

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1892.

Death of the Hon. J. H. Monger—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 3 o'clock.

PRAYERS.

DEATH OF THE HON. J. H. MONGER.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton) said: Mr. President,—I regret to have to inform hon. members that I have received a telegram conveying the sad news of the death of the Hon. Mr. Monger, a member of this House, and I think I shall be consulting the wishes of hon. members if I move that the House do now adjourn as a token of our esteem of the memory of that gentleman. Mr. Monger was known not only amongst the members of this House; but his name was a household word in Western Australia. He has been one of the leading settlers of this colony, and has been one who has done a great deal to advance the welfare of Western Australia, and I consider that through his death we have sustained a great loss. I may inform hon. members that the funeral will take place in Perth to-morrow afternoon, leaving Mr. Hooley's at half-past four o'clock; so that all will thus have an opportunity of paying their last respects to the deceased gentleman. I now, sir, move that the House adjourn until to-morrow evening at 8 o'clock.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT seconded the motion.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 3-10 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 24th February, at 8 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 23rd February, 1892.

Public Health Bill: recommitted—Customs Laws Consolidation Bill: in committee—Estimates, 1892: further considered in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

On the Order of the Day for the third reading of this bill,—

MR. TRAYLEN moved that the bill be recommitted, for the purpose of making certain amendments of which he had given notice. He said the object of the first amendment was to expedite the coming into operation of the Act after it became law. The reason for that was because,—so far as Perth was concerned at any rate, and other Local Boards were no doubt in the same position—the present Boards of Health during what he might call the interregnum between the expiry of the old system and the adoption of the new, did not care to take any active steps in filling vacancies and other matters, which the newly constituted boards might not confirm; and there were obvious reasons why this interregnum should be as short as possible. He therefore proposed to move that the Act, if it passed through Parliament, should come into force on the 1st of April next instead of May. The second amendment he proposed was a consequential one upon the first. He also proposed to add a new clause, and he did so for this reason: some little question might arise between the new boards and the old, with regard to the custody of the property belonging to the existing boards, and as to the liabilities incurred by the existing boards as to contracts and other matters; and, in order that there should be no room for any dispute in the future, he proposed to add a clause whereby the present boards transferred to the new boards all their liabilities in that respect.

Motion agreed to.

Bill recommitted.

Clause 2—Act to come into operation on 1st May, 1892;

MR. TRAYLEN moved to substitute "April" for "May."

Put and passed.

Clause 5 :

MR. TRAYLEN moved to insert the words "31st day of March," in lieu of "30th day of April."

Put and passed.

New clause :

MR. TRAYLEN moved that the following new clause be added to the bill, to stand as clause 7: "The whole of the moneys, assets, and property of the Local Boards of Health hereby abolished shall vest in the new Boards hereby constituted, and such last-mentioned Boards shall be liable for all contracts and obligations, properly incurred, of the present Boards hereby abolished."

Put and passed.

Bill reported, with amendments.

CUSTOMS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The House went into committee on this bill.

Clauses 1 to 45 :

Put and passed.

Clause 46—Within what time goods to be entered and landed :

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) pointed out that this clause reduced the time within which vessels must be unloaded after they were entered at the Customs. Under the present law they were allowed 28 days, but it would be seen that this clause reduced the time in the case of sailing vessels to seven clear working days, and in the case of a steamer to three clear working days; but power was given to the Collector of Customs to extend this time, as long as he liked. At present, as he had said, the time was fixed at 28 days, though very often vessels were allowed even a longer time than that. He did not know that any harm would be done by reducing the time, so long as power was given to the Customs Officer to extend the time.

MR. LOTON thought that seven days was rather a short time, in the case of a sailing vessel. Although power was given to extend the time, that would necessitate an application being made in almost every instance for an extension of time.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said, if the committee desired, the Government would have no objection to making the term fourteen days instead of seven. At the same time he thought it was desirable that there should be no unnecessary delay in the unloading of vessels.

MR. SYMON did not think it made the slightest difference whether they made it seven days or fourteen days, for with our present appliances and harbor accommodation the time would have to be extended in either case. At present it was difficult to get a vessel discharged in less than about six weeks, and often longer than that. The "Soukar" had been in harbor now over six weeks, and she had not yet unloaded the whole of her cargo.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) believed the "Soukar" was an exceptionally large vessel. This clause applied to vessels of all sizes, and, if they made the time too long, they would have small vessels taking advantage of it, and there would be unnecessary delay.

MR. SYMON said all vessels, as a rule, wanted to get discharged as soon as possible. It was not likely that any ship would delay her unloading, if she could possibly help it.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 47 to 54 :

Put and passed.

Clause 55—"In all cases where a duty "is imposed upon any goods imported "ad valorem, or according to the true "and real value of such goods, such "value shall be verified at the time of "entry by the production of the genuine "invoice and by the declaration, in the "form hereinafter prescribed, or such "other form as may be prescribed under "the provisions of the last preceding "section of this Act, of the importer "of such goods or of his authorised "agent:—

"I, A. B., do hereby declare that
"the invoice now produced is the
"genuine and only invoice re-
"ceived by me, or which I expect
"to receive, of all the goods
"mentioned in this entry and
"contained in the packages mark-
"ed, numbered, and described
"herein, and that the value of
"such goods mentioned in this

“entry and the aforesaid invoice
 “and therein stated as [*here state*
 “*value*] was, to the best of my
 “belief, the fair and real market
 “value of such goods at the time of
 “shipment in the principal market
 “or markets of the country
 “whence the same were exported,
 “and without any deduction be-
 “cause of the exportation thereof
 “or for any other special con-
 “sideration whatever, and that
 “the price paid, or to be paid, for
 “the goods, and stated in the said
 “invoice, is the usual and ordin-
 “ary price paid for such goods
 “when sold for home consump-
 “tion in the country whence they
 “were exported,” &c.

MR. SYMON said this form of declar-
 ation appeared to have been copied from
 the Victorian and South Australian Acts,
 but he would point out that what
 applied to these colonies did not apply
 here in all cases. In those colonies the
 duties payable on many articles were
 specific duties, while the same articles
 here were subject to an *ad valorem*
 duty. Under a specific duty the amount
 payable did not depend upon the
 value of the goods in the home mar-
 ket, but upon the quantity. Perfumery,
 for instance, which in this colony was
 subject to an *ad valorem* duty of 20 per
 cent., came into the other colonies under
 a specific duty. Therefore he did not
 think this clause altogether suited the
 tariff at present existing in this colony.
 It would certainly place merchants and
 importers here at a considerable disad-
 vantage, if they were not going to be
 allowed any deductions or special dis-
 count on the original value of the goods
 in the home market, as appeared to be
 contemplated in the latter part of this
 declaration. He would therefore move
 to strike out the following words at the
 end of the form: “and without any de-
 “duction because of the exportation
 “thereof, or for any other special consid-
 “eration whatever, and that the price
 “paid, or to be paid, for the goods, and
 “stated in the said invoice, is the usual
 “and ordinary price paid for such goods
 “when sold for home consumption in the
 “country whence they were exported.”
 He might point out that, in many in-
 stances, importers of a certain class of

goods—patent medicines, for instance—
 were allowed special deductions, some-
 times of 15, or 20, or 50 per cent. upon
 the market price at home; but, under
 this clause, the importer here would have
 to pay duty on the gross value of the
 goods in the home market, and not upon
 what he actually paid for them, deduct-
 ing the special discount.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon.
 S. Burt) said this amendment involved a
 very important principle. The object of
 the declaration was to protect the reve-
 nue, by making importers pay duty on
 the actual market value of the goods in
 the country where they were shipped. If
 they were imported from England, the
 Customs value here would be the fair
 and real market value of the goods in
 England; and the same when they were
 imported from Melbourne or Adelaide,
 or any other country. He did not under-
 stand that merchants here were supposed
 to pay less for their goods than mer-
 chants paid for the same class of goods
 in the home market.

MR. SYMON: Oh, don't they?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon.
 S. Burt) said the object of the clause
 was to get at the true value of the
 goods. If there was any special deduc-
 tion claimed, in addition to the usual
 trade discount, that was provided for in
 another clause, and the Minister of cus-
 toms would determine whether the deduc-
 tion should be allowed. But they
 must go to work on some general prin-
 ciple; it would never do to have every
 invoice referred to the Minister; and
 what was here proposed was that the
 duty ordinarily payable should be upon
 the fair actual value of the goods in the
 home market, the country they were ex-
 ported from.

MR. SYMON said that was all very well
 in some cases; but there were many
 goods in respect of which a special allow-
 ance or deduction was made when the
 goods were for exportation abroad. But
 this clause placed the importer here on
 the same footing as the home buyer, who
 was not allowed this special allowance
 or discount.

MR. LOTON said there were some
 classes of goods on which a discount of
 12½ per cent., 25 per cent., or 50 per cent.,
 and even up to 80 per cent., was allowed
 to the foreign importer, who, it must be

remembered, had other charges to bear which the home buyer had not. There was also an allowance made for cash payments. Surely the importer here should get the benefit of these discounts, and not be compelled to pay duty on the market value of the goods in England (or wherever they were imported from), but upon the actual price paid by him for these goods. Supposing the first cost of the goods in England were £100, and there was a special discount of 25 per cent. allowed on the invoice itself, which would bring the cost to the importer here down to £80, it would be rather hard to compel him to pay duty on the £100, when the invoiced amount was only £80.

MR. TRAYLEN said he had received a trade circular that very day, on the head of which was written "best export duty allowed." This was a common expression, known in commercial circles, and a common custom. A special reduction was made in many cases in favor of the foreign importer, as compared with the home buyer. In the case of the foreign importer, very often a market had to be created for these goods, and he was allowed some special inducement to create a market, whereas in the home country a market was already established. It would be very unfair to the importers of a large class of goods if they had to pay duty on the value of the goods in the home market, and not on the value of the goods to them here.

MR. LOTON pointed out that in one sense it was immaterial to the importer whether he paid duty on the larger amount or the smaller amount, for it was the consumer who would eventually have to pay for it, in the enhanced price of the goods. If an importer had to pay *ad valorem* duty on £100, instead of £80, he would simply have to raise the price of the goods accordingly, to realise a fair profit.

MR. SYMON said there were cases in which large importers who paid cash were allowed a cash discount, but this clause would deprive them in a great measure of that advantage, and place the small importer in as good a position as the wholesale importer.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the object in view was to prevent fraud, and to protect the revenue. The wholesale importer would get the

benefit of his cash discount from the shipper or exporter of the goods, but the Customs could not be expected to recognise all these special allowances and follow up every man's invoice to see how much discount he was allowed compared with what was allowed to another man. The usual trade discount in the home market would be allowed, but none of these special discounts.

MR. LOTON would put the case in this way; supposing in the invoice presented at the Customs the gross amount showed £100, and there was a trade discount of 15 per cent. deducted, showing the amount to be £85, and that there was a discount of 5 per cent. for cash, —on which of these amounts would the duty be payable?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) should say it would be on the £85, which would be the value of the goods to the trade in the home market.

MR. LOTON said in that case the importer here would have to pay duty on 5 per cent. more than the actual price he paid for the goods.

MR. TRAYLEN said the true test was the money actually paid by the importer for the goods.

MR. SYMON said his firm received goods sometimes from America, upon which there was a discount of 75 per cent., and a further discount of 10 per cent. and 5 per cent.; upon what would they have to pay the duty?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): On the fair market value of the goods in the American market. The usual trade discount would be allowed, but no special discount.

MR. SYMON asked who was to decide what was trade discount and what was special discount?

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE pointed out that this was provided for in clause 71, which left it to the Minister, in case of any dispute, to determine the rate of discount to be deducted from a firm's published price list.

MR. SYMON doubted whether the Minister might always be capable of distinguishing between what was ordinary trade discount and what was special discount.

MR. PIESSE said it was well known that a special allowance was generally made to foreign importers, and it was

only in this way that they were placed on the same footing as home buyers. Why should the importer here be called to pay a duty on more than the price he actually paid for his goods when they arrived in the colony.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said, supposing he bought a lot of iron pipes in England, what did it matter to the manufacturers whether he wanted to use them in England or put them in his garden here? What difference did it make?

MR. SYMON said if the hon. gentleman was in business he would know that it did make a difference, and that there was generally a deduction on account of exportation.

MR. TRAYLEN said there were good reasons for this special allowance in favor of the foreign importer, one being that he bought in larger quantities than the home buyer, and the manufacturers, being anxious to extend their trade connection, offered special inducements to the foreign importer.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, in a clause further on, power was given to the Minister or the Collector to increase the value of goods entered, if there was reason to suppose that they were under-valued. The whole scope of the bill was in the direction of protecting the revenue. This clause was not a new clause; it was to be found in the Customs Acts of the other colonies and other countries. He did not think it was always safe to take the invoice as a guide; there were such things as fictitious invoices.

MR. TRAYLEN said the remarks of the Treasurer did not touch the question in the very least. They were not now dealing with false or fictitious invoices, but with genuine invoices, and with trade customs that were actually fair and above board. He did not feel inclined to budge one inch in this matter. He was not at all averse to every precaution being taken to protect the revenue from fraud, but this was not a question of fraud but of commercial practice.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) hoped the amendment would not be pressed, because, if carried, it would shake the whole frame of the bill, as many clauses were interdependent on each other, and, if they altered this

clause, it would necessitate several other clauses being altered all through the bill, and the whole of this part of the bill would have to be recast.

MR. CANNING said there was a class of goods that were largely consumed here in respect of which there was a large discount allowed to the importer, if purchased for exportation,—electro-ware goods for instance; and if this clause was to apply—and it did not apply in the same way in the other colonies, where they had different duties—the importer here would clearly be placed at a disadvantage. The Melbourne merchant could afford to sell at a lower price than anyone here could import from England.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said if the goods were imported from Melbourne, the duty payable would be on the market value of the goods in Melbourne, and not in England. The clause simply provided that the duty payable should be on the fair market value—that was the usual and ordinary price paid for such goods when sold for home consumption in the country whence they were exported.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the trade discount and special discounts allowed on goods exported often reduced the actual value of the goods to the importer by at least one-fourth, and, although it might not be fair from a Treasury point of view to deprive it of one-fourth of the duty that would otherwise be paid, still from the importer's point of view it was hardly fair to compel him to pay duty on more than he actually paid for the goods. He thought the more equitable thing to do would be to make him pay duty on what the goods actually cost him. It would be rather difficult to discriminate between trade discounts, export discounts, special discounts, and cash discounts. This change in the present practice of charging duty on the actual value of the goods to the importer was one that, he was afraid, would not be relished by the mercantile element.

Amendment—put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 56—Declaration to be signed in presence of Collector:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that progress be reported. It would be necessary to recast

this and other clauses, consequent upon the amendment made in the preceding clause.

Motion—put and passed.
Progress reported.

ESTIMATES, 1892.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of these Estimates.

Railways and Tramways, £86,368 (ad-journed debate):

MR. SIMPSON asked for some information as to the new item "Paymaster, £200."

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was considered necessary to have a paymaster. Heretofore, the present accountant had been acting as paymaster, travelling up and down the line for that purpose, which necessitated his being absent from his office many days in the month, when he ought to be doing accountant's work. It was considered absolutely necessary to relieve him of this duty, and confine him to his duties as railway accountant. The officer appointed as paymaster was well fitted for the post, and he would perform the duties of paymaster and examiner of accounts at the outlying stations on the line.

MR. A. FORREST asked what they wanted with two clerks for the Stores, one at £175 and the other at £120?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the stores had been re-organised upon an improved system, which threw a considerable amount of work upon the storekeeper, and it was thought possible that another clerk would have to be appointed, besides the one now employed. The appointment would not be made unless it was found absolutely necessary, but the storekeeper had been asking for another clerk all last year.

MR. PARKER said that (in the absence of his hon. friend the member for Gascoyne) he wanted some information as to several of these items. First of all there was the item "Wages for Stores, £700," which appeared to be a new item; and he noticed that there was a large increase in the vote for Traffic Manager and station masters.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the

item "Wages for Stores" was to pay the laborers. There was a great deal of work to be done at these stores, which included railway material of every description. It was not a new item, but hitherto it had appeared under the head of contingencies. Now it was shown as a separate item. With regard to the Traffic Manager, this officer's salary had been raised from £350 to £400. The increase in the vote for station masters from £1,700 to £2,650 was due to some extent to the Railway Department having taken over the working of the Fremantle jetties, and a portion of this vote had been included in the wages vote last year. The actual increase in salaries was very small indeed as regards the station masters.

MR. A. FORREST thought it would be better in future that the salary of each station master should appear on the Estimates separately, instead of in a lump sum.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that under the new system of classification recently adopted it would be the stations, and not the men, that would decide the pay. Certain stations, according to the class they belonged to, would carry a certain fixed salary. The salary would be dependent on the work to be done and the responsibility attached, and not upon the individual officer. This was the system in vogue in other parts of the world, but it had not been adopted here until the recent system of classification was introduced. It had simply been rule of thumb.

MR. PARKER thought the course adopted by the Government of putting down a lump sum for station masters was better than to have each man's salary put down separately. He did not see any necessity for it. These station masters were not permanent officials in the same sense as other civil servants were; they were subject to the control and dismissal of the Commissioner of Railways, under a special Act of Parliament.

MR. CANNING said there was a large increase in the item "Wages for Clerks, Guards, Porters, etc., and Overtime and Extra Labor." Last year the vote under this head was £7,000; this year it was £11,750, an increase of £4,750.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the actual expenditure last year was £7,400, and the extra amount this year was, in view of the increased amount of labor required on the Fremantle jetties, which formed a very considerable item, and which must necessarily increase as the amount of the traffic increased. Of course if their anticipations in this respect were not realised, the vote would not be expended.

MR. TRAYLEN said he desired to call attention to the items "Locomotive Superintendent—salary, £400; lodging allowance, £50." If members would look at the item "Traffic Manager," they would find there was only £400 put down for that officer, and no lodging allowance. Both these officers occupied about equal positions; both held extremely responsible positions, and he thought they ought to be placed on the same footing as regards their pay. As he could not indulge in the levelling-up process, he must try the levelling-down process, and he would therefore move that the item "Lodging allowance, Locomotive Superintendent, £50," be struck out. He did that because he thought this officer was not worth anything extra, over and above the other officer he had referred to, the Traffic Manager, who received no lodging allowance. Last year, it might be remembered, he had occasion to point out some of the features in this gentleman's character, and he did something also in the way of showing how the public suffered, and how things went astray in his department, a state of things that appeared traceable to this officer's laches. He did not know that he need say very much about this same gentleman's character this year, beyond calling attention to an extremely singular advertisement that recently appeared in the papers connected with his department, calling for apprentices, who must be boys that did not smoke or do anything that was naughty and improper. Nothing in fact but very good boys would do. It had struck him as a very wonderful advertisement, coming from such a source. This officer, since he (Mr. Traylen) had called attention to his conduct in the House last year, appeared to have put the country to some expense, through his not attending properly to his duties. It

would possibly be remembered that a party of railway men were about to start for Bunbury when he last addressed the House on this subject, and that he indicated then that there was one member of that party who was not particularly sober. Now, if this man had been worth his salt he would have simply advised that this person should not be sent with that party all the way to Bunbury. However, the party was sent, and this one was shortly afterwards found drunk beside his engine. He believed the whole party were treated to free lodgings in the lock-up when they got to Bunbury, and this particular person who was afterwards found drunk beside his engine was dismissed the service, after the country had been called upon to pay his passage to Bunbury, whereas he ought to have been dismissed before he left Fremantle, if Mr. Mather had done his duty properly. The way he argued was this: this gentleman, not being an entire abstainer himself, seemed to pass over the faults of those who were not entire abstainers either,—perhaps he ought to say who were intemperate. He might point out a few more instances of the way in which the colony had been put to expense through this officer. Some months ago, a passenger who was at Beverley, wrote to him (Mr. Traylen) to the effect that the Government train was delayed, through some persons in this officer's department not being sober enough to clean the engine, and do other necessary work. The pumping, it appeared, was not properly performed, and the engine of the Great Southern Railway had actually to travel to York for water before it could start for Albany. It had to run this 40 miles to fill up with water, because this officer was not careful enough to see that he had sober or temperate subordinates under him. On another occasion an engine was wanted for ballasting purposes on the Newcastle line, and one was sent up. He thought it succeeded in getting as far as the Clackline, but was unable to go any farther, nor back again, and they had to send another. That also was found to be defective when it got there. Surely, if he (Mr. Traylen), a mere outsider, was in a position to disclose these things in connection with the working of this department, he might fairly

conclude there were several other matters of the same kind of which he had heard nothing. He would not say much about the personal relations between this officer and his men, nor about his yacht and the accommodation that he provided for it in the Government shed. He believed he had sold his yacht now; but it was a matter of notoriety that he used to keep it in the shed belonging to the Government. He had heard very much worse charges than this against this officer, but he thought he had said enough to show that the country's finances suffered, and the efficiency of the department suffered, in consequence of his inattention to his duties; and, unless there was occasion for it, he did not wish to say more, though he could adduce several other instances. He would content himself by moving that this item for £50 for lodging allowance be struck out.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) hoped the committee would not follow the hon. member in this matter. He might say that he had a note opposite this particular item that he considered this officer was under paid. For an officer carrying out the duties of Locomotive Superintendent in this colony or in any other colony it was very low pay. As to his abilities, so far as he knew—and he had every means of knowing—this officer was a most efficient officer. He had an infirmity of temper, he believed, which perhaps had something to do with his unpopularity; but as an officer, and as Locomotive Superintendent, he believed that in Mr. Mather the Government were well served. With regard to what the hon. member for the Greenough had said about some delay with the engines, he thought that was very likely to occur, and bound to occur occasionally. The Locomotive Superintendent could not always guarantee that when an engine was ordered out it was in that state of repair it ought to be. He (the Commissioner) knew as a positive fact, that time after time, when they had been compelled to ask for an engine, the Locomotive Superintendent said it was not fit to be sent out, but, when it was insisted upon that the work it was required for must be done, he had to let it go. This was simply the result of the administration of the department years

ago, when it had not the means at its disposal to provide sufficient rolling stock for the traffic; and these engines, instead of being regularly attended to, often and often had to go on the line when they ought to have been in the workshop. With regard to the Bunbury incident, the hon. member had spoken very truly in regard to the officer sent down there who was not a sober man. But that very officer had been strongly recommended to him (the Commissioner) by the then General Traffic Manager, and he had nothing to do but accept that officer's recommendation. But what happened? The moment he misbehaved himself he was dismissed. And he thought the hon. member would find that throughout the administration of the present Government they did not tolerate any case of gross neglect or drunkenness whatever. It certainly would not be while he was Minister, even if he had to shift his seat to-morrow. Any case of drunkenness on duty would meet with instant dismissal. Of course, if a man really showed signs of reforming, he hoped he was not so bigoted as to say he would not give a man a chance; but, once he was warned, and he did so again, away he went. This very man had, for a considerable time, reformed. He was a very good workman, and he was employed on the Midland Railway after his dismissal from the Government service. Although his attention had been called to him last year by the hon. member for Greenough, he thought he would give him one more chance under the new dispensation; but, the moment he committed himself, he had to go. He could not help thinking that the hon. member was rather rough on the Locomotive Superintendent. He felt sure if the hon. member had the administering of the department he would not speak in these strong terms. No doubt the hon. member in his own mind conscientiously believed all he said was true; but, as head of the department, he assured the hon. member that he had very great confidence in Mr. Mather's administration of the locomotive department. His responsibility in that position was very great indeed, and to compare him with the present District Traffic Manager was out of the question. He ventured to say that their respective re-

sponsibilities could in no way be compared; and the paltry sum of £450 a year for this gentleman's services was very small pay indeed, looking at the position he held; and he hoped the committee would not interfere with the vote. He had seriously intended to have asked for an increase in the vote.

MR. TRAYLEN said he had not hinted in any way to what the Commissioner had referred to as "infirmity of temper" on the part of this officer, for such extraordinary stories were told about his vagaries in that respect that he was loth to believe they were true. But now he was afraid there was ground for believing there was some truth in them. However, he had no wish to press his motion, after the statement of the Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn), referring to the vote for mechanics, extra labor, materials for repairs, etc., said it would be noticed that there was a considerable increase in this item. The vote last year was £16,500, and the actual expenditure £19,110. This year it was £25,000. This was based upon the extra work required to be done, consequent upon increased traffic and additional rolling stock. It was not very difficult to realise that if it cost, say, 3s. to repair a truck that had travelled 1,000 miles, it would cost 6s. to effect similar repairs in the case of two trucks.

MR. A. FORREST, referring to a new item, "Clerk, Permanent Way Branch, £160," said there was strong objection last year to there being so many Permanent Way Inspectors employed, but now it was proposed to provide them with a clerk as well.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the Inspector of Permanent Way hitherto had, in addition to his outside work, to do his office work as well, which interfered with his work on the line. Considering that this officer had all the line between the end of the Fremantle jetty and Beverley to attend to, it would be recognised that it was impossible for him to attend to office work as well. The other inspectors employed were merely district inspectors, one at Newcastle and the other at Beverley, who were under the general superintendence of the inspector at head quarters.

MR. A. FORREST said he failed to understand how it was that all the clerks in this Railway Department started on such high wages. In all the other departments of the service they started at a very low salary, and worked themselves gradually up; but in this department they all commenced at very high salaries. For instance, this permanent-way clerk started at £160 a year. He thought if the Inspector paid more attention to his work, instead of acting as handicapper for all the sports in the colony, he might very well do without a clerk.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the clerk referred to was not a new officer in the department; he had been removed from another post which he held as inspector of works on the Clackline branch, which was a higher appointment if anything. With regard to the Inspector acting as handicapper and taking an interest in outdoor sports, he thought it was hardly within his province to tell any man in his department that he must not take any interest in out-door amusements. So long as a man did his work properly, and performed his duties efficiently, he should simply consider he was a tyrant if he was to say that, when he had done his work, he must not have anything to do with athletic sports or anything else in the way of recreation. He could see no objection to this officer acting as handicapper, so long as he attended to his official duties; and he would take care that he did that. This handicapping was probably done at night. At any rate, he had no reason at all to believe that this officer's duties were in any way neglected, by reason of his taking an interest in athletic sports.

MR. A. FORREST did not want to deprive any public servant of outdoor amusement; still, he could not get away from the fact that, wherever you went, all over the colony—this part of the colony at any rate—where there were any public sports going on, this particular officer was sure to be there. He only mentioned it in the interests of the department and of the public, and he did not know that he would have spoken of it but for the fact of its now being proposed to give him a clerk.

MR. MOLLOY was inclined to agree with the hon. member who had last

spoken as to there being no necessity for a clerk in this office. The Inspector had simply to report upon the condition of the permanent way, and surely he did not want a clerk at £160 a year to write out these reports for him.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the Inspector of Permanent Way had a great deal more to do than examine the line and write a report. He had to issue instructions to all the gangers, to see to the sidings, and to inspect the whole line between Fremantle and Beverley. He was not at all sure whether it would not be necessary to increase the staff very considerably before long, as the traffic increased. It was a notorious fact that no accident had occurred on our Eastern Railway for many years, which, he thought, pointed to the fact that the work of the present staff was efficiently performed.

Vote agreed to.

Works and Buildings, £93,055 :

MR. H. W. SHOLL said he wanted to refer to the Cossack and Roebourne tramway.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member had lost his opportunity of doing so now, as the vote had been passed.

MR. TRAYLEN asked what was proposed to be done with the £3,000 set down for the Government Printing Office? The reason he asked was this: not that he thought the present establishment did not require this expenditure of £3,000, but probably a few more thousands besides; he put the question simply to know whether it would not be very much more to the advantage of the country, and certainly of the printing department, to totally re-arrange the present buildings. Would £3,000 suffice to do anything of the sort?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that during the past year the Government thought it well that the Government Printer should make a visit to the other colonies, and find out from personal observation of the Government printing offices there what improvements were desirable in our own building. Mr. Pether had done this, and, from the information he thus obtained, he was in a position to say what he really required to be done. It was

proposed to re-arrange the whole of the present establishment, but, in the first instance, the intention was to bring the present building up to the front of the street, which would give a considerable amount more room. A re-arrangement of the interior was also proposed, so as to provide improved facilities, and to enable the Government Printer to overtake the large amount of work that was now cast upon that department. He was not at all prepared to say that £3,000 would be enough, but this was all they would be able to spend this year. It was possible they would require more next year. The Government printing of the colony was increasing daily; it had increased so much now that it was impossible for the Government Printer to do all the work, and they had constantly to put out work to private printing offices. He thought it would be more profitable to do the work ourselves. This £3,000 would provide additional room and additional conveniences, but he was not at all satisfied that it would do all that was wanted.

MR. PEARSE, referring to the item "Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, £3,000," said he did not know what the Government proposed to do with this £3,000, but he thought it would be a mistake to expend it on the present building. The time had arrived when this institution should be removed from its present position. The centre of the town was no place for a lunatic asylum. The present building was a very inconvenient one, and not at all adapted for the purpose, besides being over crowded. He should think that, pending the erection of another building in some more suitable locality, a portion of the Fremantle Convict Prison might be utilised for this purpose. But the proper place for an asylum was away from the centre of population; he would suggest somewhere on the sea hills, in the neighborhood of Cottesloe, where 100 acres of land might be set apart for this purpose, so as to have pleasant grounds for these unfortunate people to ramble about, instead of being confined as they now were. He hoped the Government would not lose sight of this. It would be throwing money away to spend any large sum on the present building, which was ill adapted in every way for a lunatic asylum.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that last year he and some other members of the House, forming a select committee, visited and inspected the present building, and the sights they then saw more than convinced them of the absolute necessity for providing improved accommodation for the inmates. It was a most distressing thing to see these unfortunates huddled together, in one yard, men of all color and all nationalities, afflicted with this horrible infirmity, curable and incurable mixed together. A sum of £1,500 was voted last year for the purpose of making some additions to the building, but it was found that the amount voted was not sufficient to do any good, and therefore it was not expended. Now it was proposed to spend £3,000, and, judging from the drawings that had been prepared, he believed it would be money well expended, in providing temporary advantages. He was sorry to say that this sum would not be anything like sufficient to meet the requirements of the colony and the increasing wants of this institution, but it would do something to improve the present accommodation. He quite agreed with the hon. member for North Fremantle that it might be wise for that House to consider the advisability of changing the site of this institution by removing it to a more suitable locality. But to carry that out would require some years. The ground, when selected, would have to be laid out, and new buildings erected, involving an expenditure of £20,000 or £30,000. All this would take time; it was not the work of a year or two. Meantime, we could not allow these unfortunate people to remain huddled together within the prescribed space afforded by the present building, and this £3,000 would go a good way to improve the present state of things. Not only was it a necessary expenditure, it was an expenditure called for in the cause of humanity.

MR. TRAYLEN said he was one of the members of the select committee referred to, and he echoed all the Commissioner of Railways had said.

MR. CANNING, referring to the item "Perth Observatory, £2,000," said he did not in the least undervalue the importance of encouraging science, and pro-

viding all such appliances as observatories for an important city such as Perth would become sooner or later. But he thought it was premature at the present time. There were many matters of much more urgency and importance than the creation of an observatory. He said "creation," advisedly, for there would not only be the cost of the necessary building, but also a very large expenditure in providing proper scientific instruments, without which the building would be useless as an observatory. It would not attain its object. The cost of these instruments would be very large indeed. Thirdly, it would be necessary to obtain a scientific man in charge of this observatory, and we should have to pay such a man a very considerable salary.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh, not very high.

MR. CANNING was afraid we would, if we wanted a really good man. There was no pressing necessity for this observatory at the present moment. Our coastal trade was not so large as to call for this expenditure, and, for general purposes connected with meteorological or astronomical observations, we could obtain the necessary information from the observatories of the other colonies. The sum proposed was altogether inadequate for the purpose in view, and we could not afford it at the present time when there were other necessary works calling for our attention. Therefore he moved that the item be struck out.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) hoped the hon. member would not press his motion. The Premier had already informed the House as to the desirability of our having an observatory, and there could be no doubt on that point. As to the amount not being sufficient, we must first make a beginning. Rome was not built in a day, nor would this observatory be completed this year. This was only a contribution towards it, and towards a most desirable object.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had already spoken on this subject when making his budget speech, and he did not intend to say much more. Of course it was for the House to say whether the time had arrived for commencing this building. He himself thought it had, and it was the opinion

of the Government that something should be done in the direction of encouraging scientific pursuits in this colony. There were many useful purposes served by an observatory besides merely ascertaining true time. It was a duty cast upon all these young colonies, he thought, in this Southern part of the world, to do something towards the promotion and development of science. Even for the sake of weather reports alone, an observatory would be most valuable. These reports were not properly looked after here now, because we had not the necessary appliances. An observatory would also be very useful in training young people who proposed to follow scientific pursuits, such as surveying or navigation; it would afford them facilities for obtaining a short course of instruction in those studies, such as were afforded in other parts of the world. At present, the youths of this colony were handicapped in this respect, as compared with youths in the other colonies. He believed this observatory would be useful in a great many ways, and do a great deal of good, and at the same time give us a status in the scientific world that the colony did not at present possess. If members thought otherwise, and were adverse to this vote, of course the Government would not press it to a division. At the same time he should be sorry to see it thrown out. We had a magnificent site for it on Mount Eliza, and he thought it was about time we made a start with it, now that we were entering on a progressive stage of our history.

MR. DE HAMEL said it appeared they were asked to vote this £2,000 just for a start, and that hereafter they would be asked for a much larger sum.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not very much.

MR. DE HAMEL said it was no good our having an observatory unless we had it well equipped, and had a thoroughly scientific man at the head of it. Therefore we would be saddling the colony not only with this £2,000, but with at least £10,000 before this observatory was completely equipped. What we had to look at was this: were we at the present time, with this Midland Railway cloud hanging over us, in a fit state to go and toss away the so-called surplus in starting a thing which was likely to turn out a "white

elephant" for us? The Premier said he would not divide the House on this vote. He was glad to hear that, because he hoped the voices would settle the question at once that we must draw the line somewhere with this unnecessary expenditure.

MR. RICHARDSON said he could not help agreeing with the hon. member for Albany to some extent. He thought there was rather a tendency to presume a little too much on our presumed prosperity. He thought it was quite possible that there might be somewhat of a cloud on the horizon besides the Midland Railway cloud which had been referred to, and a bigger cloud than we would care for. He thought it was our duty to concern ourselves rather with the stern realities of life than with ornamental luxuries. He agreed that this £2,000 would only be an iota of the subsequent expenditure necessary if this observatory was to be properly equipped and properly looked after. It would probably require £2,000 or £3,000 a year to maintain it. He did not think the time had yet arrived for the colony to indulge in any needless or avoidable expenditure. We had a flourishing revenue, no doubt; but we had no guarantee at all that it would be kept up. He hoped it would, but he did not think it would be safe to presume too much upon it. He thought, at any rate, we might well postpone this item, and some other items, until next year, when our prosperity, perhaps, may be more assured.

MR. R. F. SHOLL (who entered the House at this stage) said he regretted very much he was not there earlier, as it had been his intention to have asked the committee whether it would not have been advisable to have postponed the consideration of the whole of this "Works and Buildings" vote until they had before them the proposals of the Government in connection with rendering further assistance to the Midland Railway. It was very clear to him that if they were going to find money for any extraneous purposes it would be impossible for them also to provide out of current revenue sufficient money to carry out all these public works schemes. They must take into consideration it was not merely the first cost of these works, but their upkeep afterwards—which in some cases

meant a large expenditure—that had to be thought of. Judging from the report of the Premier's speech at the railway excursion yesterday, the House was to be asked to agree to some scheme of further assistance in reference to the Midland Railway, and he was sorry he was not in his place when this vote came on, so as to move that it be postponed until this other proposal came before them. As to this observatory, he looked upon it, in our present circumstances, as a luxury we could well do without. Our taxation, as he had said before, was already in excess of that of any other Australian colony; our population was small, and our territory large; and the increasing calls upon the revenue, on account of public works all over the colony, demanded our gravest consideration, apart from any assistance for extraneous schemes not connected directly with the Government of the colony. It was all very well for colonies with large populations and large revenues to indulge in such scientific luxuries as observatories; and as for this £2,000, every member must come to the conclusion that it was only enough to make a start, and that very soon we should be called upon to provide £10,000 or £12,000 to complete the work. He also thought that when the time came for indulging in the luxury of an observatory, it ought to be at Fremantle, for the benefit of the shipping.

Question put—That the item be omitted—and agreed to, on the voices.

MR. CANNING, referring to the item "Perth Park, £2,000," moved that it be struck out. The same arguments applied to this as to the observatory. However desirable a park might be as a place for recreation in large and crowded cities, it could not be said that our present population in Perth was so large as to cause any pressing demand for this park. We had abundance of room to circulate in any direction; we had no overcrowded localities, as they had in the congested centres of population in the large cities at home, and there was no immediate necessity for this expenditure. The time would come when a park would be very desirable, and it would be time enough to incur this expenditure then, for this £2,000 was only the first instalment of an expenditure that must be increased hereafter if this park

was going to be converted into a place worth visiting at all. He was sure if this park were now formed, it would be made use of by but a very small portion of the population, situated where it was, and approachable only through a heavy sandy road. There were many works more urgently required in other parts of the colony which some of our surplus funds might be devoted to in preference to this park. He need not point out those works; they would suggest themselves to most hon. members. He thought that rigid economy should be the order of the day.

MR. MOLLOY said he totally disagreed with the hon. member for East Perth as to there being no necessity for this park. Seeing that Perth was the capital of the colony, and that so little expenditure of public money had been made here of late years, he thought the city had a strong claim upon some of the spare funds at the disposal of the Government. It was all very well for the hon. member to talk about rigid economy; it was rather late to start that cry now, when they were nearly at the end of these Estimates. It was strange that the hon. member had not thought of this before, and that he should reserve it until these grants for the city of Perth came on for discussion. He thought the formation of this park was a very necessary work, in view of the increasing population we all hoped to see very shortly. It was necessary not only for purposes of out-door recreation, but also on sanitary grounds. He thought that from a sanitary point of view alone this expenditure was justifiable. These were about the only available park lands we now had as lungs for the city, and he thought the House might well afford this small portion of our surplus revenue to providing the capital of the colony with this very necessary work. He was surprised that the very first member to oppose it was a member representing a portion of the city. He thought it was false economy to object to the expenditure of such a small sum for such a desirable object, and he trusted that members generally would resent the proposal to strike out this item.

MR. PARKER said, before they went any further, would the Premier kindly explain how it was proposed to expend this £2,000?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that so far as the Government had yet thought out the matter the intention was to expend it in improving this fine piece of ground at the top of Mount Eliza, where there was a reserve of 1,000 acres, set apart some years ago for a public park. He had no doubt that one of the first things that would be done would be to fence the ground and clear it of scrub and undergrowth, and lay it out with roads and paths. He believed this vote would probably be exhausted by these operations, which, at any rate, would be a beginning, to be followed by other expenditure in future years. This park was capable of the greatest amount of improvement. There might be magnificent drives extending many miles throughout the area, with ornamental walks, ponds with swans and ducks floating on the water, and altogether this park might be made an attractive resort for all the people of Perth on holidays and Sundays. The Government wanted to do for Perth what was done for, he might say, every city throughout the world. Hon. members who had travelled would have seen the beautiful Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, extending over hundreds of acres; the Centennial Park at Randwick, near Sydney, once a region of swamps and now made beautifully attractive. These and other public parks and gardens which helped to beautify the capital cities of Australia would show what could be done. This reserve on the Mount was as suitable for a park as any area in Australia, and all that it needed was money spent on it, under proper management. In fact £100,000 might be spent in improving such a magnificent area of park land. The intention now was to make a beginning, and they hoped to be able to vote very much larger sums in the future.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said all things must have a beginning, and it was time that this park for Perth should have a beginning. The capital of the colony was a place of resort for the whole population, and it ought to be beautified and made more attractive, so that when people did visit Perth they might find enjoyment in its public grounds. In the other colonies all classes of the population, down to the poorest, might be seen en-

joying the beautiful places of public recreation. The present was an appropriate time to take out of our available surplus this sum for making a start with this new park. He would like to have seen £1,000 put down for a park at Fremantle also.

MR. RICHARDSON agreed with the Premier that this park was capable of swallowing up £100,000; but other colonies who had made beautiful parks had millions of revenue to draw on, whereas this colony had only a small revenue. He would rather see the river side improved, as they could, at least, see something for the money there. But they might spend £10,000 or £20,000 on this park before they would see anything for it. He did not wish to be regarded as a croaker; he had every faith in the future of the colony, but he did not like to see us presuming too much on our present financial prosperity. This prosperity might not last; indeed there were already indications of dark days looming for, at any rate, some portions of the colony, and this was not the time for indulging in luxuries. We had quite enough to do to provide necessaries. We might yet (metaphorically speaking) have to consider how we were going to provide ourselves with plain bread and butter, without talking about luxuries.

MR. PARKER would like to see Perth beautified as much as anyone; and he would not oppose anything which he really thought would conduce to the comfort and happiness or enjoyment of the citizens. But he did not see how this expenditure on the hill would conduce to the comfort, happiness, or enjoyment of the people. He doubted whether any of the inhabitants would go up that enormous hill to the park. Only those who rode could go there. The hill was too steep for walking, and, until there was cheap and easy means of communication, the hill would not be a popular resort. The Government some years ago cleared and planted Victoria Park, at the east end of the city, which was handed over to the municipality, who, he was sorry to say, had allowed the park to go to rack and ruin. It was very little used by the inhabitants. Let the Government reclaim the river-side, by laying a tramway to the hill and tipping the material along the foreshore for

levelling it up. That area when levelled up would provide a hundred times more enjoyment for the public than if money were spent on the top of Mount Eliza. If the Government would devote £4,000 to the reclamation of the foreshore he should be prepared to support it, but he could not support this other expenditure, for he honestly did not believe it would be money well spent in the interests of the community. There was another way in which the Government might largely benefit the inhabitants of the city, and that was by securing sites on the banks of the river, where picnic parties might land and enjoy themselves. These picnic sites along the river banks were being enclosed by private owners, and there was an increasing want of such spots to be reserved for public enjoyment. The Government should purchase some suitable spots along the river, equally available for the people of Perth and the people of Fremantle.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) explained that when he was Commissioner of Crown Lands he reserved several sites along the river for public recreation. At Point Resolution there was a considerable reserve, and down to the Coombe; and there were other choice spots. At South Perth there was also a considerable quantity of land reserved for recreation; in fact all the available places were reserved as recreation grounds.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought it would be useless to spend money on this so-called park. The reclamation of the river frontage would be much more advantageous for the recreation of the people than climbing up Mount Eliza. It would take £100,000 to make that area into a beautiful park, and it would be better to spend £500 first in constructing a good road up to the park. He would not object to the amount being increased for reclaiming a portion of the foreshore, but he did object to throwing money away on this sandy ground, which would produce nothing.

MR. A. FORREST said the soil on the Mount was capable of growing anything. He had tried it, a mile beyond the park, and had an excellent vineyard there.

MR. MOLLOY said the fertility of the soil was evidenced by the beautiful flower gardens to be seen attached to the villa residences on the hill leading up to this

park. He believed the soil could be made to grow anything, with a little irrigation; and, as they now had the waterworks with its reservoir close to this ground there would be no difficulty about a water supply. He thought those who opposed this vote should not exhibit such a begrudging spirit, and such short-sightedness, and such false economy, after voting thousands and thousands of pounds in other directions without a murmur.

MR. DE HAMEL said he was sorry to have to vote against this item, but he did think the time had not arrived for spending a considerable sum of money in the formation of this park. It was all very well to talk about the beautiful parks in the other colonies, with their large revenues and large populations. What was our small handful compared with the population of those colonies? The time would come when the colony could probably well afford to indulge in this expenditure, but it had not yet come. He did not think they would be justified in committing the country to an expenditure of thousands and thousands of pounds in providing parks in inaccessible situations. He sympathised with the intention to spend £2,000 in reclaiming the river foreshore for a public recreation ground, but he could not support this park vote on the present occasion, whatever he might be inclined to do hereafter.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said as the hour was getting late, and there was a thin House, he would move to report progress.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 6 o'clock, p.m.