

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 21st November, 1917.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Annual reports of Commissioner of Police and Zoological Gardens and Acclimatisation Committee. Roads Act—By-laws, Wyndham and Hall's Creek. Municipal Corporations Act—By-laws, Albany, Bunbury, Busseton, and Perth.

QUESTION—GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY FARES.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH asked the Colonial Secretary: What is the amount allowed by the Federal railway authorities, to this State, per passenger travelling between Perth and Kalgoorlie on Federal railway tickets?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: First class, 33s. 1d. each way; Second class 22s. each way.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: I move—

That for the remainder of the week the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced and passed through all stages in one day, and all Messages from the Legislative Assembly to be taken into consideration on the day on which they are received; also to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

The reasons for this motion were very fully set out in the Governor's Speech. When the Federal Government announced their intention of taking a further referen-

dum on the question of reinforcing the Australian troops, the Government of Western Australia took the matter into careful consideration and determined that although it would involve both Ministers and members in a good deal of inconvenience, there was no other course open but to make everything else subservient to this great National issue. The only other State Parliament which is in session at the present time is the Parliament of Victoria, and that Parliament also has determined upon a course similar to that which we propose to adopt. That Parliament intends to do purely essential business and then adjourn until February in order that the members there may have an opportunity of taking their part in the referendum campaign. The Government recognised that if we took this course and endeavoured to have a very brief session, it would be futile for us to attempt to deal with matters of importance, because directly we started dealing with matters of importance, we would not know where to stop, and the result might be that no matter with what good intentions we set out, a considerable time would elapse before the business would be completed. Consequently, it was decided that we should not attempt to deal with many things that are important, but confine ourselves to things that are absolutely essential, because we regard the taking of the referendum and the securing of an affirmative vote as infinitely more important than any matter in our State politics. The business before the House pending the adjournment will therefore be confined to non-contentious and absolutely necessary matters. It will include a Privilege Bill, notice of which was given yesterday, and the continuance Bills referred to in the Governor's Speech, namely, a Bill to continue the Roads Act which has been enacted from year to year and which would otherwise expire in December; the Sale of Liquor Regulation Bill which provides for the closing of hotels between the hours of 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. and which will expire on the 31st December unless renewed, and the Postponement of Debts Act which will also expire at the end of this year. The Wheat Marketing Act in its present form gives authority for the handling of the harvest of the 1916-17 season, and it is intended to extend the opera-

tion of that measure so that the Government may be permitted to deal with the harvest of 1917-18. A further Bill containing a number of amendments to the Wheat Marketing Act will be submitted to Parliament on re-assembling in January next, and that will afford an opportunity for any debate which hon. members may consider desirable in regard to the matter generally. The Land and Income Tax Act will be re-enacted, and whatever further form of taxation the Government intend to bring forward will be submitted in another Bill at a later stage. A Supply Bill will also be submitted to enable the affairs of the State to be carried on until Parliament re-assembles. It seems probable to me that hon. members would regard it as somewhat futile to continue at this stage the debate on the Address-in-reply. Hon. members would consider it advisable that that debate should take place when we meet later on for the transaction of the actual business of the session. My only desire is to study the convenience of hon. members in every possible way, and if this motion is agreed to, I would suggest that we complete the other business on the notice paper, that is, the Privilege Bill, and then, instead of waiting on the uncertainty of the business to be dealt with in another place being prepared for us during this evening, we should adjourn until to-morrow afternoon, when I have no doubt the continuance Bills will be ready for our consideration. Having disposed of the formal business, it is then proposed to adjourn until probably the 23rd January next.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.37]: As the business which another place is preparing for this Chamber will not be available for our consideration this evening, I think it would be convenient for country members who might desire to catch their trains to-morrow afternoon, if the House were to meet, as is customary towards the end of the session, at 3 o'clock instead of at 4.30.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.38]: This is a most objectionable way of doing business, but I quite realise that it cannot be done in any other way. I would like to ask the leader of the

House a question with regard to the regulations which were laid on the Table yesterday. A considerable number of these were placed on the Table and I am not quite clear what the position is with regard to them. I am only speaking offhand, but I am under the impression that if no objection is taken to them within 14 days, they *ipso facto* become regulations which have the force of law. I am only asking for information on the subject, and I would like to have some kind of assurance from the Colonial Secretary that an opportunity will be given to members to look into these regulations and if necessary disallowing them at a later stage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [4.40]: With reference to the remarks of Mr. Kirwan my only wish is to study the convenience of hon. members and if it will be more convenient for hon. members to meet at 3 o'clock instead of at 4.30 I shall be quite willing to fall in with the suggestion. The regulations which were laid on the Table of the House yesterday are under a number of different Acts and some of those Acts make certain provision regarding the disallowance of the regulations, while others do not.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Nearly all 14 days.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: My attention was drawn to one set of regulations to which it was thought some objection might be taken and I withheld those from the Table and will not submit them until the House re-assembles after Christmas. If any exception is taken to the regulations, and it appears that through the method we have been forced to adopt this session, any of the privileges of hon. members are being taken away, I can say on behalf of the Government that we will take steps to withdraw the regulations. Hon. members will recognise that in these times it is not easy for the Government to meet the proper conveniences of hon. members, but we will do all we can.

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. W. KIRWAN, leave of absence for the remainder of the

session granted to the Hon. J. Cornell on the ground of absence from the State on military duties.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [443] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short measure of one clause only. Section 49 of the principal Act provides that "every duplicate or special certificate herewith issued shall be of parchment." A difficulty has arisen with regard to obtaining parchment. It is considered not merely as a matter of economy but of necessity as well that we shall substitute paper for parchment in regard to these duplicate certificates. As a matter of fact the opinion has been expressed by the Titles office that paper of the quality now obtainable is preferable to parchment. The number of parchments required in a year is anything up to 10,000, and at the present time there is considerably less than a year's supply available and there is not much prospect of getting any more. I say a year's supply even if the whole of the parchment we could lay our hands on were used for this purpose. If this Bill is passed a great deal of parchment will be available for use in connection with other purposes. It is necessary that the Bill should pass at once because it takes a good time to collect these parchments. All the skins have to be examined and we generally have to get stocks for from nine to twelve months in advance. If the Bill is not put through immediately steps will at once have to be taken to endeavour to secure those parchments which will be necessary. The saving—which cannot be exactly estimated because the number of parchments used from year to year varies considerably—will be from £400 to £600 per annum. The suggestion would not be made for the sake of this saving alone, but for two important elements, one being that in the opinion of those handling the titles the paper now obtainable for the purpose is better than parchment, and the other is that even if we did not determine to do this it is quite likely we would

be forced to do it. Then we should be in difficulties because of the provision of the existing Act. The Bill now before the House provides that the words "every duplicate or special certificate on the title hereafter to be issued shall be in parchment" shall be omitted from the Act in order to provide for this contingency. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [448]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until three o'clock to-morrow afternoon.

I do this at the suggestion of Mr. Kirwan and without having any feelings of my own in the matter at all. I merely wish to carry out the wishes of hon. members.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 1.50 p.m.