

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 8th August, 1894.

Drowning of Seaman Webb near Rockingham—Fremantle Hospital, Erection of; Point of Order; debatable matter contained in question—Inspection of Passengers' Clothing by Customs Officers—Business Days—Extension of Telephone System—Defence Forces Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

DROWNING OF SEAMAN WEBB AT ROCKINGHAM.

THE HON. T. H. MARSHALL asked the Colonial Secretary,—

1. Is he aware that on Sunday, 29th ult., between 2 and 3 p.m., a seaman named Webb, belonging to the barque "Serena," at Rockingham, was drowned.

2. Were steps taken to recover the said seaman's body, and at what time such action to recover same was made.

3. Had the said seaman's body been recovered.

4. If no steps had been taken to recover the said seaman's body, who was to blame for not trying to recover the body.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) replied,—

1. Yes; the seaman was drowned at the South end of Garden Island, and the police at Fremantle received notice of the unfortunate accident at 8 o'clock on the night of the 29th ult.

2. A boat from the "Lochfleet" rescued the other four men who were in the boat with Webb when it was capsized, and the "Lochfleet's" boat also searched for Webb's body. The next day boats from the "Serena" and "Lochfleet" made another search for the body, but failed in discovering it. The beach about Rockingham has been since then continually searched for the body by the police constable stationed there.

3. No.

4. The police are of opinion that the only chance of recovering the body will be if it is washed ashore. I do not think any blame is attached to anyone in the matter.

I may add that I have received the following report from Sub-inspector

McKenna, of Fremantle:—I beg to report for your information that on Sunday, the 29th ult., at 8 p.m., I received a telegram from R. Scott, of Rockingham, informing me that a man named F. Webb, a seaman of the barque "Serena," had been drowned at the South end of Garden Island by the capsizing of the ship's boat, while out fishing. I did not send the water police to make any search for the body, as I considered it would be useless to do anything of the kind. A search was made immediately after the man was drowned, by the boat of the "Lochfleet," which rescued the other four men, who were on board the "Serena" at the time of the accident, but without success. On the following day the "Lochfleet's" boat and the "Serena's" boat made another search, and went along the beach on the Island, and found two of the caps and one hat belonging to the men who were on board the boat at the time of the accident, but could not find the body; and since then the constable at Rockingham has patrolled the beach with a view of finding the body should it wash ashore, which I consider the only chance of the body being found. The body has not been found yet, and the police continue to patrol the beach.

FREMANTLE HOSPITAL—ERECTION OF.

THE HON. T. H. MARSHALL asked the Colonial Secretary when the Government would be prepared to hand over to the Fremantle Municipal Council the sum promised (viz., £1,500) towards the erection of a hospital for Fremantle; so as to allow the said Municipality to proceed building same at once, it (the hospital) being urgently required.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I rise to a point of order. Debatable matter is included in this question, besides which there are absolute mis-statements. In the first place we are told by the junior member for Fremantle that the Government have agreed to hand over a sum of money for the erection of a hospital. No sum was ever promised to be handed over. I find, under Section 83 of our Standing Orders, that on putting a question no argument or opinion shall be offered, and that this question contains. I might also point out to the hon. member that if he had consulted his colleagues I believe

he never would have placed the question on the Notice Paper.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): The hon. member can only state his point of order; he must not make a speech.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: Then I raise the point of order.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): As the hon. member has raised the point, I rule that all the words after "Fremantle" must be struck out.

THE HON. T. H. MARSHALL: Then I beg leave to withdraw the question.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I would sooner answer it.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): The only point now is whether the question shall be withdrawn.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: If the hon. member had consulted his colleagues this question never would have been asked; and, further, I believe the manner in which the question has been put would have been different. The hon. gentleman seems to have lost sight of the fact that he is in the Upper Chamber of Western Australia, and that he should not put a question in such a form as to hurt the feelings of other hon. members. I myself feel deeply hurt, and passed over, inasmuch as it was I who, as Mayor of Fremantle, corresponded with the Government and induced them to place an amount on the Estimates, but no such promise was ever made that any money would be handed over to the Fremantle Municipality; indeed, we prefer that the Government should carry out the work.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I have ruled that all the words after "Fremantle" must be struck out, and on that the hon. member asks leave to withdraw the question. If the question is negatived then the Hon. the Colonial Secretary can give his reply, which he wishes to do.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I hope hon. members will allow the question to be withdrawn.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): Why? It is a very reasonable question.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): If one hon. member objects, the question cannot be withdrawn.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES: I think, as the Hon. the Colonial Secretary

has prepared a reply, he should be allowed to give it. I object, therefore, to the question being withdrawn.

THE HON. H. McKERNAN: I can hardly agree with the last speaker that this question should be forced on the House.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): One hon. member having objected to the withdrawal of the question, it must be put. The matter cannot be debated further. The hon. the Colonial Secretary will now reply.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): In reply to the hon. member, I may say that I am not aware of any promise by the Government to hand over £1,500 to the Fremantle Municipal Council towards the erection of a hospital at Fremantle, but the Government propose to place the sum of £2,000 on the Estimates for 1894-5 for this work. I may add, for the information of hon. gentlemen who are particularly interested in Fremantle, that the Colonial Surgeon recommended that the proposed hospital should be a capacious one, having 16 beds for males and eight for females, with all the necessary appurtenances for a proper hospital. I have supported that recommendation to the Government, with the result that a sum of £2,000 has been placed on the Estimates for that purpose. And I may say that, to complete the hospital as it is proposed, will take considerably more than £2,000.

INSPECTION OF PASSENGERS' CLOTHING BY CUSTOMS OFFICERS.

THE HON. T. H. MARSHALL asked the Colonial Secretary,—

1. If the Government were aware that passengers arriving from the Eastern colonies were subjected to much annoyance and inconvenience in having to show before the public, at the shore end of the jetty, their dirty linen and other apparel to the Customs officers.

2. If the foregoing was correct, would the Government either do away with the same or otherwise erect a suitable place for inspection, and also appoint a female officer, as in other ports, to inspect their clothing.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) replied,—

1. No. The Collector of Customs reports that only such luggage as is carried

by passengers in their hands is liable to inspection at the shore end of the jetty, and only such of that as the officers deem necessary is inspected. All other luggage is examined in the sheds.

2. If it should be found necessary to examine a woman, a female searcher will be employed. I am not aware that female officers are employed in other ports to inspect women's clothing or luggage.

BUSINESS DAYS—ARRANGEMENT OF.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) moved, That, unless otherwise ordered, the Council do meet for the despatch of business on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4.30 p.m. until 6.30 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards. He said:—Hon. members are aware that the Legislative Assembly has arranged to meet on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. I need not refer to the hours at which that body meet on the first named days, but on the last named days—Wednesdays and Thursdays—I propose to ask the House to sit at 4.30 p.m. each day, it being expedient that this House should meet at the same time as the Assembly in order that there may be an opportunity for exchanging messages. I now propose that this House shall meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays each week at 4.30 p.m. and go on with the business until 6.30 p.m., and then, if it be not finished, to adjourn for one hour and then proceed. In making this proposition, I do so to study the wishes of hon. members who reside at a distance from Perth. The Legislative Council formerly sat on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on this account hon. members were obliged to come to town on Tuesdays and remain until Friday; but by making the sittings continuous, hon. members will be able to enjoy and amuse themselves in the country one day longer each week than they otherwise would. I trust hon. members who reside in Perth and Fremantle will be prepared to accord with the wishes of members who reside at a distance. As far as I am concerned, I am prepared to sit at any time, and to meet the wishes of hon. members generally. I do not wish to force my views in any way. By making the time 4.30, members residing in town

and engaged in business will also be suited. By 4.30 p.m. I hope they will have made enough money to enable them to devote the remainder of their time to the services of the country. I now move the resolution.

Question put and passed.

EXTENSION OF TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES moved, That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the telephone system should be extended, and that telephonic communication should be supplied at the railway stations for the use of the public. He said: I think, sir, we all know the great benefits of telephonic communication. Those who reside in Perth and Fremantle know what a tremendous convenience it is, and know what a great deal of trouble and money is saved by it. The privilege of using the telephone is limited at present to those who reside in the capital and the port, and to those who have the pleasure of working in the Railway Department. I wish to see the system extended to those who carry on business in the country, and the only way I see of giving effect to that wish is to secure for the public permission to use the telephones along the different lines of railway. At present these wires are only used by the railway officials; but, from what I can gather, these officials are not anxious for the public to use them—at all events, I know of one instance where I myself asked to be allowed to use the wire, and I was refused. I can, however, see no reason for this objection. At present there are about 30 trains a day between Perth and Fremantle, and yet one wire suffices. Taking as the basis that one wire is sufficient for 30 trains a day, we can easily estimate what is sufficient where there are less trains. On the Eastern Railway there are 10 or 12 trains only a day. Therefore the amount of traffic between Perth and Fremantle is three times as great as between Perth and York, and Perth and Northam. We may, therefore, naturally come to the conclusion that the wires to York and Northam are more than sufficient for the requirements of the department. On the Bunbury line there are only about 10 trains a week, and we can again come to

the conclusion that the railway officials cannot be using the line all the time, and that the instruments must be idle for half or three-quarters of the time. This seems to be a great pity, when they could be made use of to advantage by the public. Even if they were required all the time by the department, I do not see why a second wire should not be put up. It does not follow, if you allow the public to make use of the wire, say, from Clackline to York, that the man who is wanted can always be obtained, unless there were a telephonic exchange at York, and I do not see why there should not be one there as well as at Northam and Bunbury. I find that when telephonic communication was first established, a sum of £2,000 was placed on the Estimates for the purpose, and at that time there were only 50 subscribers, so that the Government incurred this expense for 50 people. Since then telephonic communication has made great strides, and I see no reason why the same thing should not be done again. I have made inquiries, and find that an exchange can be made for £70 or £80, and to connect twelve people with it would mean £250, if they were resident within a reasonable distance. I have no means of ascertaining how many country people would use the telephone, but from what I have heard, I should think at least 50 or 60 persons would take it. It would certainly be a great convenience to them if they did, for they could converse and carry on their business by means of it and often save themselves the trouble and expense of undertaking a railway journey. If a farmer at Clackline wished to deal with a farmer at York the whole business could be settled by telephone, and the goods could be placed on board the next train, and sent to their destination. Besides this the telephone would encourage more trade, and would make life more attractive in the country than it is. Indirectly, therefore, the telephone will do something towards the settlement of the soil, which we all so much desire to see accomplished. There are a great number of places in the country where there is no telegraph station, and even if there were the telephone is so much better to do business with. I am going to ask the Perth and Fremantle members to give me their support to the motion, because they should not be averse to the country having some of the advan-

tages they possess, and I am also going to rely on the support of the country members. I do not say that if we agree to the motion we shall get what is sought by it; but it may have some effect.

THE HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I rise to second the motion, because I consider that telephonic communication would be of great advantage to the country districts if a system could be carried out in an economical way. I, myself, have been to a railway station, and have asked to be allowed to get a message through, but I was told I could not. Sometimes, as a great favour a message is sent, although it is against the rule. At the same time the young men in the department make use of the instruments to send frivolous messages, and I do not, therefore, see why the public should not also be allowed to use them for important messages when the business of the department does not necessitate their use.

THE HON. H. MCKERNAN: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion of the Hon. Mr. Foulkes. The hon. gentleman has stated that the telephone wires along the Eastern Railway are not utilised to their fullest extent, and if this be so I do not see why the public should not have any advantage that is to be derived from them. I would further say that I do not see why any passenger by rail, who has paid his fare, should not have full advantage of every accommodation attached to the railway system. Having paid for his ticket, the traveller should, in addition to the journey, have the free use of the telephone. With the mover of this resolution, I think that if we allow the use of the railway telephones—of course on payment of a small fee—it would add to the attractiveness of country life. I have, therefore, much pleasure in supporting him.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I observe that this motion reads:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the telephone system should be extended, and that telephonic communication should be supplied at the railway stations for the use of the public." I do not know whether the hon. gentleman intended it to apply to all railway stations, but if so I think there will be a strong objection to it. Take York and Geraldton, for instance. Surely the hon. member does

not desire to allow people to send free messages by telephone in competition with the telegraph. Does he desire that the people of York and Bunbury shall be allowed to use the telephone at their own sweet wills and pleasures, and apparently without any payment, while the telegraph, which is worked at a considerable cost, should not receive any support? If the hon. gentleman had confined his motion to railway stations which were not connected by telegraph, it might possibly have met with the approval of the House. Hon. members must bear in mind that the railway telephonic system is in no way connected with the telephone exchange system. If a man, resident halfway to Bunbury, were desirous of communicating with someone in Perth he could not do so direct. He would first have to telephone to the Perth Station, and the message would then have to be transmitted through the Exchange if the person to whom it was addressed was a subscriber, or if not, a messenger would have to be sent with it. It is thus obvious that a considerable amount of labour would be involved, and is it to be done without any cost? I think the Commissioner of Railways would have a strong objection to anything of the kind. He would say that all the officers of his department are fully occupied as railway officials, and could not devote any time to serving the public as receivers and transmitters of messages. I can see a great convenience to many persons residing in the country to have the use of the telephones, and I should be glad if arrangements could be made for their use, without inconvenience to the proper working of the Railway Department; but I am afraid, if such a practice were made universal, it would become a great nuisance to the officials. I have not spoken to the Commissioner on the subject, although, perhaps, I should have done, and therefore I do not know what his views are; but I should imagine he would say, that while it would afford considerable facilities to the public in the country, a great onus and responsibility would be cast upon the department.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES: In answer to the objections brought forward by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, I may make the following replies: He

states that I have made no provision for charging. Certainly such is not laid down in the motion; but I think anyone with a fair amount of intelligence would see that I do not wish the telephonic system extended unless something is paid for it, in the same way that the people of Perth and Fremantle pay. Either an annual charge could be made, or a price could be fixed per message. Then it is said that the extension of the system will interfere with the telegraphs; but at some stations there is no telegraph, besides which certain kinds of business can be arranged far better by telephone, and the public should have the most efficient means at the disposal of the Government given to them. For my part I do not think it would affect the telegraphs at all. As I have said, by giving these facilities, it would mean that more people would settle on the soil and—

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): The hon. member must reply only. He has referred to that matter in his previous speech.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES: As to the statement that it would require an extra clerk at Perth to receive messages, I do not see why, if a man at Guildford wanted to communicate with some firm at Perth, he could not telephone to the station, and there be switched on to the Exchange.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): They are not connected.

THE HON. J. C. G. FOULKES: Then why should they not be? That is simply a question of detail. As to the inconvenience to the Railway Department, I do not say that the public should have priority. I hope hon. members will vote for the motion.

The Council divided.

Ayes	6
Noes	9
			—
Majority against...			3

AYES—6.		NOES—9.	
The Hon. R. G. Burges		The Hon. D. K. Congdon	
The Hon. C. E. Dempster		The Hon. F. T. Crowder	
The Hon. R. W. Hardley		The Hon. E. W. Davies	
The Hon. T. H. Marshall		The Hon. S. J. Haynes	
The Hon. H. McKernan		The Hon. Ernest Henty	
The Hon. J. C. G. Foulkes		The Hon. C. A. Piesse	
(Teller).		The Hon. H. J. Saunders	
		The Hon. E. H. Wittenoom	
		The Hon. S. H. Parker	
		(Teller).	

DEFENCE FORCES BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): Hon. members are, no doubt, aware that we have at the present time a permanent force as well as a volunteer force. This defence force is regulated by virtue of "The Volunteer Force Act of 1883," "The Volunteer Service Act of 1885," and "The Defence Force Act of 1893." The object of this Bill is to consolidate and amend the existing law. With regard to the permanent force, which is now dealt with by the Act of 1893, there is, by this Bill, very little alteration in the law and that such as the experience of the Commandant has advised. With regard also to the militia force, the alteration is only slight. As to the volunteers, it is proposed to repeal the present law as to enlistment, and substitute another for it. This Bill is founded in a great measure on the present law, but some of the amendments will make the regulations more strict. For instance, it provides that if the volunteer force is called out for active service, no volunteer will be at liberty to retire while warfare is going on, without the permission of the Governor in Council. What we say is, if we maintain a force at a considerable cost to the country, drill the men and make efficient soldiers of them, and if they are required to defend their country against the foreign invader they shall not be allowed to retire and allowed to enjoy the peace of their homes, and leave others to fight. Anyone who enters the service must contemplate that it will be his duty, if called out, to serve his country to the best of his ability; and I have no doubt that all the members of the force now enrolled will only be too glad to conform to the law as I now propose it. As I have said, with regard to the permanent force and the militia there is very little alteration in the law, but the law in regard to volunteers is made more stringent, and more power is given to the Governor and Commandant to enforce discipline and obedience. I think hon. members will agree that, if it is desirable to maintain a force, it is also desirable to have it under control. If it is advisable to vote public funds for the maintenance of the force, it is advisable that that force should be efficient and can be depended

upon if, unfortunately, the occasion arises for its service; and I trust, therefore, hon. members will support me in the various clauses of this Bill. I am happy to say that volunteering is not dying out, although it is not so popular a movement as it was in former days, but I take this to be in consequence of there being now so many other amusements. Still I notice that when called out the men muster well, and go through their exercises to the satisfaction of their officers; and I am happy to say that the movement is so strong that a mounted force was put in the field and equipped in fourteen days, to the admiration of the public and the satisfaction of the Commandant, and this mainly owing to the knowledge and experience of the commanding officer. While speaking of the volunteers, I may mention that in some of the country districts the movement is still most popular. I observed that the corps from the town of York on Queen's birthday mustered 71 strong, whereas the actual number, according to the allowance, was only 70, so that the corps was increased by one on the journey down. That speaks well for the ardour of the people of York. I have now to move the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. E. H. WITTENOOM: In rising to support the second reading of this Bill, I have much pleasure in congratulating the Government on bringing it forward. It is a measure which is much required to put the force in proper order. I have only had an opportunity of going through the Bill superficially, but I have no doubt that, with a few amendments, it will meet all requirements. I am pleased to learn that there is so much enthusiasm in regard to the volunteer movement at York; and I may speak with some pride of the corps of my own district, which carried off the silver cup the other day. I have myself always taken a strong interest in the movement, and I believe that if the Russians stormed Fremantle our men would be quite equal to coping with them, and therefore they deserve every encouragement the Government can give to them. With these few remarks, the Bill will have my cordial support. With your permission, sir, I should like to make one or two other remarks. I desire, sir, to convey to you my congratulations on the position you

occupy. My brother members have had an opportunity of doing so before. It is a great pleasure to me to see you occupying the position, and I do not think the distinction could have fallen upon anyone better fitted to bear it. It is a fitting illustration of how a man who leads an honest and upright life obtains the confidence of those he lives among. It proves that those who try to live their lives in a proper manner, with honesty of purpose, can succeed to the highest honours the country can bestow.

THE HON. H. MCKERNAN: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion of the hon. the Colonial Secretary, although I should have been glad if he had given us some more information as to the Bill than he did. It is, no doubt, an admirable measure; but there are items in it the House are entitled to know more about. Certain things are to be done by regulation. We have no regulations before us, but I hope, when we get into committee, we shall have full information upon the subject. Under clause 10, sub-section (3), it is stated that the commanding officer of any corps may, subject to regulations, appoint to his corps all non-commissioned officers not included in the last preceding paragraph of this section. I do hope, when the Bill is in committee, the Colonial Secretary will alter this, so that appointments shall be made by competitive examination. In clause 34 it is stated that only men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five shall be qualified for enlistment into the militia, and between the ages of eighteen and thirty for enlistment in the permanent force. According to that a man who is over thirty-five years of age, and who may have been long in the volunteer service, will not be entitled to become a member of the permanent force. I hope I am wrong in this view, and that men in the volunteer force will be allowed to join the permanent force if they wish. Another point not mentioned in the Bill is this: it is well known that men like a change in their commanding officers, and I think provision should be made that these officers should be changed every five years. This would promote the efficiency of the corps and promote respect for the officer. Reference was made by the Colonial Secretary to the recently established mounted corps in Perth. The admiration of the hon.

gentleman for this corps has been very well represented to the House in his own language. I am a member of that corps, and I have the honour and dignity of holding the distinguished position of a full private.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 6 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Thursday, 9th August, at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 8th August, 1894.

Release of Prisoner John Gittings—Survey of Townsite at Bamboo Creek—Erection of Condon-Marble Bar Telegraph Line—Decking of Cossack Wharf—Telegraph Line from Marble Bar to Bamboo Creek—Appointment of Medical Officer at Pilbarra—Construction of Subiaco Road—Shelter Shed and Level Crossing at Subiaco Station—Approaches to West Perth Station—Leave of absence to Mr. Darlot—Purchase of Diamond Drill by the Government—Private offers for construction of Goldfields Railways—Papers re appointment of Mr. Edwards as Veterinary Surgeon—Bankers' Books Evidence Bill: third reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

RELEASE OF PRISONER JOHN GITTINGS.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, asked the Attorney General:—

1. What reasons had led the Government to release John Gittings from prison?
2. What was the unexpired term of his sentence?