

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 3rd December, 1902.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—INDIAN-BRITISH SUBJECTS, FACTORIES AND SHOPS BILL.

HON. A. G. JENKINS presented a petition from Indian-British subjects resident in Perth and elsewhere in Western Australia, praying that Clauses 49, 74, and 75 of the Factories and Shops Bill be eliminated or modified so as to exclude from their operation Indian-British subjects.

Petition received, read, and ordered to be considered in conjunction with the Factories and Shops Bill.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: Annual Progress Report of the Geological Survey for the year 1901.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—RABBIT-SKINS EXPORTED.

HON. R. G. BURGESS asked the Minister for Lands: If he can give the value of rabbit-skins exported from the State during the last twelve months.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: During the twelve months ended 1901 the value of rabbit-skins exported was £5. Since the 1st January last no skins have been exported.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CROSSING CLOSED, COOLGARDIE.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM asked the Minister for Lands: If the Government has considered the question of compensation for depreciation in value of property to owners in the vicinity of Pell's Crossing, Coolgardie, on account of the closing of the same.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: Pell's Crossing was closed on account of its dangerous position, and the Commissioner is not aware how any depreciation of property could arise thereby.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE-TO-GOLD-FIELDS RAILWAY SURVEY.

HON. A. G. JENKINS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Will the Government endeavour to get the survey of the Eastern Goldfields to Esperance railway completed before the present estimated date, the end of 1903. 2, Will the Government increase the numbers of the survey parties to enable them to more expeditiously complete the survey.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The survey is being proceeded with as speedily as possible, but it is not anticipated the work will be completed before the present estimated date. 2, There is nothing to justify increasing the numbers of the survey parties. To do so would add materially to the cost, without adequately expediting progress.

QUESTION—POISON LANDS EXCHANGED.

HON. C. A. PIESSE asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Have any poison lands in the Kojonup district been given in exchange for land at the Mundaring Weir. 2, If so, what is the acreage so exchanged. 3, The name of the person or persons with whom such exchange was made. 4, The reason for such exchange, and by whom recommended. 5, Was the land given in exchange improved. 6, If not, have the Government provided for such improvements in accordance with the Land Act before issue of title.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No; but land has been given in other districts. 2, 111,262 acres held under poison lease were granted in fee simple in exchange for 166,894 acres,

also held under poison lease by the same syndicate. 3, The Occidental Syndicate, Limited, London. 4 (a.) It was thought desirable for the prevention of pollution of the catchment area that the Government should, if possible, acquire all the lands within it, and by this exchange more than half such area was obtained; (b.) that as the owners of the leases in question were, in other parts, vigorously carrying on the work of eradicating the poison, and otherwise complying with the conditions which would entitle them to the Crown grants, there was no reason to suppose that they could not or would not do the same on these leases in the catchment area, and once having obtained the grants, or even if the matter had been left till they had commenced spending money on the land, the cost to the Government to obtain the land would be vastly more; (c.) before the exchange was effected, certain by-laws affecting the catchment area were gazetted which rendered it practically impossible for the poison lessees within the area to carry out the conditions of their leases without infringing the by-laws; the enforcement of these by-laws would have given the syndicate a cause of action against the Government. The exchange was recommended by the late Engineer-in-Chief and Under Secretary for Lands. 5 and 6, No.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE WATER SUPPLY, QUANTITY, ETC.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What was the reduced level of the water in the Mundaring reservoir, and the corresponding volume of water indicated on December 1st, 1902. 2, What quantity of water has been used by consumers during the two months October and November, 1902. 3, How far was the water advanced in the pipes on December 1st, 1902.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—1, The reduced level was 380·91 feet, and the corresponding volume of water was 712 million gallons above lowest outlet level. 2, In October, 3,025,000 gallons; in November, 3,587,000 gallons. 3, The water in the pipe main reached the receiving tank at No. 7 Pumping Station (Gilgai), 250½ miles from Mundaring Reservoir, on 1st 1st December, 1902.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, PORT HEDLAND TO INLAND GOLDFIELDS.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (for Sir E. H. Wittenoom) asked the Minister for Lands: Whether the Government have taken, or intend taking, any steps to provide railway communication between Port Hedland and the inland goldfields; and if not, why not.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: No; not at present.

RETURN—PUBLIC SERVICE RETRENCHMENT, COMPENSATION.

On motion by Hon. J. M. DREW, ordered: That a return be laid upon the table of the House showing: 1, The number of civil servants, with less than eight and more than four years' service, who have been retrenched, or have received notice of retrenchment, since 1st June, 1902. 2, The names and the respective periods of service of all such civil servants who have received compensation, or been promised compensation, under the provisions of the Superannuation Act or otherwise. 3, The amount of compensation paid or promised in each instance.

PAPERS—RAILWAY CROSSING CLOSED, COOLGARDIE.

HON. G. BELLINGHAM (South) moved:—

That all papers in connection with the closing of Pell's Crossing, Coolgardie, be laid on the table of the House.

The Commissioner of Railways had acted in a most arbitrary manner in closing a certain crossing in the vicinity of Coolgardie, known as Pell's Crossing, which had been open to the public ever since the railway was constructed. The crossing was shown on the Government plans of sale, and the land, owing to its proximity to the town, consequent on the facilities of approach afforded by the crossing, had brought high prices. Now the crossing had been closed without a moment's notice, with the result that residents instead of being within three or four minutes' walk of the town had to take a circuitous, uphill route, involving ten or fifteen minutes' walking. Moreover, in consequence of absence of notice, a cyclist had run into the fence on the evening of the day on which it was erected, with the result that he had sustained serious injuries and was likely to lose a limb. In

view of the personal damage and of the depreciation in the value of land resulting from the action of the Commissioner, he desired to have the papers laid on the table. The Town Council of Coolgardie would probably take action in the matter.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (South) seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

ROADS BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BREAD BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BROOME TRAMWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. M. L. MOSS (Minister): In moving the second reading of this Bill, I need only say that the Public Works and Railway Departments consider it necessary that a short tramway, two miles and four chains in length, should be constructed in connection with the jetty at the townsite of Broome for the purpose of facilitating shipping operations. The Bill is hardly more than a formal measure, and there is no reason to delay the House by an elaborate speech.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Will this tramway facilitate the handling of stock?

HON. M. L. MOSS: The object of the tramway is to facilitate the shipping of stock, as of all other shipping.

HON. W. MALEY: What will the gauge of the tramway be?

HON. M. L. MOSS: The gauge is bound to be three feet six inches.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: Not necessarily.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Then, my answer is that I do not know exactly. This small line of two miles four chains is not expected ever to become portion of the railway system of the State. It is intended for nothing except the facilitation of shipping operations.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ASHBURTON TRAMWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. M. L. MOSS (Minister): In moving the second reading, I need do no more than say the Bill is of the same character as that which has just passed through the Committee stage. The length of the tramway is four miles 32 chains. Under the Act it is necessary to lay on the table of the House the plans of the proposed lines. There are two plans, one for Ashburton and the other for Broome. Any member will find all the information he desires on those maps. I move the second reading.

HON. W. T. LOTON (East): Will the hon. member tell us whether these lines are to be constructed out of loan or ordinary revenue?

HON. M. L. MOSS: I will undertake to supply the information to the hon. member to-morrow, before we proceed with the third reading.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON (North): Is this a new departure or has it anything to do with the present tramway? There is a tramway now from the town of Ashburton to the jetty. Is this a new tramway?

HON. M. L. MOSS: It seems to be an entirely new line.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN would like the Minister to give the necessary figures with regard to this. As far as he could learn there was a tramway service from the head of Ashburton jetty to the Ashburton townsite.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: A memo. should be sent down to the Minister in charge to show why these works were constructed.

HON. G. RANDELL: An estimate of the cost, too.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes. At any rate, there should be some explanation to the House.

HON. M. L. MOSS moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again. He undertook to give full information to the Committee. He owed the Committee some apology, and it was not his fault.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

LEONORA TRAMWAY BILL

SECOND READING.

HON. M. L. MOSS (Minister), in moving the second reading, said: This measure differs from the preceding ones, being an application to confirm a provisional order. Under the Tramways Act of 1885 power is given to enable tramways to be constructed in various towns. The municipality of Leonora have determined to construct a tramway in that municipality, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the provisional order contained in the schedule to the Bill now before the House. In Section 13 of the Tramways Act, it is provided that:—

On proof to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Railways of the completion of such publication as aforesaid, the Commissioner of Railways shall, as early as possible in the first ensuing session of the Legislative Council, procure a Bill to be introduced into the Legislative Council in relation to such provisional order for an Act to confirm the provisional order, which shall be set out at length in the schedule to the Bill; and until confirmation, with or without amendment, by Act of the Legislative Council, a provisional order under this Act shall not have any operation.

The municipality of Leonora decided that it was in the best interests of that community that they should undertake the laying down and maintaining of a tramway as set forth in this provisional order. The promoter of this provisional order is the Leonora municipality itself. These are municipalised works, and the tramway is to be constructed on the two-feet gauge. I believe the matter has received every consideration in the Leonora municipality. All they are asking Parliament for is power to carry out the provisions of Sec. 13 of the Tramways Act, 1885. The Commissioner of Railways has shown, by his signature at the end of the provisional order, that he is satisfied the tramline is in the best interests of that community, and that the provisional order should be confirmed. I have much

pleasure in moving that the Bill be read a second time.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): Section 9 of the Tramways Act of 1900 is really absolutely necessary, I think, for the protection of the telephone service. There was serious detriment to the telephone service of Perth which occurred by the introduction of tramways in this city, and I think it is desirable every provisional order confirmed by the Legislative Council should have the provision I mention included in it, namely Section 9.

HON. M. L. MOSS: I was going to ask if some member from the goldfields would inform us whether at Leonora there is a telephone service?

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: No.

HON. G. RANDELL: Is there a telegraph service?

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes.

HON. M. L. MOSS: In the Fremantle Tramways Act of 1900 provision is made that—

Whenever any telephone service is erected prior to the construction of the tramways, and is prejudicially affected by the construction or working of the tramways, the Postmaster General may, at the cost of the promoter and his assigns, do all such things as may be necessary to protect the telephone service from being so affected, either by placing the same on the metallic circuit system or otherwise.

I believe all the telephones put up now are on the metallic circuit system. This is a federal matter. The hon. member is justified in mentioning it; but I hardly think the provision made in the case of the Fremantle tramways would apply to Leonora. So far as I am concerned, if any member wishes to move that a similar provision be inserted in the Bill, I do not say that I should oppose it; but I hardly think it is necessary, in view of the fact that there is no telephone service there.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 5, inclusive—agreed to. Schedule:

HON. G. RANDELL: It was desirable to take every precaution with regard to future development. He wished to ask the Minister whether the provisional order was of the same character as the previous ones, which provided all necessary

protection for persons who might be interested.

HON. M. L. MOSS said he had read the provisional order. He knew of no vested rights that were in any way interfered with, and he thought every precaution was afforded. The municipality would have all the running powers.

Schedule passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

RABBIT PEST BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson), in moving the second reading, said: This is a Bill to deal with the rabbit pest. The measure is designed to enable us to fight better that great pest which threatens us from the side of the Eastern States. I have to point out that the nature of the Bill is purely tentative. As time advances, we shall have to advance our measures. Under this Bill the Government do not propose to establish boards of any kind whatever, for it is thought that, at all events while the pest is in its initial stage, the Government of the country ought from the public revenue to provide the funds necessary to fight an evil such as that now menacing the State. Western Australia is fortunate, I may say, in benefiting by the experience of the various Eastern States which have had to fight the rabbit. Even so lately as 1902, this very year, New South Wales has passed a Rabbit Act, on which to a large extent this Bill is based. I say at once that the conditions provided by the Bill are stringent and severe. Exception may be taken to the measure on that score by some who possibly think that property may be affected, but I would ask those of that opinion to reflect for a moment that unless every necessary power is placed in the hands of those charged with the work of repelling the pest, success cannot attend the effort. Those administering the measure must be armed with as full powers in working against this living danger of the rabbit pest as is the physician or surgeon when working against the living danger of disease. In curing disease there must be no half measures, and in dealing with the

rabbit pest half measures are equally inadmissible. The Government propose no half measures: the Minister controlling the Act is to be provided with really great powers; but I maintain that those powers are absolutely necessary if the Bill is to be of any use whatever. Better not place the measure on the statute book at all if the powers of him who administers the Bill are to be diminished. That, shortly, is my view of the position. The Minister must have very definite powers, and those powers he must bring into force at once and without hesitation. The first, the preventive part of the measure, proposes the erection of a Government fence. The second part of the Bill deals with the destruction of the pest: in case it should get the better of us in any particular region, we provide every means of destroying. Practically, the Act is divided into two parts, prevention and destruction. As for prevention, Clauses 9 to 13 authorise the Minister to erect fences, and provide that—

For such purpose, all persons acting under the authority of the Minister may, at any time, and from time to time, enter upon any private land and make all necessary surveys and do all necessary work.

The Minister may fence across roads or travelling stock routes, and no compensation shall be payable for anything lawfully done under this measure. As I have said, the powers granted are considerable, and I hope the House will recognise the necessity for them. Under Clause 13, not the Minister, but be it noted—

The Governor may, by regulations made under the Land Act, (1.) Require any selector or lessee of land abutting upon the barrier fence, or any other fence erected by the Government under this Act, to pay not more than one-half of the value of so much of the fence as is on the boundary of the land. (2.) Prescribe the instalments in which such payment shall be made. (3.) Require any such person to contribute not more than one-half of the expenses of or incidental to the maintenance and repair of such fence.

That provision may seem a little harsh, but we have to bear in mind that the fence erected by the Governor will directly advantage the holder of land adjacent to the fence. Therefore, it is but reasonable that such holder should pay half the value of the Government fence along his boundary.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not half, surely!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think half is more than reasonable in such a case; but no doubt we shall hear the hon. member presently on the point. Clauses 14 to 20 make every provision for the erection of private fences in certain quarters. Exception has been taken to the definition of "rabbit-proof" fence under Clause 14. I have heard it stated that barbed wire ought to be required, so that the fences may keep out dogs as well as rabbits. If hon. members think the amendment desirable, it can of course be made in Committee. Certainly, the matter is open to discussion and consideration. It must be remembered, however, that in some regions where rabbits have to be excluded there are no dogs to shut out; and therefore it is questionable whether the proposal to specify barbed wire ought to be entertained. However, the advisability of this course has been strongly urged in some parts of the State. Under Clause 15, a certificate that a fence is rabbit proof may be required from the chief inspector by the owner of a fence, and that certificate will be *prima facie* evidence in courts of law. A private fence also may cross a road. Clause 17 compels the owner of adjoining land to contribute half the value of a private rabbit-proof fence, in the same way as he has to contribute half the value of the Government fence. Then follows the important proviso that—

A contribution shall not be payable where the Court as hereinafter constituted is of opinion that the rabbit-proof fence has been erected, or the fence has been made rabbit proof, otherwise than *bona fide* for the purpose of excluding or destroying rabbits.

Clause 20 provides for the constitution of the Court—

Every claim to contribution shall be determined, and the amount of contribution (if any) assessed by a Court consisting of the magistrate of the nearest Local Court and two assessors, one to be appointed in the prescribed manner by the owner or occupier claiming contribution, and one by the owner or occupier of the adjoining land against whom contribution is claimed.

I think we shall be safe in trusting a court of that kind with the duty of deciding whether the fence has been erected *bona fide* for the purpose of excluding rabbits. Clause 18 makes provision for contributions to the cost of

construction, whilst under Clause 19 adjoining holdings must contribute half the cost of maintenance of the fence. Clauses 21 to 27 make provision for the encouragement of rabbit-proof fencing. The most important of this group of clauses is perhaps Clause 22:—

Before any wire netting or other appliances are supplied, the applicant shall execute a mortgage of the land, to secure the repayment of the cost with interest at the rate of four pounds per centum per annum, by equal annual instalments of the prescribed amount, extending over a period not exceeding twenty years.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How will the owner do that, if his land is already mortgaged?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In that case, he certainly cannot do it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Then what is the use of the clause?

MEMBER: A second mortgage may be taken.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I say at once that I may decline to take a second mortgage, as not being sufficient security. Where a large first mortgage exists, a second mortgage cannot be regarded as security sufficient to justify the advance of public funds. Everything, of course, depends on the amount of the first mortgage and on the value of the security. Clause 23 throws on the occupier or owner of land the duty of maintaining and repairing a fence, and imposes in default a penalty not exceeding £5 per day for every day over which such default continues. Under Clause 24, the Minister may enter property for the purpose of repairing fences and may recover from the occupier or owner the expense of the work. Clause 26 is most important. It provides that the owner may be required to join in a mortgage on application by the occupier. Circumstances may render it necessary that the owner shall also become responsible for the security of the mortgage money.

MEMBER: An occupier cannot mortgage.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not without the consent and the assistance of the owner. The payment by annual instalments as between occupier and owner is provided by Clause 26. Part V. of the Bill makes provision for the destruction of rabbits. This part will in time become very important indeed; even

at present it is not unimportant. Clause 36 provides that wherever rabbits exist the natural enemies of the rabbit are to be protected. In a large measure we must depend for the destruction of a few rabbits scattered about a district on the natural enemies of rabbits: birds, reptiles, or other animals. Clause 44 also is important, and I draw attention to it because, in a sense, it is extremely drastic:—

Any person who, without the license in writing of the Minister, pays or offers to pay any bonus or scalp money as a reward for the destruction of rabbits shall be liable for every offence to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds. The provision may seem rather harsh, but the reason of it is clear enough; namely, that the offering of a bonus or scalp money for the destruction of rabbits naturally tends rather to the fostering of rabbits. The provision, I may mention, finds a place in the recent Act of New South Wales. Naturally, those making money out of trapping rabbits have an interest in encouraging the pest, the spread of which is thus actually promoted. With a view to obviating this evil, the stringent clause which I have read has been inserted. The House may consider the question whether the operation of the clause should not be restricted to the west side of the Government fence, so that a bonus may be offered on the eastern side of the Government fence. [MEMBERS: No.] The matter is one for consideration. Clause 45 in some measure touches on that aspect of the question, inasmuch as while it provides that:—

Any person who, in any part of the State west of the barrier fence—(a.) Sells, or offers to sell, or exposes for sale any dead rabbit; or (b.) Has in his possession any rabbit skins, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Fifty pounds—

it contains a saving paragraph:—

It is a defence to a charge under this section to prove that the rabbit or rabbit's skin was imported from beyond the State.

The Government believe that there is good ground for this clause. The trapping of rabbits in the Eucla district and on towards the South Australian boundary may become more or less of an industry, and we should offer every encouragement towards their destruction in that neighbourhood. If there really be a large number of rabbits outside the

Government fence, it would be an unwise policy to prevent the offer of a bonus for scalps. Plainly, the rabbits being already there, it is to our advantage that they should be destroyed before they come to our fence. Accordingly, the prohibition of bonuses and rewards applies only on the western side of the fence. However, the matter is one for consideration in Committee. I may remark that, generally, the clauses of this Bill are machinery clauses, designed to attain the very desirable ends of preventing rabbits from entering the State and of destroying those which have already entered it. I do not think that any power which can be vested in the Government of the day for the prevention of what has proved so terrible a calamity to the Eastern States will be too wide. I have seen photographs of fences along which the rabbits in the course of a single night have piled themselves up two feet high, being thus destroyed by means of the fence. At one time it was said that a fence was of no value in keeping out rabbits. The fact I have mentioned shows that the fence is at any rate a first line of defence, showing us where we must keep our boundary riders and where we really can fight the battle with the pest. Curiously enough, it is very doubtful whether a rabbit will climb a fence. They say rabbits will climb a fence; but a rabbit does not seem to have that much sense. It runs against a fence, and other rabbits come up behind it when these tremendous epidemics take place, and the rabbit becomes smothered and destroyed. In one night you will see perhaps two feet of rabbits against a single fence. Thus you can see what very great use a fence may be. We should make provision for its construction in the first place, and in the second place for its maintenance. The fence is being made as rapidly as possible. All the tenders have been let, and fencing materials are arriving very rapidly—40 or 50 miles a month. We are now able to proceed with the work, and are going on with it as rapidly as possible. I commend the measure to you, and I hope members will have no difficulty in supporting its second reading.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (East): I second the motion, and I heartily congratulate the Government on introducing this Bill.

I asked questions some time back. We have now laws on the statute-book of the country, and if they had been carried out they would have done great good without this Bill at all. We have the present Minister, who has now been for some time in office, and I think that if he is in earnest in the matter he ought to have taken this question up more seriously, and carried out the Act existing before this Bill was introduced at all. By means of the Act we have at present, they may have saved the expense of this money altogether. The Minister told us they are getting on with this fence. He says that tenders are taken. I suppose that means as far as the railway line, or a few miles north of the railway from the coast, is concerned. I do not think there are any tenders put up at all for the northern portions of the line; at any rate, I have not seen them. There is no doubt that is going to be perhaps the most important part of this fence. If anyone takes any interest, and reads our daily papers, he must be aware that these rabbits are coming to this State from South Australia. It is all very well to say we should put this on the statute book. We know there are statutes on the book now that are never carried out. If the present Act had been carried out down on the coast the invasion of rabbits would have been kept back for years. That would have been the case if the Government had only carried out the present machinery—those two little Acts on our statute book at present. They could then have made those owners down there, who ought to have protected themselves, poison those rabbits all along that narrow strip of country. It must be known very well to anyone who takes interest in these matters that the body of the rabbits we have in Western Australia are on a narrow strip of good country on the south coast. It is beyond doubt that they are pretty plentiful there. I ask the Minister for Lands if the present Government, or any Government, has taken any steps to try to eradicate them? No. They bring these Bills here to fine people and do all sorts of things when the rabbits come. They cause large sums of money to be spent on rabbit departments. That is what they are doing. If we pass this Bill, let the Government at once see that it is carried

out, or something done to poison that large body of rabbits along the coast. It is of very little use to pass these measures, and as soon as we get away from Parliament think everything is done for 12 months. The Bill will not be worth the time spent upon it, unless something is done by the Government to compel the Rabbit Department to take steps to destroy these rabbits. They have inspectors tracking, like tracking out thieves in the thickets, and burrowing out one or two here, and one or two there. What can they do by that? It is perfectly absurd. To show the way the Government have been handling this matter, I may remind the House of a question I asked to-day regarding the value of rabbit skins exported within the last 12 months. Skins to the value of £5 have been exported, and there may have been a great deal more. I heard from very good authority some few months ago—I will not say whom; perhaps the hon. member who mentioned it may have forgotten it—that rabbit skins have been sold. People who steal gold do not tell anyone about it, and there is very little doubt that there have been a great many more rabbit skins sent away from this State during the last six months than £5 worth. Before the Rabbit Commission it was shown that natives were going out with dogs and killing 40 or 60 rabbits in a couple of hours. There is no doubt that, as the Minister for Lands said, there are some rather severe clauses in this measure. Doubtless they have to be severe. If we are going to spend this large amount of money on the boundary rabbit fence, we must have a strict tax. I am not going to object to that as long as the clause is anything reasonable at all. The only thing I object to is putting these statutes on the statute book, and then not carrying them out at all. Under this Bill a selector may be compelled to pay half the cost of that portion of the fence on his boundary. I think it is rather hard, seeing that the fence will be put up there not only for the benefit of that owner, but for the benefit of all those west or east of the boundary, as the case may be. It would, I say, be rather hard to compel that owner to pay for half of the fence, and also half of the cost of repair. As regards this barbed wire, it would require two or

three barbed wires to make the fence of any value at all. Part V. deals with destruction of rabbits. The Government already have this power, and I say they ought to carry it out at once down on the coast. In the East there are good patches of country along there, and the Government ought to assist those men by sending a rabbit inspector and letting them see if they cannot poison these rabbits, the same as has been done in the other States. No doubt millions of rabbits have been destroyed in the other States by phosphorised corn and other things. If the Government are sincere in this matter, they ought to set to work and carry out what is required. They should show their *bona fides* by destroying these rabbits, where they can do so, at once. With regard to the natural enemies of rabbits being protected, it is all very well; but are we going to pass a measure to protect these rabbits' enemies, and then let all these enemies be on our lands? If we were to protect the eaglehawk in the Eastern districts, we would have hardly any lambs at all. This year eaglehawks were a perfect curse, and, if we were to protect them by law, and not destroy them, they would be pretty well as bad as the rabbits. Although they have been kept down for years, the drought or something or other has driven them in, and they have aggregated, and have been a great source of loss throughout the district. What would it be, if they were protected on large areas of pastoral land?

HON. G. RANDELL: What about Clause 43?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I do not like Clause 43. It is perfectly absurd to keep rabbits. People ought not to be allowed to keep them anywhere at all. I do not think rabbits should be allowed to be kept in the Zoo. There have been a good many down there. The last time I was at Coolgardie, the late Minister for Lands (Hon. C. Sommers)—

HON. C. SOMMERS: That was a male rabbit. What nonsense!

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Others may have come before, and there may have been female rabbits. That was not the first rabbit. Two young rabbits were sent down from Southern Cross the other day. Does the hon. member know what they were? I do not believe he ex-

amined that one. If rabbits were let about the country, we should soon have a stock of them. In one part of Australia several men bought rabbits, but could not keep them, for the animals died off. Then a hobbyist bought rabbits and bred them up. A man told me at Ballarat that a person had all the land fenced in, and some people went there shooting on the estate. They met the foreman, and he said, "You are not allowed to shoot here. They will not allow you to shoot rabbits. If you ask, they may allow you to." He said they could shoot a few. The same man told me the next year that they could bring as many as they liked to shoot rabbits. He has now found what a curse he was breeding. Clause 45 undoubtedly is wanted now. It appears that £5 worth of rabbit skins was exported from this State last year, and that export has been the curse of the Eastern States. An export trade leads to the old rabbits being killed and the young ones allowed to run. The Bill will be useless unless the Government are thorough in their endeavours to stop the invasion of our settled country by rabbits. What is now proposed ought to have been done six years ago, or indeed twenty years ago. Sir John Forrest at the request of a former Commissioner for Crown Lands years back placed £20,000 on the Estimates for this purpose; but the Minister left the Government before the Estimates were passed and the money was spent on something else—probably on something more fashionable at the time. Had a few thousand pounds been spent years ago in the neighbourhood of Eucla, we should have stopped all the rabbits from coming into this State and so endangering the most valuable settled portions of our agricultural land. The small holders of the farming districts will be able to combat the rabbits; they have fought droughts, and they can fight the rabbits; but what about the Northern settlers? When the whole of the North-West of the State is settled, and a water supply is assured, the country will carry much more than the requirements of this State in the way of stock. The rabbits must be stopped, in order that we may feed our own people with meat. Here, on the coast, is a large body of people, and somebody will be always brushing up the Government to keep out the rabbit

pest; but the sooner the Government set to work in earnest to survey the line of fencing and erect a fence to keep the rabbits out of the Northern areas, the better it will be for the State. Either to pass this Bill or try to enforce it will be equally useless if a rabbit-proof fence is not erected to keep the rabbits out of the Northern portions of the State. For, if they get there, they will soon work down into the South, as they are now doing from the Eastern States. I shall not take up the time of the House longer, but shall endeavour to improve various clauses in Committee. I urge the Government to be more energetic in erecting the fence and in trying to get rid of the rabbits that are already, as is well known, within our borders. The Government have hunted up the few burrows scattered about the country, but they have never dealt with that narrow strip on the coast where rabbits are known to exist in thousands, or, as some people declare, in millions. The fact that forty or fifty can be killed with dogs in an afternoon shows they must be fairly plentiful, at any rate. I regret the necessity for dealing with this Bill at all, but undoubtedly the fault lies with previous Administrations. If a few thousands had been spent some years back at Eucla, we should have saved all the enormous expense we are now called upon to bear.

On motion by HON. C. SOMMERS, debate adjourned.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (HON. A. JAMESON): In moving the second reading of this important measure, I have to point out that its primary object is to effect a redistribution of seats. That necessity naturally arises in all such countries as this, with a rapidly increasing population and with expanding industries. Representation must alter with the progress of the State. A redistribution of seats admittedly being absolutely necessary, the Government have thought well at the same time to amend the Constitution Act in such a way that necessity will not arise, at all events for years to come, for again interfering with that Act. In a rapidly developing country

there is naturally a tendency to tinker with the Constitution Act every other year, and therefore this Bill provides that the boundaries of electoral provinces shall be such as may be determined by Parliament. Thus, a Bill dealing entirely with the boundaries of provinces and districts—that is to say a Redistribution of Seats Bill—may be introduced independently altogether of any amendment of the Constitution Act. In the same way, this Bill provides that such matters as the qualifications of electors and members for either House shall be entirely independent of the Constitution Act. Under such conditions the Constitution Act is not so likely to be frequently tampered with—a most undesirable proceeding in connection with so important a Statute. This Bill provides for repeal of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, and also the repeal of the Act to correct certain errors in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899. The original Constitution Act of 1889, of course, remains unrepealed with the exception of Sections 8, 9, 15, 35, and 49. As regards Section 75 of the Constitution Act of 1889, the definition of “person” is repealed. It is difficult to understand how that definition ever got into the Constitution Act. “‘Person’ includes a corporation or association of persons.” We know that companies and associations of persons cannot vote, and therefore cannot be represented in Parliament. That definition is repealed by this Bill. The original Constitution Act, on which our system of self-government is based, will after the passage of this Bill still remain in force with the modifications I have referred to. Perhaps the most startling clause of this Bill is No. 4, which provides that:—

On the thirty-first day of May, one thousand nine hundred and three, this present Parliament shall expire and determine, and all members of the Council and Assembly shall vacate their seats.

Precedent exists for this course, which has been adopted in South Australia, and is, I believe, about to be adopted in Victoria. The question whether the clause shall come into force in so far as the Council is concerned is one which, I feel sure, will receive the anxious consideration of hon. members. I see some difficulty in amending the Constitution as proposed unless

the clause be applied to both Houses. The real question at present before us is whether the time is ripe for an amendment of the Constitution. A number of the amendments proposed by this Bill are most desirable, and will, I feel sure, receive a large measure of approval and support from every member of the House; but the primary question is whether the time is ripe for amending the Constitution, and the onus and responsibility of deciding that question now rests with this House. I think it well to put that point clearly before dealing with the amendments proposed. Clause 7 provides that the Council shall consist of 24 members, which means a reduction of 6, our present number being 30. Hon. members may be interested to learn the relationship of Council to Assembly in the Eastern States. In New South Wales the Council has 65 members and the House of Assembly 125; in Victoria the Council numbers 48 and the Assembly 95; the South Australian Council consists of 18 members and the Assembly of 42; the Tasmanian Council numbers 19 members and the Assembly 38; whilst Queensland has 38 members in the Council as against 72 in the Assembly. It will be seen, therefore, that this Chamber with a membership of 24 will stand in much the same proportion to an Assembly of 48 members as do the Legislative Councils of the Eastern States to their respective Houses of Assembly. This Bill treats the Council slightly more liberally, on the whole, than the Councils of the sister States are treated in respect of membership. Clause 8 provides that the State shall be divided into 12 electoral provinces, and that each province shall return two members to the Council. Thus we shall have 12 provinces each returning two members in place of 10 provinces each returning three. Clause 9 reads:—

The boundaries and name of each electoral province shall be such as may be determined by Parliament.

This clause is most important, inasmuch as it provides that a measure outside the Constitution Act will deal with any alteration which may be necessitated by the development of the State from time to time in the boundaries of provinces. Increase and movement of population may demand the widening or narrowing of boundaries, and it has been thought

well to provide that such demands may be met without an amendment of the Constitution Act being involved. I consider the innovation a highly desirable one. Clause 10 provides that the qualifications of a member of the Council shall be the same as those of a member of the Assembly. The qualification for membership of this Chamber at present is that a man shall be 30 years of age and shall have lived in the State for two years. The qualification for membership of the Legislative Assembly, as specified by Clause 30, is an age of 21 and a year's residence. The alteration is one which some believe will render this House more liberal. I do not know, however, that the constitution of the Chamber will be materially affected; nor can I regard the matter as highly important. Comparatively few men so young as one and twenty would either find or avail themselves of an opportunity of entering this Chamber. The amendment is not so important as one might be at first disposed to believe. The tenure of members is not altered in so far as the six years are concerned, but the rotation of members is. Instead of two members for each province, the rotation would take place so that one member for each province would vacate his seat on the 21st May in the third year after his election, and the other on the 21st May in the sixth year after his election. Instead of being the second, fourth, and sixth years they would be the third and the sixth. Under Clause 18 a quorum of this House would be a half of the full number, in place of one-third as it is at the present time.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What is the reason of the change?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The reason of the change, I presume, is that eight members would be a very small quorum indeed. If you have 24 members as the full number, eight would seem a very small number to decide important measures. I think there ought to be some 12, but at the same time I consider that if this applies to the Council it should also apply to the House of Assembly, in Clause 35. It will be seen that under Clause 23 "the qualification of electors of members of the Council shall be such as may be determined by the Parliament." That is important in so far as the Constitution Act will no longer

have anything to do with the qualification of electors. That would be decided by the Electoral Act, and then again it will never be necessary or rarely necessary to interfere with this Constitution Bill, and I think members will agree that it is undoubtedly a very grave thing to interfere and tamper with the Constitution of the State. It ought to be considered very, very carefully, and I am sure this honourable House will give the measure most careful attention, such attention as it has received in another place. We cannot but give it every attention here, and consider it with the very greatest care and anxiety. Under Clause 26 no person is to be registered more than once for any one province. This, I think is a very reasonable provision. These are the clauses dealing with the Legislative Council, and, in regard to the Legislative Assembly, members will see the provisions are that there shall be 48 members, that the State shall be divided into 48 electoral districts, each of which shall return one member for the Assembly. Again, the boundaries of these districts shall be determined by Parliament from time to time under another Act! Members will find in Clause 30 the qualifications of the members of the Assembly, and under Clause 31 the duration of the Assembly may be three years. Clauses 32 to 36 deal with the question of the Speaker. The Speaker may be removed by a vote of the Assembly—Subclause 2 of Clause 32. That is thought to be a very reasonable provision. It does not exist at the present time. Clause 42 provides that no person shall be entitled to vote more than once at the same election of members of the Assembly. That is one man one vote, which we so often hear about. At general elections all elections are to take place on the same day:—"After any general election, the Parliament shall be summoned to meet not later than thirty days after the day appointed for the return of the writs." This is an important provision: "A member of either House of the Parliament shall be incapable of being elected and of sitting as a member of the other House." Members will see under Clause 49 the disqualifications, which are the same as at present. I would like to refer to Clause 57, and this is a distinct innovation. You will see that, "Any Minister

of the Crown who is a member of the Council or of the Assembly may at any time sit in the House of which he is not a member for the purpose of explaining the provisions of any Bill introduced by him, or relating to or connected with any department administered by him, and may take part in any debate or discussion therein on such Bill, but he shall not vote except in the House of which he is an elected member." Thus, a Minister of this Chamber may appear in the other place to explain his particular measure. This is a question that wants to be very carefully considered by members in this Chamber, for undoubtedly it is a very distinct innovation, and it is doubtful whether it may not interfere in some measure with the prerogative of this Chamber. I think it wants very careful consideration. I believe in the first instance this law existed in Cape Colony, South Africa, and there was a very good reason for it there, as there are so many conflicting elements; there are Dutch, English, and the native elements, and many conflicting elements with two languages may make it desirable in many instances for the Minister of one House to pass to another. I may say also I believe that in Victoria this is about to be the case. It is proposed, at all events, to have this innovation, and it may there be carried. I should like for my own part—I cannot say exactly what I think about it myself. I should like this House to consider the matter very carefully. Certainly I shall say what I think about Subclause 3.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Is it not a vote of censure upon you?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think so. I am first a member of this House, and in the second place a Minister.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: But they do not trust you.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I want particularly to speak on Subclause 3, which I have no hesitation in saying I cannot support. That subclause provides that "Any member of Parliament who introduces a Bill to either House of Parliament, which is transmitted by message to the other House, may, in either of such cases, take part in the other House in any discussion on such Bill or motion." This is the first step towards combining the Houses and having

one Chamber. We had better have a clear understanding that we only want one Chamber before we enter into such a condition of things. The difference is very distinct. The Minister is the representative of the Government of the day for the time being. He is working constantly at a department, which is most complicated. Take the Lands Department, where we have between 200 and 300 officers. It is most complicated and difficult of administration, and it takes a great deal of thought and care to master the details of it; details which cannot possibly be thoroughly mastered in a month or two, as so many members in the Chambers may think. In any business where there are 200 or 300 persons employed, many difficulties must occur in the administration of that department, especially where complex questions arise; therefore if the Minister of that department brings forward a measure, he has probably been studying that measure for some six months or so, and probably during the whole of the recess he has mastered every detail of it. There is some ground for saying it is desirable in the interests of the State and government of the country that the Minister who has the entire details of his department in hand shall come before the Chamber and explain precisely the nature of the measure he wishes to be passed. Members can see that in the case of a Minister it may be desirable that he should be able to speak in either House. I will give you an instance in regard to my own department. I may say it has taken me days and days to instruct the Minister who has to deal with questions of Estimates and so on in the other place as to the actual details of the work done in the department. I have gone through day after day with him, communicating with almost every officer in the department, showing how money was expended, and why it was necessary to expend these moneys. In this House particularly it is felt that, the Minister not being in the other Chamber in regard to the Estimates, at all events, to explain the necessity for the various expenditures, his department may suffer very materially. Thus there is ground or reason why a Minister dealing with a large department in the interests of the State should be able to be present

in either House. But that does not apply to a private member. It appears there is a very great distinction indeed between a private member bringing in a private Bill and a Minister bringing in a Bill which affects the interests of the whole of the State. Clause 58, dealing with the powers of the Houses in respect of legislation, is an important one. The very last measure which I brought before this House—a Bill relating to the rabbit pest, which we have just been dealing with—was, members may remember, introduced by myself into this House, but I was ruled out of order, and the Bill could not be dealt with here owing to certain questions of money arising in connection with the measure. It will be perfectly clear henceforth that there will be no necessity for that. If members read the clause they will see how Bills such as this should be dealt with. All the privileges of our Chamber, at all events, will be clearly defined. Clause 58 provides that: "Proposed laws appropriating revenue or moneys or imposing taxation shall not originate in the Council; but a proposed law shall not be taken to appropriate revenue or moneys, or to impose taxation, by reason only of its containing provisions for the imposition or appropriation of fines or other pecuniary penalties, or for the demand or payment or appropriation of fees for licenses, or fees for service under the proposed law." That is exactly the case with the proposed Bill. It must be perfectly clear that if that had been the law to-day, we could have dealt with the Bill.

HON. G. RANDALL: The Rabbit Bill provides for lending money, and that would block it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We may deal with a Bill that appropriates money, but we cannot deal with a Bill which provides money. That difference is clearly drawn here, and a very valuable addition it would be to our Constitution at the present time, because there seems to be certainly room for a good deal of doubt with regard to that question. The clause says: "The Council may not amend proposed laws imposing taxation, or proposed laws appropriating revenue or moneys for the ordinary annual services of the Government," and so on.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is the present law.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is the present law made perfectly clear.

MEMBER: The very words.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. In Clauses 59, 60, 61, and 62 members will find provision for deadlocks. I may say that these provisions are taken from the Constitution Act of the Commonwealth, and they are a little more liberal in some respects than the Commonwealth law. Members will see that Clause 59 contains the words, "after an interval of three months, the Council or Assembly, in the next session, again passes the Bill." Under Section 57 of the Constitution Act of the Commonwealth, it is the same or the next session. That is to say, it may come on in the same session. Members will see farther that the clause says, "But such dissolution shall not take place within one year before the date of the expiry of the Assembly by effluxion of time." Under the Commonwealth law, the limit is six months before the date of the expiry of the House of Representatives by effluxion of time. Again, under Clause 62, Subclause 2—

Any such amendments which are affirmed by a majority of at least three-fifths of the total number of the members of the Council and Assembly present and voting thereon shall be taken to have been carried.

The Commonwealth Act requires an absolute majority of the total number of members. The provision in this Bill is, perhaps, slightly in favour of the smaller Chamber, and thus the Council will enjoy a slight advantage should this Bill become law. Clause 67 provides—

No responsible Minister of the Crown shall hold office for a longer period than one month unless he is or becomes a member of the Council or Assembly.

This clause is necessary, for certain abuses may, as we know, arise from Ministerial office being held by those not representative of some particular district or province of the country. In the past we have known of abuses in this connection, and it is thought well to prevent them for the future. I do not think I need detain the House longer in dealing with the measure, which I place before hon. members as deserving all careful consideration. Indeed, no less is due to it, as the most important Bill introduced during this session. The measure, although it designs to effect certain alterations in

the constitution of this Chamber and to provide for a dissolution in May next, contains many provisions which have been very carefully thought out and to which a great deal of time and attention has been devoted. Undoubtedly, many members of this House will consider those provisions highly useful and desirable, and worthy, therefore, of being passed into law. A great deal is to be said in favour of the measure, and I can only express my regret that it was not introduced by my colleague (Hon. M. L. Moss), whose legal knowledge would have enabled him to deal better with so important a subject. I have endeavoured to place the various features of the Bill clearly before hon. members. At the same time I feel sure that neither opinions nor explanations from me are needed to commend the Bill to the House. I merely put the measure before hon. members, who I feel sure will give it careful and earnest attention, quite independently of any arguments which either my colleague or myself may advance in its support. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

HON. M. L. MOSS (Minister): I second the motion.

On motion by **HON. J. W. HACKETT**, debate adjourned until the next Wednesday.

DROVING BILL.

AMENDMENT ON COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

The Council having made four amendments in the Bill, and the Assembly having agreed to the same, subject to a farther amendment, this amendment was now considered in Committee.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: By way of compromise, the distance might be made 30 miles in place of 40 as proposed by this Chamber, or 20 as proposed by the Assembly. The definition of "traveling stock" would then read: "Any stock taken or driven, or about to be taken or driven, to any place more than 30 miles from the run upon which such stock were depastured previous to starting." That limit would answer in farming districts, and the reduction made no great difference so far as the large pastoral areas were concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN: The proper course was to move, in the first place, that the

Assembly's amendment be not agreed to. If that motion were carried, a counter amendment might be returned.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM moved that the Assembly's amendment be not agreed to.

Question passed.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM moved, as an amendment on the Assembly's amendment, that "twenty" be struck out, and "thirty" inserted in lieu.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member having moved that the Assembly's amendment be not agreed to, and the motion having been carried, was it now in order to move a farther amendment on the Assembly's amendment?

THE CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order 289, a message ought now to be returned to the Legislative Assembly stating the Council's reasons for not agreeing to the amendment proposed by the Assembly: farther, under Standing Order 290, a schedule of amendments made by the Council on the Assembly's amendments must be prepared, to accompany such message.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER supported the amendment, which was in the nature of a compromise. The Bill ought not to be dropped.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There was no reason why paper and printing ink, to say nothing of the time of Parliament, should be wasted on ill-considered amending Bills introduced by young and thoughtless members. A limit of even 40 miles was insufficient, whilst a limit of 30 miles would mean that every lamb or sheep sent to market would have to be branded with the letter "T," three inches long. Moreover, stockowners would always be liable to visitations by inspectors.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: The branding did not involve much trouble.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: On the contrary, a great deal of trouble. The limit of 30 miles would answer neither in the northern pastoral areas nor in the southern farming districts. The 30-mile limit, moreover, involved necessity for brands and waybills, which, as was well known, were frequently unobtainable at railway sidings. The whole Bill was useless and absurd, and ought to be laid aside.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: When the House went into Committee and the Chairman took the Chair, the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly on the Council's amendment should have been either agreed to with or without farther amendment, or not agreed to. If it was not agreed to, the whole thing went.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It was not agreed to.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Yes; he knew. The amendment being not agreed to, all we could do now was to send back a message to another place with our reasons for disagreeing, but we could not farther amend.

THE CHAIRMAN: We could not farther consider this matter. We had disagreed with the message received from the Legislative Assembly, and all we could do was to send a message with reasons to the Legislative Assembly, saying we disagreed with it.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: When this question first came up, the Chairman informed him that the first thing we were to do was to disagree with the message that came from the Legislative Assembly. In accordance with the ruling he moved that. He found now that it put him in such a position that he could not move an amendment.

HON. C. SOMMERS moved that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

Motion negatived.

HON. G. RANDELL: There was another alternative. He thought Mr. Burgess was perfectly in order. There was a little difficulty. Standing Order 296 said: "The amendments made by the Legislative Assembly shall be then either agreed to, with or without further amendments, or disagreed with, and the original amendments made by the Council insisted on; or the Bill may be ordered to be laid aside." He thought that Mr. Burgess had moved an amendment to the motion of Sir E. H. Wittenoom that the Bill be laid aside.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The motion that the Bill be laid aside could not be put, because the other motion had been put and agreed to. A farther motion might be moved if neither of those were dealt with, but we had already dealt with one of them.

THE CHAIRMAN: We had not dealt with the second part of Standing Order 296, "and the original amendments made by the Council insisted upon."

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It did not allow one to introduce the third alternative, that the Bill might be laid aside.

SIR E. H. WITTENOOM: It seemed to him there was nothing else to do but to draw up reasons why we disagreed with the message from the Legislative Assembly.

HON. M. L. MOSS: We had undoubtedly to appoint a committee to draw up reasons, and he thought we could do that to-morrow. He moved that progress be reported, with the object of appointing a committee to draw up reasons.

Progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6'42 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd December, 1902.

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THE DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair at 2'30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: Alteration to Classification and Rate Book relating to conditions and regulations under which telephone messages will be accepted for transmission over Govern-

ment Railway telephone lines; to discharge of ballast at the Albany Jetty; to sectional season tickets; to return excess fare tickets.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

MR. HOPKINS asked the Premier: If he will arrange for the Friendly Societies Act Amendment Bill to be considered this week.

THE PREMIER replied: Yes.

QUESTION—HEALTH ACT, TO AMEND.

MR. HOPKINS asked the Premier: When is it intended to introduce the promised amendment of the Health Act to make District Boards elective?

THE PREMIER replied: The matter cannot be dealt with this session.

REPORT—STOCK REGULATIONS COMMITTEE.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM brought up the report of the select committee.

Report received, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT—KALGOORLIE ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER SPECIAL LEASE COMMITTEE.

MR. W. ATKINS brought up the report of the select committee.

Report received, and ordered to be printed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from the previous sitting; MR. ILLINGWORTH in the Chair.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT (resumed).

Police, £130,448 2s. 6d.:

MR. MORAN again referred to the advisability of the Government giving early consideration to the question of properly policing the Kimberley district, and to the settlement of the newly explored Kimberley country. The police were more necessary in those North-West parts than they were in Perth. He honestly believed that there we had the finest cattle country in the world. We were badly in need of cattle country