295 tons; and for October 43,967 tons. We find that the average tonnage passing over the Fremantle jetties for the past five months has been 41,303 tons. This is an enormous return for a small place like Fremantle. Hon. members will no doubt be under the impression that because all the difficulties at Fremantle have disappeared, there has been a falling off in the traffic; but that falling off has not taken place, and I am pleased to say that the traffic is still increasing, and that the locomotive traffic also is increasing rapidly. With regard to the exports, the quantity of timber exported is rapidly increasing. For the month of November last year the whole of the exports over the Fremantle wharves amounted to 1,300 tons; for the corresponding month of this year it amounted to 7,700 tons—an increase of 6,400 tons—a very encouraging increase indeed. With regard to the wharfage, I would like to refer to some remarks made a few nights ago to the effect that the Government were receiving a large revenue



from the wharves. I then pointed out that our income—I have not the exact figures before me to-night—was about £44,000, while the expenditure was £52,000, and that consequently there was a loss of about £8,000 in connection with the handling of cargo on those wharves. It will be said that we are paying too much for the labour, which I certainly believe to be the case, because I look upon it that the 1s. 3d. per hour paid for the labour in connection with handling cargo is altogether too high; but we have to take into consideration the fact that we are not paying that rate continuously; that the men who work there have to suffer this disadvantage, that the work is not continuous. They are paid this rate of 1s. 3d. per hour, but they have to take their chance of getting continuous employment. I am hoping that, now that matters have reached a more normal condition, the expenses in connection with the working—and particularly the expenses of overtime and Sunday work, which I am glad to say has ceased, or nearly so—will be very much lessened, and that this year we shall be able to show a better return than in years past.

#### *Rolling Stock.*

With regard to the increase in the stock, which I anticipated last year, hon. members will recollect my statement that if it did not increase as much as I expected, it would be owing to the difficulty we experienced in getting our orders executed at home. The recent strike in England retarded the execution of our orders; and although, when our orders were sent home, they were divided amongst a number of firms, we found that other countries were in the same position as ourselves, and had put large orders in the hands of manufacturers, so that a great delay was unavoidable. We have now at work in the colony 151 locomotives, as compared with 74 in 1896, and 224 carriages as compared with 102 in 1896. Wagons have increased from 2,360 in 1896 to 3,485; so that now we are much better able to deal with the large amount of business which we have to handle on our railways. I must point out, however, that it is only recently that we are beginning to get our stock in, and that, up to about four months ago, the stock came forward

very slowly. Now we are receiving it much more quickly, and in the course of another eight or ten months it is hoped that we shall have the whole of the stock which was ordered recently, and which was charged to that large vote of £1,200,000 obtained last year, for which a Loan Bill was put through the House. Of this amount something like £700,000 worth of stock has been ordered. It is hoped that next year we shall be able to introduce into the country fifty lavatory carriages for the long-distance journeys. These carriages will consist of two first-class compartments and two seconds, each fitted with a lavatory, and furnished, the firsts as carriages of that class are furnished now, and the seconds much better than those we have at the present time. They will be made as comfortable as possible. This is very necessary when we take into consideration the long journeys which passengers have to make over our goldfields railways.

#### *Duplication of Lines.*

With regard to the duplication, that has been completed, or nearly so; and in a very short time the whole of the works in connection with that undertaking will be finished. The Guildford Bridge is the last item we have to complete, and then we shall have the duplication from the 24-mile to Fremantle. Had it not been for this duplication we should have found very great difficulty in the working of our traffic; but, owing to the improved condition of things, the expenses have been lessened and a change for the better has taken place. Although some adverse comment has been made with regard to the expensive buildings and the cost of the work generally in connection with this duplication, it must be remembered that we are not building for the present; but that, when buildings were erected in the old days, they were built, no doubt, to anticipate the future, and, in erecting our buildings to-day, we, too, must anticipate the future; in fact I hope we have anticipated the future to such an extent that we shall be able to meet the convenience of the public, though not perhaps to that extent which we might be led to believe by the remarks passed from time to time on these buildings upon the railway.

*Interlocking Gear.*

I am also pleased to inform the committee that the interlocking work which was arranged for a short time before I came into office has been continued since, and has been greatly extended, for the reason that, as I said last year, I consider we cannot do too much to make our railways safe; and I think we have only to bring to our recollection the unfortunate accident which occurred a few days ago on the Yilgarn railway to prove that if the interlocking system had been in use there, that accident could not have occurred, for the reason that the points, which were unfortunately set in the wrong position by someone—probably by the deceased himself—would have been automatically adjusted. The inquiry has not yet been completed, but if those points had been interlocked, the signal would have been against the driver of that train, and consequently he would not have entered the siding, and this poor man would not have lost his life. The cost of interlocking such a siding as that would only amount to some £400; and I think that, when we can afford to do it, every station where we have a busy line, such as the Yilgarn line, should be interlocked.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would it cost £400 a station?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes; with the signals and everything else. Of course that figure applies to the very small stations. For such a station as Perth the cost would be £5,000; in fact, Perth will ultimately cost about £11,000 when completed. At the same time, we must take into consideration the fact that the cost of the whole of the interlocking done up to date has been £34,000 for the 21 stations which have been interlocked. It will thus be seen that the system having cost up to date about £34,000, the percentage of this expense on the capital cost is only £914, or barely one per cent.; so that, had the system not been introduced, we would only have effected a saving of, say, one per cent. And we must certainly acknowledge that, by introducing it, we have greatly improved the railways, have increased the conveniences to the travelling public, and made travelling very much safer.

*Improvements and Renewals of Existing Lines.*

With regard to the improvements and renewals of existing lines, I have made a new departure this year by charging to consolidated revenue an amount of £95,000 for the purpose of effecting certain improvements which should be carried out, and which cannot possibly be charged to loan; for I take it that the repairing of stations, the re-laying of the railways, and also the removal of different station buildings, and so forth, and the improvement of the railway carriages, ought to be done out of revenue. It has cost some £600 to improve the second-class accommodation. Although possibly this has not been done to the extent which we would all desire, still I think there has been a considerable improvement, and I am glad to say that to-day nearly every second class-compartment has been cushioned. These works, I take it, should be properly charged to revenue, and I think, too, that the more we can take from revenue, so long as we can afford to take it, the better; in fact, I was about to take £150,000, but found it impossible to do so, and contented myself with the £95,000 shown as expended from railway revenue. That sum is taken from railway revenue, and expended on the railways. The railway revenue is, of course, paid into the consolidated revenue, and the vote is taken for improvements to open railways.

*Lighting of Carriages.*

The lighting of trains is a matter which has been frequently brought before the public; in fact there have been many complaints about the indifferent lighting; but I would like to point out that this subject has been a matter of inquiry in larger communities than ours, and it is only during the last few months that Victoria has adopted a uniform system of lighting. Victoria has experimented with electricity and with gas; and I had an opportunity when in that colony of travelling in one of the experimental cars lighted by gas. I have heard since that the Victorian Government have given orders for the fitting up of the whole of their railway stock with what is called Piusel's gas. I find that this system has been adopted in New South Wales also, as well as in Queensland. In South Australia, although we have heard so

much there of the lighting of carriages with electricity, I find that only one train—and that the train running from Adelaide to Broken Hill—is so lighted. And from inquiries made I find that it is a very costly method of lighting, and not to be recommended, and the South Australian Government intend to adopt the system of lighting by means of gas. Electricity, however, is receiving some consideration at the hands of our Government, and the General Manager, who is visiting England, intends to inquire into its working at home. The Engineer-in-Chief, when in England, also made inquiries, and he is rather in favour of the lighting of carriages by gas in preference to electricity. We have fitted up a carriage here with Stone's patent electrical appliance, and that will be tested in a few days. But I myself think it will be eventually proved that the lighting by gas will be the least expensive system, and will possibly give the best light we can get for the money. There certainly should be an improvement in our lighting. I feel myself that an improvement is very necessary; for those who travel long distances in our trains must certainly find it very tiresome indeed to sit in our carriages with the indifferent light which is now provided.

#### *Increase of Staff.*

I must mention one or two remarks made the other evening with regard to the staff. Some members drew attention to the great increase in the staff, and there was evidently an impression that it was too large. I must point out, however, that although the staff shows an increase, a great number of men recently employed are not now in the service, because the return which I then presented to the House was made up to the 10th June; and the staff employed by the permanent way branch included a large number of men engaged on the duplication work who have since left the service in consequence of the completion of that undertaking. Otherwise there has only been the ordinary increase of staff, which is absolutely necessary for the efficient working of the railways. This year, in fact, I think the staff will be much reduced in numbers, taking into consideration the large amount of work we have to carry out, for

the reason that our men have become and are becoming more efficient. Last year, as I pointed out, the department was more of a training school, because a great number of men came here who had more or less knowledge of railway work—some very much less; and the consequence was that we had to keep a number of men in reserve to take the places of those who proved to be inefficient. The increased efficiency of the staff this year will obviate the necessity for keeping so many temporary men as we had to employ last year.

#### *Official Conferences.*

I would like to mention one or two innovations made during the year, which will show that some improvement has been effected in regard to the administration of the railways. Last year I mentioned that it was intended to introduce a system of conferences, and I am glad to say that this system has been inaugurated, and has worked admirably. The heads of the departments have their regular conferences, at which all matters of importance are discussed; and proper minutes of these conferences are kept and printed, and are sent to the representative heads of departments, as well as to the Commissioner. These conferences have been introduced with much advantage. They have prevented the delay which took place when communications were in writing. The officers most concerned are able to discuss these matters among themselves, and to arrive at the best conclusions without having to resort to the very tedious process of writing. I am glad to say that I have found very great benefit from it. Conferences are held by five different departments, and all matters discussed by the subordinate boards are discussed at the Commissioner's conference, which sits monthly. Such a system has been found to work admirably in New South Wales, and it has had a very good effect here. I regard the railways as more of a business department than any other, and I have to work it upon those business lines which we would adopt in our own business—to arrive at a conclusion as quickly as possible, and to act on our conclusions without delay. The changes which have taken place from time to time have been the cause of very much annoy-

ance to the public, and have caused the public to condemn the system more than anything else: and any improvement in that direction should be appreciated by those who transact business with the Railway Department.

*Salaries and Duties.*

Hon. members will find, on going through the Estimates, that the salaries will be placed before them. Some of these will, perhaps, be criticised by hon. members on account of the apparently large figures; but when hon. members take into consideration the fact that the principal men of this great department have under their control the working of a big system such as our railway system is, they will find that the amount paid to the gentlemen who do the supervision is not too much for the services which they render. It is an immense business, and their work is never finished. They are working at all hours, day and night. They have a great responsibility, and I know of no other department in the public service which needs such close attention as the railways. I hope members will consider that the work is different from and quite outside of the ordinary working of departments which do not come so closely into touch with the public as the railway servants do. When you look into the vast amount of business done, which is worked up in a measure by those men who have to provide the means of transit and who have also to be responsible for the working of a big undertaking such as this, I certainly consider they should be well compensated for the arduous and responsible duties they have to perform. During the year the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. O'Connor, resigned the position he held of Acting General Manager of Railways. He has held that position for the past six years, and although he has frequently asked the Government to relieve him and to appoint someone else, it was not till December of last year that the Government finally decided to do so, and to appoint Mr. Davies as General Manager of Railways. The services rendered by Mr. O'Connor during the time he has been acting as general manager have been much appreciated; and although very great improvements have been effected during the past year, taking into consideration the condition of the colony,

a great deal is due to him for the economical way in which he designed and also carried out the construction of the railways. We have recently had to increase the equipment of the railways, and to improve them in such a way as of course might reasonably have been done during the administration of that gentleman. I quite admit that what he did he did for the best. I fully appreciate all that he has done, and I think we have very much to thank him for, although sometimes he may have erred upon the side of economy—that is with regard to the equipment. After filling the position for such a length of time, I cannot do more than express in this House the confidence the Government had in his administration and their appreciation of the good work he did. Mr. Davies's appointment has only been made since January 1, and we have not yet had sufficient opportunity of seeing what he can do in his new post. We had five years' experience of his working as chief under-manager, and when the full report is presented next year of the working of the railways, under one year's administration by Mr. Davies, we shall be able to judge whether the confidence placed in him by the Parliament of the country has been justified. When the heavy work occurred at Fremantle and at other places, I always found him to the fore doing his very best in the interests of the service, and in the most energetic manner carrying out the administration of the railways to the utmost of his ability, with a great amount of success. The appointment of Mr. Davies necessitated the rearrangement of the administrative staff of the railways. Mr. Short, who was recently, until the purchase of the Great Southern railway, the chief manager of that railway, was offered and accepted the position vacated by Mr. Davies. Mr. Short comes to us with a reputation from the Great Southern for courtesy of manner, and also for practical experience in connection with railway working, which I hope will stand him in good stead in his new post. At present he is acting for the general manager, who is away on six months' leave of absence, and who requires rest after his arduous work during the past six years. Mr. Short is taking up the position of acting general manager during the absence of the general manager

in England. So far things have gone on most satisfactorily. With regard to the other officers, Mr. Dartnall, the Engineer of Existing Lines, and his staff have done their utmost during the past year to carry out the very heavy work that has fallen on them. I cannot say too much of the energy with which Mr. Campbell, Locomotive Engineer, met the call made upon him for the increase in rolling stock. His department worked night and day to effect that object. He is on the goldfields now arranging about the water difficulty. All those officers seem to take and do take a very great interest in their work, and to them must be attributed much of the success that has followed the railways during the past year. The improvement, too, in our account branch is evidenced by the remarks made by the Auditor General in his report laid before the House. He has signified his appreciation of the work done since Mr. Patterson has taken up his duties. Those who knew the department some time ago, and the way in which the accounts were managed, must certainly approve the change that has taken place recently. The Auditor General stated that much of the cause for fault-finding in connection with shortages has now been removed. We shall hear very little more of any difficulty in connection with the account branch of the railways.

#### *Electric Branch.*

During the year an electric branch has been established—a large and growing department which deals with the whole of the telephonic system in connection with the railways. The electric staff system, which has been introduced, is one of the safety appliances which adds to the safe working of the railways. It is one of the most useful innovations brought about in the working of the railway system generally.

#### *The Future.*

With regard to the future, I may say that, although the Government give a good account of the past—the income which we expected last year was exceeded by the result—next year we hope to receive a very much larger amount than we did last year. The revenue is estimated at £1,200,000, and the expendi-

ture is placed on the Estimates at £866,396 or £900,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I hope you won't spend it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The member for Central Murchison (Mr Illingworth) hopes we will not spend it, but the hon. member may depend upon the department using all economy in connection with the working of the railways, although we may look for some reduction in the expenses owing to the efficiency of the men.

#### *Water Supply for Railways.*

We must be prepared to increase the expenditure for the water supply. The water supply for the Yilgarn goldfields has given out, and we have only a supply sufficient to last three weeks. This will necessitate, unless we have a rainfall, an expenditure of £12,000 in connection with the construction of tanks and providing extra pumping where there is rain water. This will mean the expenditure of an extra amount of £600 per week for the haulage of water. When hon. members consider that this will mean a very large increased cost in connection with the working expenses, they will quite understand that we are not always prepared to cope with sudden emergencies of this kind. We did not calculate on an expenditure of this character in the Estimates. Although we estimated so much for the working of the railways, we assumed that conditions would be normal; but now we are face to face with an unexpected difficulty, which will not occur again. A great many reservoirs have been constructed which will hold 57,000,000 gallons, and 128 miles from Perth is another holding 11,000,000 gallons. It is situated at a very good place for catching water, and this year was almost full. Next year, if we have anything like an ordinary rainfall, we shall not have to face that difficulty, even if we set aside the question of the Coolgardie water scheme, which must eventually be carried out. But I hope that then we shall be able to supply ourselves with water from our reservoirs along the railway, and thus leave the whole of the water which may be taken by the Coolgardie scheme to be used by the people on the goldfields. I would like to mention what we are doing

in regard to carrying coal from the Collie coalfield.

*Collie Coal Traffic.*

I mentioned, in my remarks, that I anticipated a large increase in connection with the working of the South-Western Railway, resulting from the carrying of coal from the Collie. We have accepted a tender for the supply of 60,000 tons of coal for use on Government railways during the year; but I may mention that provision is made in the contract that the Government may, by giving notice to the contractor, reduce the quantity we have engaged to take under that contract, and we are at liberty to take coal from any local colliery we may think fit for supplying our railways. We are now testing the Collie coal on the railways, and in a few days another test will be made in addition to the previous tests which have been so satisfactory. As an encouragement to those who are engaged in developing our coal-mines at the Collie, the Government have agreed to take some 25,000 tons from one colliery, and this coal is to be subjected to satisfactory tests, and to be supplied at a price which, all things being taken as equal, will be equivalent to the price of coal supplied to us from Newcastle, New South Wales. It is hoped the large quantity of Collie coal we intend taking for use on the Government railways will act as an inducement to those who are developing our collieries, and will enable us to test the coal thoroughly, and show whether it is a good fuel for the purpose of our railways. If the tests are not satisfactory, the Government are not bound to take the coal; but it is to be hoped that the coal will turn out satisfactorily; and I am sure any encouragement which can be given to local collieries in the way I have stated will be approved by this House. As I shall have an opportunity, during the discussion on the Railway Estimates, for dealing with individual items, it is not my intention to speak further on these matters at the present stage.

*Revenue—How Estimated.*

MR. ILLINGWORTH: On what ground do you estimate the revenue of £1,200,000 for the year?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Having the mileage basis, and taking the increases to be the same as we had the year before, when we found ourselves with a revenue of £915,000 upon an estimate of £734,000, so we have based the estimate again on mileage, and have made due allowance for any probable falling off by striking off some £50,000 from the estimated amount which we should receive if we take the figures of the past year as the basis of our estimate of what we are likely to receive in the present year. I may say that, up to the end of November, we had received a revenue equal to £1,030,000 for the present year, and each month has shown an increase on the previous month. The revenue for the last month, for instance, showed an increase of £7,000 over that of the previous month; and we all know the great increase of traffic which usually takes place during December, January, and February, and which we may expect to take place this year. We have a large local business which must certainly give us a great deal to do, and we have also to take into consideration a large business coming on in connection with the carrying of coal from the Collie to the goldfields. There is no doubt a falling off in the wood supply on the eastern goldfields; and it is stated by mine managers that they can get a better result from coal than from wood, the price being equal, so that this points to the fact that we are likely to have a greatly increased business in connection with the carrying of coal to the goldfields, now that our collieries are being developed. We have also a prospect of an increased business in connection with return freight; and taking this increase, together with the recent construction of the Boulder railway, we expect a very large business will be done in the current year. Therefore, taking all things into consideration, I am sanguine of receiving for the current year the income I have estimated. We certainly expect it, and I believe we shall get it. There is no reason why we should not get it, because, after all, the best months in the year for traffic are to come. We have had the early portion of the year, which is always a dull period for railway purposes; we are having summer months now, and

shall have the best part of the year to follow; so that I quite expect a considerable increase during the ensuing months. There is also an increase on the Boulder railway, which will have cost, when completed, some £22,000. We commenced by carrying 6,000 passengers a week, and the traffic has increased to 11,000 weekly. A further increase of some 50 per cent. is expected to follow immediately on the completion of the whole of that railway, which is going on some distance farther. These figures will indicate that a large business is to be expected, not only in passengers, but in goods traffic along that line.

*Great Southern Railway.*

One point I have omitted is in regard to the Great Southern Railway; and I may say that, notwithstanding the falling off which has taken place in connection with people coming into the colony who have made Albany their port and travelled overland by the Great Southern Railway, the income from that railway has kept up very well, as will be shown by the report I have presented to the House; and although there has been a slight loss, after paying interest on capital, yet it may almost be said we have paid our way since the purchase of that railway. I think the results on the whole are satisfactory, considering that we have had to renew some miles of that line in consequence of the sleepers being in a bad condition.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You told us, before the purchase, that the sleepers were all in good condition.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I told the House that some sleepers would have to be renewed; and I may say the company had intended to renew them, if the company had continued to manage the line. We have also established a much improved train service on the Great Southern line, for we have two trains running daily between Albany and Perth, and another train running between Albany and Northam for local traffic, thus serving the people who are settled along the line, and encouraging that increase of settlement which we are all satisfied to see making such great progress along that railway. I hope that with the increased settlement there going on, and also with the improving prospects, we shall have a better account to give of the

working of the Great Southern Railway next year. Even now I am perfectly satisfied with the result; and considering the fact that we have now to work two services instead of the one service which was in operation when we took over the Great Southern Railway, I think the Government and the country may congratulate themselves on the purchase of that line of railway.

*Concluding Remarks.*

In making these remarks on the Railway Estimates, the time available to me has been too short for dealing exhaustively with such an important matter; but I have endeavoured to touch upon every subject of importance. If there is anything I have not touched upon, I shall be pleased to give members any information they require in regard to the working, or any subject on which they may desire information. Although I have given such a good statement of the working of these railways, yet, after all, we must feel that while everything may have been done for the best from an administrative point of view, yet the success which has attended the working of the railways is to be attributed in a great degree to the men who are engaged in carrying on that service. They have been assiduous and untiring in their efforts, from the General Manager downwards; and, speaking of them as a whole, every one has worked with a will, and done his particular part in a way I appreciate very much. There is no hour of the day or night when, if I get on to the telephone and ring up an officer of the Railway Department, I fail to find they are always on the alert, or that someone does not answer in connection with that department. Indeed the railway could take no better motto for itself than that of *Nunquam dormio*—"I never sleep."

DEBATE ON RAILWAY ESTIMATES.

MR. KENNY asked for information as to the proposed construction of the Cuetto-Nannine railway, and what was being done to commence that work. He observed that £121,283 remained unexpended in the vote for the Nannine railway; and as nearly 12 months had elapsed since that railway was handed over, there should be some sign of commencing

the extension to Nannine. It had been stated that the survey was finished, and the latest information was that the plans were completed, but that the Government had not decided to go on with the work at present. As he had said, in reference to constructing a telegraph line to Peak Hill, there were thousands of tons of machinery now on the water, and a lot more to follow, for the Peak Hill mines; and all this would be a great advantage to the North Murchison goldfields, and gave assurance of traffic for the Nannine railway, which he wished to see commenced. It would shorten the route to Lake Way, and those far-distant goldfields, and there could be no question about this line paying well when opened.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** Although a survey of the proposed line had been made, and the plans were being prepared, the Government were not prepared to proceed with the construction of the line at present. As to the amount available, although at one time it was thought that £30,000 would be available, which would have been sufficient to construct a certain portion of the line, if not all of it, there had been greater demands on the Government in respect to the Mullewa-Cue line than were at first anticipated. A large amount had to be expended to put right some wash-aways, and there had been great cost in connection with the water supply for the line. The amount that would be available would be small.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The House passed a Bill for the construction of the line, and we had a pledge that the money would be allocated.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member knew better than that.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** There was a Loan Bill passed, and a certain sum was set down in the Bill for the Mullewa-to-Cue line. When the railway was tendered for there was a clear surplus shown, and a promise was given that the excess money of that vote should be expended in the extension of railways in the Murchison district. In view of the fact that there would be money available, the House passed a Bill for the construction of a railway from Cue to Nannine. The answer of the Minister was unsatisfactory in view of that fact.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member for Central Murchison was too astute a man not to know all about this matter. There had been considerable expenditure on the line from Mullewa to Cue. Then there were the wash-aways and the water supply, so that there would be not so much available as was anticipated; in his opinion there would be nothing available. Something like £40,000 was absorbed in raising the embankments and in providing water supplies along the line. Nearly the whole of the money the Government expected to have for the Nannine railway would be exhausted. It would have been foolish to start a branch line when the trunk line was not completed. If there was sufficient for the construction of the Nannine railway, the Government would be only too pleased to build it. As soon as money was available the line would be started.

**MR. A. FORREST** congratulated the Commissioner of Railways on the great success which had attended the Railway Department. He was glad to see that the salary of the general manager was to be increased. A great deal of credit was due to the manager for the improvement in the service. The general manager insisted on making the railways pay whether it suited individuals or not. The railways were now managed to the satisfaction of the public. Every man who had business with the railway department was satisfied with the way in which the railways were being managed.

**MR. KENNY:** Out of £181,280 for the construction of certain lines, there would be £121,293 left by June next year. In the face of that fact the Commissioner of Railways said he had not sufficient money in hand to construct an additional 60 miles of line.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** The wash-aways and the provision for water supply absorbed £70,000 of this amount. Then there were progress payments in connection with the railways, and although the line was to be handed over next June, the contractor had to maintain the line for another period, and he would not be paid the balance until that period had elapsed. Very little of the £121,000 would be left.

**MR. GEORGE:** The South-Western railway would prove an important asset as far as the railways were concerned. A



number of stations had been erected along the South-Western line, but very few conveniences. The shelter sheds had not been placed in the proper positions to form a shelter. Would the Minister remedy that error of judgment? And was he prepared to place a responsible officer in charge, so that the settlers who had small lots of goods left at stations on that line might not suffer from pilfering? Then again would the Minister consider the question of introducing the eight-hours system into the Railway Department? The Wellington Street entrance to the goods yard had been closed, and a picket fence erected in its place; and now people having business at the goods office had to go half a mile round and eventually cross the dangerous part of the line, from which the picket fence was properly intended to protect the public. No doubt the William Street gates would prevent serious accidents, but at the same time the gates were a great inconvenience to people who wished to cross the line with vehicles. Beaufort Street bridge was not wide enough for the traffic, should the William Street crossing be closed entirely. As to the footbridge at William Street, the sooner it was widened the better; and an officer should be placed to enforce the "move on" law, and prevent the bridge being blocked by loiterers. There was a large quantity of rolling stock at Fremantle; and if rolling stock was required, why was that not put into use?

MR. A. FORREST expressed a hope that the Commissioner, in replying to the remarks of the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) as to the William Street bridge, would not pledge himself to any particular line of policy until he had been interviewed by a deputation appointed by the City Council, which would wait upon him in reference to this matter. The hon. member for the Murray had left the City Council—why, he (Mr. Forrest) did not know.

MR. GEORGE said that was his business.

MR. A. FORREST said he had a great esteem and regard for the hon. member for the Murray, but when that gentleman rose to represent the city of Perth, it was time those members who did represent the city should ask the Minister not to pledge himself to any particular line of policy.

MR. GEORGE said he did not know whether the hon. member for West Kimberley held a brief for any particular part of the colony. The hon. member represented a district in the North—

MR. A. FORREST: I am mayor of the City.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member represented a district more remarkable for the largeness of its acres than for the brains of the individuals it produced.

MR. A. FORREST said he was not produced there.

MR. GEORGE: No; otherwise the constituency would not have had brains enough to return the hon. member. A sneer had been raised at him (Mr. George) for leaving the City Council. This was not the place to explain his reason for leaving the Council, nor to ask the hon. member for West Kimberley why he (Mr. A. Forrest) left the City Council in such a muddle as he did two years ago, and paved the way for such a display of mayoral incompetency as the colony had never seen before, and, it was to be hoped, would not see again.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order.

MR. GEORGE said he was a ratepayer, and not a small one, and yet it seemed to be regarded as a piece of impudence on his part to point out what appeared to him to be of interest to the Commissioner of Railways and to the ratepayers of Perth. He was not asking the Commissioner to declare his policy, and he hoped the hon. gentleman would not allow himself to be dictated to by the autocrat, at any rate, of the Assembly.

MR. HUBBLE congratulated the Commissioner on the very able way in which the railways had been carried on during the last twelve months. Some eighteen months ago, there was a great block at Fremantle, and a great outcry against the Government; but the Government coped with the block in the best way possible under the circumstances. It was all very well for hon. members, who did not know the "ins and outs" of affairs, to criticise, but if they had resided in Fremantle, as he had done for the last 12 years, they would have formed very different opinions.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The shelter sheds referred to by the hon. member for the Murray were

in existence on the South-Western line some three or four years ago. The department were now altering the state of affairs complained of by reversing the lines, and putting new stations on the other side, so that he thought this should meet the wishes both of the hon. member and of his constituents. Wherever the circumstances warranted the putting an officer in charge of a station, he had it done. Nearly all the places which a year ago had no one in charge were in charge of someone now. This policy would be carried out so far as was possible. There would soon be little cause of complaint. With regard to the William Street crossing, he had ten deputations coming to see him about that, and he would not say much about it till he had seen them. He would, however, say that it was the intention of the Government to increase the width of the overhead bridge for passengers. Those who loitered on the bridge, as the hon. member complained, would be asked to move on, although he felt rather grateful to them for the evident interest they took in, and for the admiring comments they passed on, the work of the department. It was intended that another platform should be erected, and in three or four weeks he hoped to see the commencement of a bridge leading down to the platform from the overhead platform, thus enabling passengers to come down by the bridge and go on to the platform. There would be an entrance from Beaufort Street proper to the platform. This would enable passengers to use the platforms without having to go in the square to enter by the main entrance in the event of the gates being closed. He hoped the public would bear with the present arrangements for a time, remembering that the department were doing all they could to effect improvements. Designs were being prepared to widen the Beaufort Street bridge to double its present width, and the work would be placed in hand immediately the designs were ready. The change would be made on the south-eastern side of the present structure. That would give extra convenience to people travelling by that route. With regard to the closing of the Wellington Street gates, that had not been done till after the matter had been fully considered. He would see that some sort of wicket-gate was put up for the

convenience of passengers. With regard to the other matters mentioned by the hon. member, he had no intention of introducing the eight-hours system. The present system worked admirably. Taking into consideration the fact that the work was not of a very laborious character, he did not think any change was required.

MR. OLDHAM congratulated the hon. gentleman who administered the Railway Department on the great success that had been achieved. He wished, however, to draw attention to the expenditure on the Mullewa-to-Cue railway. When the construction of this line was finished, something like £30,000 remained unexpended; but in consequence of some wash-aways he understood the committee was to be asked to allow nearly the whole of this money to be spent on embankments, etc., and that another £30,000 would be necessary for the construction of the line. If the line had been properly designed in the first instance, a very few more thousands would have been sufficient to cope with the wash-aways.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS said that only those who were intimately acquainted with that part of the Murchison through which the railway in question passed could have anticipated the great havoc and damage done to the railway by the recent flood. There was no evidence of any watercourses, and provision was only made for a fall of water which was considered likely to fall. The four or five inches which fell at one time, inundating the whole country and causing the wash-aways that occurred, could never have been anticipated by those who knew nothing of the country; and the evidence the engineers had, though they made every inquiry, did not justify them in constructing waterways. If provision had been made beforehand for the whole of the flow which actually occurred in connection with that rainfall, it would have meant the construction of a bridge for miles, as it would have been impossible to provide waterways for the great bulk of water which fell. It was proposed to put in fairly large openings where necessary, but both he and the engineers quite anticipated a recurrence of the difficulty if there was a recurrence of heavy rainfall. All the engineering skill they possessed

would not obviate this without going to the expense of putting in very lengthy bridges. Only one other course could be taken, and that was to lay the line level with the surface, and let the whole of the water flow over it; but if the rain continued for days or weeks, that method would not be safe, as the rails would sink into the surface. If the rainfall were not of an abnormal character, he proposed to provide for it by putting in fairly large openings to the ordinary drains. With regard to the rails ordered from England, he might say that these had not yet left London. In consequence of the great business that had sprung up in connection with the Coolgardie line, the rails had been ordered to go on to Fremantle instead of to Geraldton, and they would be made use of for putting in 50 miles of line on the Yilgarn railway, which was urgently required. Unless arrangements were made to re-rail that line, not only would additional expense have to be incurred, but a great delay would be caused. When the time came, the Government would replace these rails.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then the Commissioner admitted stealing the Nannine rails.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That would not be charged to the Nannine line, but to the open railway vote, and, of course, it would be spent for the purpose of renewing the rails on the Yilgarn railway.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would the Commissioner replace the rails?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: When Parliament found the money for the continuance of the line to Nannine, the rails would be forthcoming.

MR. A. FORREST said he happened to be on the railway when the great flood referred to by the Commissioner occurred. There was no doubt that the engineers who surveyed the line had had no experience in the Murchison country, otherwise they would have laid the rails in quite a different way. Anyone who knew the Murchison country was aware that it was subject to floods, that there were few waterways, and that the country was frequently under water. The whole of the country between the Murchison and Mount Magnet was at times under water. It was a low country covered with small creeks, and anyone who travelled through

it could see that the whole of it would be flooded at times. And the Government, when it took over this line, would have to be prepared to spend from £20,000 to £50,000 in repairing wash-aways. The Government, in the first instance, had constructed this line in the cheapest possible way—no doubt in the interests of the country, for the House would never have agreed to spend £4,000 or £5,000 a mile upon it. It was because of the risk of wash-aways that the contractors were not prepared to hand over the line until the contract was completed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was one difficulty about this railway line which he would like the Minister to explain. In the estimate for the construction of this line, an amount of some £400,000 was put down. Of this sum, £200,000 was supposed to be for construction, exclusive of rails and fastenings. The railway contract was let for £64,000; so that there was, on the face of it, a balance of £136,000 to the credit of that vote. He understood that £12,000 had been expended for wash-aways; and, even if another £10,000 or £12,000 were added to that amount, the question still remained: what had become of the balance of the vote carried for the purpose of constructing this railway from Mullewa to Cue? Had the amount been absorbed, even if we put on another £12,000 for water?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: £40,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Even so, the remainder of the balance of £136,000 still had to be accounted for.

THE PREMIER: Only £36,000 was shown last year.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was said that £40,000 had been spent for water.

THE PREMIER: It had not been spent yet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then that was a point gained; though it did not appear where it could be spent.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Water would have to be got from the Nannine river. If the hon. member would leave the question until to-morrow, he could get full information about it in dealing with the Loan Estimates. It was a public works matter.

MR. LYALL HALL: The Commissioner of Railways was to be congratulated on the very satisfactory statement

he had placed before the committee, which was particularly gratifying in its financial aspect. Yesterday he had been informed by a gentleman who had just returned from Geraldton, and who had had 28 years' experience in Victoria, that our railways were better ballasted than those of that colony, and that, although he had been travelling on a narrow-gauge line, he had not felt so much oscillation as in Victoria, where the broad gauge existed. He would like to draw the attention of the Commissioner to the importation of young Englishmen to fill positions in his department. As an Australian, he (Mr. Hall) believed in giving our own young men a show; and it was all bosh to say that it was necessary to import men from England. We could find men here—if not in Western Australia, at least in the other colonies—to fill any positions in the railway service. As everyone was aware, the reason for this was that the chief men in the department were from England; and the antipathy of the Englishman to anything colonial was well known.

MR. WALLACE: With reference to wash-aways, without reflecting on the Engineer-in-Chief's department, he might say that, if its officers had made a proper survey of Yalgoo, they would have found that it lay in a basin surrounded by hills; and they might have easily ascertained that the high water-mark, in ordinary seasons, was considerably above the level estimated by them. Another matter was that on the Mullewa-Cue line there were two stations which would not be used by the present generation. There were no settlers in the country, nor was there anything around them that would make them of any use.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave granted to sit again.

#### MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.5 p.m. until the next day,

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 15th December, 1897.

Paper Presented—Criminal Appeal Bill: discharge of order—Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Bill: in committee; divisions on Clause 20 and postponed Clause 7—Noxious Weeds Bill: second reading (negatived)—Streets and Roads Closure Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 5 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By THE MINISTER OF MINES: Loan Estimates of Expenditure for 1897-8.  
Ordered to lie on the table.

#### CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

##### DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: I move that the Order of the Day be discharged. I do this because I do not think there is the slightest chance of this Bill receiving attention and passing through another place and becoming law this session; but I hope at some future date to again bring forward the Bill, and have it passed into law.

Put and passed, and the Order discharged.

#### SALE OF LIQUORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE:

Clauses 1 to 6, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 7—Sale or possession of adulterated liquor:

HON. F. T. CROWDER moved that in line 6 the words "salicylic acid" be struck out. If these words were left in, there was not a publican in the country who would not be liable to be fined. There was not a drop of lager or English bottled beer which did not contain this acid, which was used to preserve the beer. The salicylic acid was only used in small portions, and did no harm.

HON. A. B. KIDSON: Would the hon. member tell the committee what effect this acid had upon human beings?

HON. F. T. CROWDER: If the acid were taken by the spoonful, it would be injurious, but in small quantities it did no harm at all. Some time ago the Govern-