

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT said that this Bill was brought in to give the Commissioner of Railways power to take the land as well as to abolish the rights-of-way.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): Only the land at the ends of the streets.

Clause agreed to.

The remaining clauses were passed, and the Bill reported.

#### JURY EXEMPTION BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

#### TRANSFER OF LAND BILL.

This Bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 10 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 20th December, at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

*Monday, 19th December, 1892.*

Reorganisation of the Colonial Hospital—Sums paid by Government to Newspaper proprietors—Bills of Sale Act Further Amendment Bill: first reading—Jury Exemption Bill: third reading—Transfer of Land Bill: third reading—Mr. Allison Smith's Report on the Railway Workshops and Locomotive Department—Retirement of Inspector Rowe from the Police Service—Legislation for prevention of fires caused by sparks from Railway Engines—Commission on Government Auction Sales—Scab Act, 1891, Amendment Bill: recommitted—West Australian Trustee, Executor, and Agency Company (Private) Bill: in committee—Industrial and Reformatory Schools Bill: message from the Legislative Council—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### REORGANISATION OF COLONIAL HOSPITAL.

MR. QUINLAN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier, whether the Government intended to take steps, dur-

ing the recess, with a view to the re-organisation of the Public Hospitals?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government would not be able to do anything in the matter until the present hospital was enlarged.

#### SUMS PAID BY THE GOVERNMENT TO NEWSPAPER PROPRIETORS.

MR. R. F. SHOLL rose to ask the following question standing in his name—If the returns already laid upon the table of the House, in regard to the moneys paid and due to the proprietors of the various papers mentioned, include all moneys paid or due to them for all services rendered, whether by advertisements or otherwise?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will ask the hon. member to postpone his question until to-morrow. The wording of it is so obscure that I hardly understand it. If he means moneys paid for job printing, I will make inquiries. I don't know of anything else except subscriptions.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I mean all and every expenditure.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What sort of expenditure?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: All sums paid by the Government to newspaper proprietors, other than for advertisements. I do not particularly want the amounts paid for subscriptions, but there may be other items.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What sort of items?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Any items. There may be no other items, but if there are, they are very easy ascertainable. My question is plain enough.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will try and get him the information to-morrow.

#### BILLS OF SALE ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), and read a first time.

#### JURY EXEMPTION BILL.

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

#### TRANSFER OF LAND BILL.

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

MR. ALLISON SMITH'S REPORT ON  
THE RAILWAY WORKSHOPS AND  
LOCOMOTIVE DEPARTMENT.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I rise, sir, in accordance with notice, to move "That in the best interests of the colony this House is of opinion that the Government should, without delay, give effect to the recommendations of Mr. Allison Smith, as set forth in his report to the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways upon the Workshops and Locomotive Branch of the Railway Department of this colony." When I moved, the other day, that this report should be laid on the table of the House, I had no idea that the report was such an important one as affecting the working of the railways of the colony. I think this is a report that we might fairly have expected the Government to lay on the table of this House without its being necessary for any member to move a resolution asking for it. From this report we see that the advice given by this gentleman, who came here specially to report on the subject, not only deals with the working of our railways, but also with the financial position in connection therewith. In the second paragraph of his report he says: "It will be noted that the cost for "all locomotive charges per train mile in "Western Australia for last year was "6'81 pence higher than on the New "Zealand Railways of the same gauge, or "equal to 33 per cent. of the whole "expenditure. This amount, calculated "upon your probable locomotive expendi- "ture for the current year of £45,700, "amounts to, say, £15,000; and, as the "lines extend and more mileage is run, "unless immediate steps are taken to find "a remedy, the loss to your taxpayers "must increase in a similar ratio." He says he attributes a large proportion of this excessive cost to the absence of proper accommodation in the shape of convenient engine sheds, and well-designed and efficiently equipped workshops. It appears, therefore, that the colony is losing £15,000 a year owing to the unsuitableness of the present site and want of proper accommodation. He says: "From the situ- "ation and plan of the existing shops, "extensions are impracticable, and any "money spent upon them, except in the "way of purely temporary conveniences, "must be ultimately wasted." And again he says: "In my opinion the present

"repairing establishment cannot possibly "be developed into workshops such as "will ere long be absolutely necessary for "the safe and economical working of the "large business which the railways already "constructed and authorised must require. "It is also reasonable to suppose that "this mileage will be increased." Then he goes on to say: "After most careful "investigation of the subject, and taking "into consideration the local circum- "stances, and being duly sensible of the "great responsibility involved in comply- "ing with your request that I should "advise upon a question of such import- "ance as that of 'putting the railway "workshops of a growing colony into such "a condition as will ensure a maximum "of efficiency at the least possible cost,' "I have come to the conclusion that the "present site should be abandoned as "soon as it is possible to complete and "equip a new establishment, properly "designed, to meet the present and "rapidly increasing necessities of the situ- "ation." It seems from this that it is absolutely necessary for the Government to take some steps for remedying the present state of affairs. The monetary loss sustained by the colony is said to be £15,000 a year; but this monetary loss is as nothing compared with the safety of the lives of the travelling public. It is incumbent upon the Government, in the interests of the travelling public, whose lives are endangered, to do something to put the working of our railways on a safe footing. This report, in my opinion, deserves the most careful consideration on the part of the Government, and of the members of this House. I am not at all wedded to my own motion, and I shall be glad if some member will move that the matter be referred to a select committee. When the Government selected this gentleman from Victoria to come here to report upon these workshops, no doubt they picked upon a man on whom they could place every reliance, and I am surprised myself that the Government should have allowed this matter to rest so long, in the face of this report, without taking some action. I know their excuse will be—no funds. I think that is one reason why this matter should be referred to a select committee, by whom the question of funds might be considered. I do not think there need

be much difficulty about funds. There was a little Bill brought into the House the other day under which it was proposed to take £40,000 out of the Immigration Vote. As that Bill has been withdrawn, I think that sum might very well be appropriated to a work of this kind. I see that Mr. Allison Smith estimates that the whole of the alterations which he recommends will cost about £50,000, extending over two or three years. If that £40,000 which it was proposed to expend in carrying out the Premier's homestead scheme were to be applied to this work, a commencement could be made with it immediately. I think it is only fair to the town of Fremantle that the select committee should endeavor to obtain all the evidence they can to confirm or to contradict the conclusions arrived at by Mr. Allison Smith. That gentleman suggests that the workshops be removed from Fremantle, as the present site is unsuitable, and he suggests a site at Guildford. I am not in any way wedded to any particular site, myself, and, if possible, I would rather see these workshops remaining at Fremantle, if sufficient land can be obtained there for carrying out the design suggested. I believe it has been hinted that I have brought forward this motion on personal grounds, that I am interested in property at Guildford. [THE PREMIER: No, no.] I assure members I do not hold any land in Guildford, and I hope the House will not run away with that idea. I trust members will give the matter every consideration, and that no time will be lost in giving effect to these recommendations of Mr. Allison Smith. It may be hard upon Fremantle to lose such a large expenditure of money as is going on in connection with these railway workshops; still, in a matter like this, we must consider the welfare and interests of the colony generally, more especially when the safety of the travelling public depends upon our having sufficient workshops provided for the safe working of our railways.

MR. DEHAMEL: I have the greatest pleasure in supporting this motion of the hon. member for the Gascoyne. I think the thanks of the colony are really due to him for bringing this important matter under the consideration of this House. It seems to me, however, that our task

to-night is an easy one, because we have placed before us, without exception, one of the most admirable reports that it has ever been my good fortune to read. As a rule, when we get reports of this kind, the author generally tries, as far as possible, to reconcile some conflicting or antagonistic interests which cannot be reconciled; but in this case we have nothing of the sort. A more uncompromising document was never placed before this House. Mr. Allison Smith, in this report, goes straight to the crucial point, and sweeps away all irrelevant considerations. I think the report may be boiled down into three axioms or main truths which it lays down. These are, firstly, that the expenditure on our locomotive service is 33 per cent. higher than it ought to be; secondly, that this excessive expenditure is occasioned by the inefficiency of our present workshops; and, thirdly, that these shops cannot possibly be developed into an establishment that will meet the requirements of the colony, even in the near future. It seems to me we may accept these three facts as axiomatic truths. Mr. Smith's words are: "From the situation and plan of the existing shops, extensions are impracticable, and any money spent upon them—except in the way of temporary conveniences—must be ultimately wasted." No one could use stronger, no one could use more direct language than that, in any report. And, further, Mr. Smith says distinctly: "I have come to the conclusion that the present site should be abandoned as soon as it is possible to complete and equip a new establishment, properly designed, to meet the present rapidly increasing necessities of the situation." To me these words are of the deepest import. It seems to me that language cannot be clothed in words more forcible than these; and it seems strange to me that, in the face of this report, which is dated the 22nd July, the Government should have taken no action on it; but rather shown a "masterly inactivity" in doing nothing, and actually not producing this important report until it was wrung from them by the action of my hon. friend the member for Gascoyne. It is strange to me that a report like this, dealing with matters of such importance to the public, should be left not to the Government but

to the Opposition to place before this House and the public. I would ask what has been the cause of this? I would ask the Premier whether any fears of interfering with Fremantle interests had anything to do with it? I am afraid so. But are the interests of this colony to be sacrificed to the political exigencies of any party? I say the Government have no right to regard this question from any selfish, or any local, or any single standpoint. The interests concerned in a work such as this are far too important for the colony to be passed over without immediate action. What are those interests? We have the answer put before us very plainly in this report: with our present inefficient establishment we are losing 33 per cent. more than we ought to lose.

MR. SOLOMON: That is on the whole working of our railways.

MR. DEHAMEL: Mr. Allison Smith does not say so. Mr. Allison Smith says:—"I attribute a large proportion of "this excessive cost to the absence of "proper accommodation in the shape of "convenient engine sheds, and well-de- "signed and efficiently equipped work- "shops." There is the answer to that interruption. I say that the loss, according to this report, which the colony is put to is equal to £15,000 a year, or 33 per cent. of the whole of our locomotive expenditure. That is with our present 200 miles of railway only. But what have we coming upon us in the near future? We have our South-Western Railway to come, we have our Yilgarn Railway to come, and we have our Mullewa Railway to come, and, in addition to that, we shall probably have, ere long, the working of the Midland Railway thrown upon us—altogether an addition of no less than 700 miles to our present lines. We may, therefore, safely multiply this £15,000 which we are now losing by four, which will make an annual loss of about £60,000 that we shall have to meet in two or three years from the present time, unless this report is acted upon. I do not wish, however, to strain the matter; I will leave a fair and reasonable margin, and I will put it that our losses, when all these railways are opened, cannot be less than £30,000 annually. And what does £30,000 represent to a colony like this? It represents the interest on £750,000, or one-third of the

present total indebtedness of the colony. Yet, in the face of facts such as these, we find that the Government have sat idly by, carefully neglecting the present, and leaving the future to take care of itself. There seems to be an idea in some quarters that all we want, to send this colony ahead and attract population here, is to keep on borrowing money. But it is not the mere borrowing of money that will attract people to our shores. If people see that the Government of the colony are economising its resources and showing a judicious reduction in its public expenditure, and carefully managing the public estate, avoiding waste in every department, these things will do far more to give confidence in our colony and to attract population than all this piling up of burdens upon our shoulders, by the borrowing of public moneys. The day of reckoning, as the Premier himself has said, is at hand.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I never said anything of the sort.

MR. DEHAMEL: He says he never said anything of the sort. I refer him to his speech this very session, in which he told us the day of reckoning was at hand, and that if we did not do something we would have to see to it. I agree with him that the day of reckoning is at hand; and, when that day comes, it will be a most serious thing for us, if we are losing unnecessarily a sum of £30,000 a year in the management of our railways. With regard to the question of the best site for these workshops, I agree with my hon. friend the member for Gascoyne that it is not for us here to express any opinion upon that at present. I think it is a question that ought to go to the select committee, so that we may have every information on the subject before coming to any decision upon it. We have already unnecessarily lost seven or eight weeks over this matter, for this report ought to have been placed before us the first day we met. Had the Government done so, the whole matter might have been settled before this. I hope members will now accept the view of the hon. member for Gascoyne, and consent to this motion being referred to a select committee. As the hon. member himself cannot move for the appointment of a select committee, I will wind up by moving that this report be referred to a select committee.

**THE SPEAKER:** The hon. member cannot do that. I thought he was seconding the motion of the hon. member for the Gascoyne.

**MR. DEHAMEL:** So I am.

**THE SPEAKER:** Then the hon. member cannot move another question.

**MR. CANNING:** I have listened with attention to the speech of the mover of this resolution, and also to the hon. member for Albany. The question is no doubt a very important one, and one that certainly merits the fullest consideration; and I quite agree with the hon. member for Albany that, in order that the fullest information may be elicited, it ought to be referred to a select committee. I cannot, however, accept the hon. member's dictum that we are to accept every statement made by this gentleman in this report as an axiomatic truth. An axiomatic truth is a self-evident and necessary truth or proposition. This gentleman's statements are merely assertions, and I think we have a right to know and ascertain on what he bases his assertion that we are losing £15,000 a year through the workshops. If he had stated that we were losing £100,000 a year, we might have passed it over as hyperbole; but when he states that this colony is losing £15,000 annually by reason of the inefficiency of its locomotive department, we want some evidence to show upon what he bases his calculations. Therefore I think it is most desirable that the whole question be referred to a select committee.

**MR. SOLOMON:** As has been said by previous speakers, this is no doubt a very important question, not alone for Fremantle but to the colony at large. The hon. member who moved the resolution said he had brought it forward in the interests of the travelling public. The hon. member was apparently very much concerned about the lives of the travelling public, but, if that was the object he had in view, I think it would have been better if the hon. member had devoted his attention to the very dangerous grades on our Eastern Railway. He would have done better if he had called attention to the return placed on the table of this House the other day showing that some of these grades were as high as 1 in 21, a most dangerous state of affairs; and if the hon. member is so particularly anxious for the safety of the lives of the

travelling public he might have called attention to the danger which the travelling public incur when they have to travel over a grade like that. If the hon. member wishes to pose as a humanitarian, let him turn his attention to another document laid on the table of this House last year, showing the wretched accommodation provided at the Lunatic Asylum, where unfortunate human beings are suffering, and have been suffering for years, for the want of proper accommodation. The hon. member was aware of this, yet we do not find him bringing forward a resolution that the condition of these unfortunates should receive immediate attention.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** What has the Lunatic Asylum got to do with the question now before the House?

**MR. SOLOMON:** Only this: the hon. member made believe that he had brought forward this resolution from humanitarian motives, that he brought it forward because he was concerned about the safety of human lives, the safety of the travelling public. I say it is nothing of the kind. That was not what induced the hon. member to call attention to this report of Mr. Allison Smith's. As for the Government not having presented this report to the House before it was asked for, I presume the Government will be able to give us some explanation upon that point. But I should like to call the attention of the House to some portions of that report, and to show that the deductions of Mr. Allison Smith are not so well-founded as may appear to some hon. members. He says: "From the comparative return attached, (Appendix A), showing the cost of "working the locomotive departments of "the adjoining colonies and that of "Western Australia, it can at once be "seen that the impression which you "mention as prevailing here, to the effect "that the maintenance of your rolling "stock has been costing more than it "should do, as compared with similar "work in the other colonies, is well "founded." Now, sir, let us turn to Appendix A, which this gentleman calls a "comparative" statement. What do we find? We find a return purporting to show the relative cost of the locomotive departments in the various Australian colonies, but I find that this comparison is

not made in respect of the same year in each colony. With regard to New Zealand, we are given the returns for the year 1887; the returns for Victoria are for 1889-90; while the returns for the other colonies are for 1890 and 1891. How can you call that a comparative statement? The estimate, so far as our own colony is concerned, showing a loss of £15,000, is based upon the locomotive expenditure for the current year, yet, for the purposes of comparison, we are asked to take the returns of New Zealand for 1887, the returns of Victoria for 1889 and 1890, and the returns of Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia for 1890 and 1891. In not one single colony do we find the returns given for the same year as for Western Australia; yet we are told this is a comparative statement! But, assuming, for the sake of argument, that these returns are correct, what do we find is the difference between the total cost per mile here and the cost in the other colonies? The difference between us and New Zealand is certainly considerable—and I will refer to that presently; but the difference between us and Victoria is 4d., and between us and New South Wales it is only about 2d., and between us and South Australia it is about 4d. But why does he go back to the year 1887 for his New Zealand returns, and compare them with our own returns for 1891? Is that a fair comparison? I should also like to ask if this gentleman has taken into consideration the different conditions of the two colonies, as regards the number of miles of railway open for traffic, and the number of their population, and the relative volume of business done on the railways of the two colonies? Has he taken any of these things into consideration? If he has not, then I say these comparative returns and the deductions he draws from them are of very little value. In 1887 the population of New Zealand was 500,000, and at present it is 550,000, or about 500,000 more than the population of this colony. Yet this gentleman draws a comparison between the cost per mile of working our railways and the cost per mile in a colony possessing ten times our population. Then, again, in New Zealand the whole of their railways are supplied with coal procured from their own mines, and at a cost of from 10s. to 15s. per ton. On the Westport and the Greymouth lines—the two

best paying lines in the colony—the coal used for their locomotives only costs 10s. per ton. Then, again, the freight on coal in New Zealand (from 7s. 6d. to 10s.) is a liberal allowance, as the journey from the West coast ports to the East coast, where the main railway lines are, only occupies from two to three days. Then, again, look at the extent of the railway traffic in New Zealand, and the shipping facilities, as compared with this colony. As we all know, there are several lines of large steamers and sailers plying regularly between England and New Zealand, and, as these vessels are sure of homeward freight in the shape of frozen meat, wool, grain, flax, kauri gum, etc., their charges for outward freight is comparatively low. The steamers go direct to New Zealand ports, and no goods are transhipped, which is an important consideration, inasmuch as all railway material imported to the colony is placed almost at the door of the workshops. This reminds one of the importance of having our railway workshops at Fremantle, our principal seaport, instead of 20 miles inland. All these things are factors in reducing the cost of working the railways, and it is absurd to attempt to make a comparative statement when the conditions for working them economically are so favorable in one colony and so unfavorable in another. It has been said that there is an objection to having locomotive workshops near the seaboard. I understand that in New Zealand the two principal workshops are at a place called Addington and a place called Hillside. The Addington workshops stand on about 20 acres; they are the workshops used for the Canterbury railways—about 200 running miles. The Hillside establishment, which serves the Otago railways—about 300 running miles—stands on about 12 acres. Addington is twelve miles from the port, but Hillside is only a mile and a-half from Dunedin, a seaport town, and I am given to understand that the reason why the Addington shops were placed inland was because Lyttleton, the port of Christchurch, is situated in a very hilly locality, and there is no level ground available. Between Lyttleton and Christchurch a tunnel, costing half a million of money, was constructed, and hence the necessity for erecting the workshops in this case away

from the seaboard. But, at Hillside, the Government had level land near the seaboard, and they utilised it. So much for New Zealand, which this gentleman has held up to us as an example of what ought to be done in the way of economical railway working. It is said, in this report, that the difference in our railway expenditure as compared with the New Zealand expenditure is £15,000. But I would point out that this is based on the whole expenditure, and without reference to the price of coal, the amount of traffic, the difference in the grades, and other things. I may remind the House that by an arrangement which the Government have made for their coal supply this year, there will be a saving of £4,000 a year on that item alone. It is therefore absurd to say that the high cost of working our railways has been owing simply to the inefficiency of our locomotive workshops. With regard to the sites occupied by the workshops in the other colonies, besides New Zealand, I understand that in New South Wales they moved their railway workshops to a seaboard town, and paid at the rate of £2,000 an acre for the ground. That was at Redfern. Then in Melbourne they have their workshops at Newport, which is close to the Williamstown pier; and, in South Australia they have them at Islington, which is not very far from the seaboard. How is it that in all these colonies, where they have had railways for so many years, they find it necessary to have their workshops near a seaport? It is on account of the saving in haulage,—not one word about which is mentioned in this report. Yet it is a very important consideration. What was the main reason why it was desired to take our Yilgarn Railway by way of Northam instead of York? Was it not because we thought that a saving of 15 miles of haulage was a very great consideration? I can tell hon. members that the present haulage is about 7,000 tons per annum. I say it is absurd to attribute the high cost of working our railways to the position or inefficiency of these shops. While on that subject I should like to quote from the late Acting-Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Clayton Mason), who in his report for last year says: "There is 'an increase under this head'—that is, the cost of traction—'of £2,754 10s. 7d.,

"caused through working an increased  
"traffic over steep gradients with an in-  
"sufficient number of engines, and  
"the coal strike, which considerably  
"added to the cost of fuel (for a short  
"time as much as £5 per ton had to be  
"paid for coal delivered at Fremantle).  
"Under these circumstances it is a source  
"of congratulation that the work has  
"been carried on so economically, and the  
"result is chiefly due to the constant  
"care and energy displayed by Mr.  
"Mather, our able Locomotive Superin-  
"tendent. An indent for three powerful  
"locomotives was sent to the Crown  
"Agents in October, but in consequence  
"of the large orders in the hands of the  
"makers in England they cannot be ex-  
"pected to arrive before the end of 1891.  
"If my suggestion in the last Annual  
"Report, to order more engines at once,  
"had been adopted, a considerable saving  
"in cost would have been effected and  
"much inconvenience avoided." And,  
again, Mr. Mason says: "The total  
"number of vehicles in traffic is 290, no  
"additions to speak of having been made  
"during the year. This quantity, as I  
"have before pointed out, is altogether  
"too small for working even the present  
"traffic in a satisfactory manner. Dur-  
"ing the year six single-decked sheep  
"trucks have been converted into double-  
"deckers, thus increasing the carrying  
"capacity for our rapidly-increasing trade.  
"In the early part of the year an indent  
"was forwarded to England for two com-  
"posite Cleminson's saloons, 15 covered  
"goods trucks, two horse-boxes, and iron-  
"work for 25 high-sided trucks, and three  
"Cleminson's vehicles. In the ordinary  
"course of events these should have been  
"delivered before the end of the year,  
"but up to that time no advices had been  
"received. In my last Report I wrote as  
"follows:—'None of the wagon stock is  
"fitted with the vacuum brake. This is  
"an important matter, and funds should  
"be provided for the purpose without  
"further delay; thus saving expense in  
"working the goods trains and ensuring  
"greater safety.'" I think members  
will agree with me that it is obvious  
that a large share of the heavy cost of  
working our railways must be charged to  
other causes than our workshops. We  
know that only recently we have been  
compelled to import rolling stock from

New Zealand for the purpose of carrying on the increasing traffic, and what has been the result? Shortly after these importations arrived here they had to undergo repair, and that, I suppose, will be another charge upon our Locomotive Department. Not only that, but, in order that trains should run regularly and there shall be no stoppage of traffic, their repairs had to be done at night time, which, as members all know, must cause extra expense. We hear nothing about all these charges in this report. Everything is laid down to the position of our workshops. All the blame is placed upon the inefficiency of our Locomotive Department. I have no wish to say anything against the gentleman who wrote this report. We have heard a great deal said about his high qualifications, but it is known to us all that his administration of the locomotive branch of the Railway Department in Victoria has recently been the subject of inquiry and investigation by a Board appointed by the Government for that purpose; and Mr. Allison Smith found it necessary to appear by counsel, when these charges were being inquired into. I find, from the *Argus* of November 8th, that one of the charges or questions remitted to the Board was this: "Whether stores, material, and machinery have been procured of an unsuitable description and size, and have been ordered far in excess and in advance of requirements, and whether such stores, and material have accumulated, causing loss." Another question submitted to the Board, and upon which they took evidence was: "Whether stores have been improperly ordered, without calling for tenders, and whether contractors have been improperly allowed to vary the character of goods contracted for."

MR. R. F. SHOLL: What was the result of that inquiry?

MR. SOLOMON: I have not got the result. Whatever the result may have been it shows that there must have been some ground for challenging this gentleman's administration of his department. If the hon. member can show me that the result was wholly satisfactory so far as Mr. Allison Smith was concerned, let him do so. So far as I can ascertain, the matter is not yet settled. However, I have placed this matter before hon. members to let them judge for themselves

who the gentleman is who is responsible for this report. I have no more to say. I hope members will duly weigh this matter, and vote against this motion of the hon. member for Gascoyne.

MR. LOTON: I do not want to go at any great length into this question. I suppose we may be satisfied, at all events, of one thing: that this gentleman who has been round here reporting on this important branch of our railway system is an expert. I conclude he is a recognised expert in this particular branch of the business, and that after due inquiries on the spot he has given us his opinion, and this opinion he has based upon certain facts (so far as I can gather), and he has not put forward this report without some basis to work upon, as suggested by the hon. member for East Perth. This report is based upon certain returns showing the relative cost of working the railways in this and other Australasian colonies. Whether Mr. Allison Smith, in compiling these returns, selected them as being fair average returns, or whether he took advantage of the returns for some particular years in order to emphasise his remarks, I am not prepared to say. But the deductions arrived at by him certainly point to a very serious state of things in this colony connected with our Locomotive Department. If the loss in connection with this branch of the service is anything like what he represents, then certainly we must admit that it discloses a very serious position of affairs, and ought to be inquired into. I am not prepared to say that he has arrived at the correct state of things in this matter, and that his deductions are beyond all question; and I do not think any member in this House is prepared to substantiate all his statements. It seems to me that one of the first things the Government should do, in the face of this report, is to take the opinions of their own experts, and ascertain what those opinions are with regard to the opinions of this gentleman. I can scarcely believe, myself, that the fact of the locomotive workshops being situated at Fremantle causes an extra expense to the country of 33 per cent. over and above what this branch of the service would cost if these workshops were somewhere else. That does not look to me to be feasible. As to the question of the cost of haulage, I



do not think the question of haulage is affected so much by the position of these workshops as this gentleman imagines, because all materials have not to be used at Fremantle. Supposing these shops were established at Perth or at Guildford, the haulage would be about the same except as regards materials used between these particular points. Coal, for instance, when it has to be conveyed inland has only to be conveyed once. There is one strong point, however, in favor of having the locomotive workshops nearer the Darling Range, with its steep gradients, and that is we should have the more heavy or more powerful rolling stock available on the spot for these steep grades, and, in that case, the heavier rolling stock would not have to come to Fremantle at all, and the amount saved in that way would be very considerable. With regard to the motion now before us, as it stands, I do not feel I can give it my support, for it amounts to this: that this House requests the Government to go to the expense of £50,000, and the question is, where is the money to come from? At the same time, it does seem to me that if there is anything like truth in the deductions of the gentleman who wrote this report, that we are losing £15,000 a year in connection with this branch of our railways, the Government cannot make a start too soon in making the alterations recommended, because, in three years, at that rate, we should save nearly the whole amount of the cost of removing these workshops and erecting new ones somewhere else.

MR. LEFROY: I just wish to make a few remarks on this subject. Although this report was not laid on the table by the Commissioner of Railways at the beginning of the session, I feel sure the Government had not lost sight of it, and they must have been considering the question in some way, because the very fact of their having requested this gentleman to report on this branch of our railway service shows that they must have had some doubts as to the efficiency of the working of that branch, otherwise, I take it, we should not have had Mr. Allison Smith or his report here. The hon. member for East Perth has told us that this gentleman has not given us sufficient data to go upon; but I main-

tain that sufficient data are given, and they are based upon what I take it must be reliable figures. The hon. member for the Swan said he did not think we could be quite sure as to the truth of these figures, or where this gentleman got them, or whether they have been fairly taken. But I find here the certificate of our own Railway Accountant, stating that the figures are correct; and it appears to me that Mr. Allison Smith has conclusively proved from these certified accounts that we are losing at the rate of £15,000 per annum on the working of this one branch of our railway service—not on the working of the whole department, as the hon. member for South Fremantle says—calculated upon the basis of New Zealand expenditure. Of course that sounds a great deal of money, a loss of £15,000 a year; still, it is proved conclusively from these figures, and they have been certified as being correct, that such is the case.

MR. CANNING: The figures may be right, but the deductions may be wrong.

MR. LEFROY: If we are losing at the rate mentioned in this report, we must clearly be losing 33 per cent. more than we ought to. That is beyond cavil. Of course, there is another side to this question, and it is this: it must be relatively more expensive to work, per mile, say, 200 miles of railway, than it is to work 1,000 miles, which they have in New Zealand, and from that point of view it may be said that the comparison is not a fair one. If we were engaged in working the same number of miles as they are doing in New Zealand, the cost per mile would naturally be reduced. Just in the same way with the man who cultivates 50 acres of land; his expenditure per acre, or his profits per bushel, will be less than that of the man who cultivates 1,000 acres. Our Railway Department must have a certain amount of machinery, and the same machinery that is now required to work 200 miles of railway would probably suffice to work 1,000 miles. But there can be no doubt that, so far as the figures in this appendix go, we are now losing 33 per cent. upon the working of this locomotive branch of the department; and something should certainly be done to reduce this serious loss, and the Government should take the matter into their serious consideration. No doubt they have done

so, and possibly have been waiting for some expression of opinion on the part of this House on the subject.

MR. RICHARDSON: It appears to me that there are two courses open to us in this matter: either to leave it in the hands of the Government or do what they consider necessary, or have it referred to a select committee for further information and confirmation. I am inclined to think that it will come to this in the end: that these workshops will have to be shifted; and, no doubt, if it has to be done, the sooner the question is grappled with the better. At the same time, I can agree with what some members have said, that further information is necessary. I am not at all inclined to absolutely accept the *ipse dixit* of Mr. Allison Smith, without much fuller information than he has given us in this report. I have only glanced at the figures within the last few minutes, and a very casual perusal shows me that they contain some very grave inconsistencies. For instance, he takes the relative cost of working the railways in New Zealand and in this colony as the basis of his conclusions; but he appears to me to have lost sight of two important factors that ought to be taken into consideration when making this comparison. One is the number of miles of railways that have to be worked, and the volume of business or traffic upon those railways; and the other is the ruling gradients. Anyone can see that the cost *pro rata* of working a thousand miles of railway must be less than the cost of working 200 or 300 miles, and that the cost *pro rata* where there is a large traffic must be considerably less than where the traffic is limited, and the same machinery has to be employed. Then, again, as to the grades; we know very well that the heavy grades on one of our railways is the cause of very heavy expense in connection with our Locomotive Department, and this is an item which, so far as I can see, was not taken into calculation by Mr. Allison Smith at all. This, again, would very considerably affect the *pro rata* cost. Then, again, there is the cost of coal. We know that in some of the other colonies, and particularly New South Wales, coal is obtained at a much cheaper rate than we can get it here; yet I find that the cost of working their rail-

ways in New South Wales, with all her advantages, is not so very much lower than it is here, with our heavy gradients, our comparatively small traffic, and the high price of coal. I only mention these things to show that the figures given in this report are not quite conclusive, and that there are important considerations which Mr. Allison Smith has apparently lost sight of in making his deductions and his comparative statements, and that we want a great deal more information before we can pass judgment upon such an important question as this.

MR. A. FORREST: I should like to say a few words on this important subject, and they will be to this effect: after reading this report very carefully, I fail to see any good reason whatever why this colony, at the present time, should go to the expense of £50,000 in shifting the railway workshops from Fremantle to Guildford. If the hon. member for the Gascoyne, instead of moving in this direction, had moved that a Commission be appointed to inquire into the working of these workshops, I should have been happy to have supported him. We all know—it has become a by-word almost—that the management of the Government workshops is far from what it ought to be; and I think if Mr. Allison Smith had devoted his attention to re-organising the working of this department so as to improve the system of management, he would have found that the evil lies not in the fact that these workshops are situated at Fremantle but in the way these workshops are managed. Their removal to Guildford would not affect that. Why should we go to Guildford? Surely there are other places nearer than Guildford. It has been said there is no level ground, but, surely, sand is cheap enough here, and it would not be very expensive to level a piece of ground suitable for this purpose. We know that our sand makes one of the best foundations; we see it at Perth, and we see the Railway Department using it for levelling the ground for their new station. What the hon. member for the Gascoyne should have done was to have moved for an inquiry into the management of these workshops, and to have a thoroughly competent man placed at the head of them. As to Mr. Allison Smith, who, I may say, is a friend of mine, he was only

here a few weeks, and he makes out that our system of working our railways is all wrong, and that our workshops should be removed 20 miles inland, and thus cause an extra 20 miles of haulage for all the material used, and then have to be brought back 10 or 12 miles to Perth, where the principal traffic is concentrated. There are large interests at stake at Fremantle; and a large expenditure has been incurred in building the present workshops, and I fail to see why they should be removed at present. If there is not sufficient room on the present site, there are 40 or 50 acres more ground available on the other side, which would cost very little to level, and it would answer all our requirements, certainly as long as anyone in this House is likely to live. Why should we, on the recommendations of this gentleman, and these two sheets of paper, propose to incur an expenditure of £50,000, when we know that the real fault is the management of these workshops? Mr. Allison Smith may be a very clever man, but he was only here about three weeks, and I do not know that we ought to accept all his conclusions in this matter as gospel truth, when those who have lived in the country all their lives, and those who have been at the head of our railway affairs apparently knew nothing about it. I remember there was a great deal of agitation many years ago to have these railway workshops established in Perth, instead of at Fremantle, and I myself at that time thought they ought to be at Perth; but the head of the department at the time considered it would be better to have them at the seaport. I can see no good reason for shifting them now to Guildford. At any rate, there is no immediate necessity for it. We are a young and a growing country, and we do not yet know what may be necessary to be done to meet our future requirements in this direction; and I think we ought to wait a year or two, and see whether it would be advisable to shift these workshops from Fremantle or not. We do not know what may happen in a young and growing colony, in a few years. The capital of the colony may, by that time, have been removed to the district represented by my hon. friend on my right (Mr. Simpson), or to the district represented by the Hon. the Premier, or the district represented by the hon. member

opposite (Mr. DeHamel). There are other considerations why we should delay taking action in this matter at the present time. The only action now wanted is to put the management of these workshops on a better footing.

MR. PEARSE: I have listened with some attention to the debate on this important question, and I must confess I have not heard one single argument that would induce me to support this motion of the hon. member for Gascoyne. No doubt some improvement may be required in the present workshops, but I do not think that this is the only improvement required if we want to reduce the cost of working our railways. I think the main improvement required is in the grades on our Eastern Railway. If these heavy grades were reduced, the cost of working our railways would be very much less than at present. I do not think it is right to blame the workshops for this. I do not propose to say anything further on this point. I think we have at the head of our railway service a gentleman who is quite competent to deal with this question, and I should be inclined to leave the matter to a professional man who understands such questions. I do not think this is a question which this House is in a position to decide, and I am quite prepared, myself, to leave the matter in the hands of the Government and their professional advisers.

MR. SIMPSON: We have before us a report by an expert, Mr. Allison B. Smith, who was brought to this colony on a special mission, at the invitation of the Government and at the expense of the country, notwithstanding the fact that we have in our railway service perhaps one of the most accomplished men in the Southern hemisphere. But I presume it was considered wise by the Administration to secure the advice and assistance of another gentleman, whose professional reputation was beyond question, and whose independence was exactly in the same position. That professional gentleman says in his report that the question he was asked to advise upon was that of "putting the railway workshops of a growing colony into such a condition as will ensure a maximum of efficiency at the least possible cost." That was the question. In reply to that problem submitted to him, this accom-

plished man—and I hold that he is an accomplished man, notwithstanding the recent endeavor to cast some stain upon his reputation—says: “I have come to the conclusion that the present site should be abandoned, as soon as it is possible to complete and equip a new establishment, properly designed, to meet the present and rapidly increasing necessities of the situation.” I can quite understand the enthusiasm of the hon. members for Fremantle in their opposition to the removal of these railway workshops. Their enthusiasm on that point almost amounts to patriotism. But no one wants to hurt Fremantle, if it can be avoided. At the same time it is distinctly pointed out here that there is an absolute loss of £15,000 per annum to the Government of this colony in connection with the working of this particular branch of the Public Service. The hon. member for West Kimberley says we are a young and growing colony. I should like to point out that in young and growing colonies they cannot afford to pitch away £15,000 a year. We must also bear in mind that Mr. Allison Smith, when he speaks about our losing £15,000 a year, is only dealing with our present railways, with lines already opened; and we may take it, that unless something is done to improve the existing state of affairs, our losses will increase as our railways extend. But there is one question that does not seem to have occurred to this gentleman when preparing his report, and that is the fact that the gradients on portions of our Eastern line are extremely heavy, and cause a very large expenditure in our locomotive workshops. The shifting of the workshops, of course, will not affect that question, but there can be no doubt that, in the face of this report, some action should be taken. I am sure that no member of this House has the faintest idea of endeavoring to injure Fremantle. I am sure we are all proud of Fremantle—even to the hon. member for Albany. The only rivalry between Albany and Fremantle is simply the question of which of the two places shall become the Australian Brindisi. But, as for the railway workshops, it appears to me that a serious factor in increasing the cost of maintaining them is to be found in these extreme gradients on our East-

ern Railway, and I do not think Mr. Allison Smith has dealt with these gradients at all. I understand, however, that the Government propose shortly to suggest some scheme for reducing and improving these grades, and consequently reduce the charges of our locomotive branch. The fact has come to my knowledge that we have a railway in this colony whose locomotive branch is conducted at an expenditure of 30 or 40 per cent. less than our own State railways. I have been informed of that by a trustworthy authority. That is a question which I commend to the serious attention of the Government. Seeing the importance of the whole question, not only to the town of Fremantle, but also to the whole colony, I think the best object of a good Government would be served by referring this matter to a select committee, and I beg to move that the consideration of this report be so referred.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I am afraid that if I dealt with this matter as I should like to deal with it, I should have to detain the House to a late hour of the night, because the question is a very important one, and it is one that has been on my mind for some time past, and one that also should have weighed on the minds of the members of this House, if they had listened to what fell from me on two former occasions, when the railway estimates were before the House. However, I will not say very much to-night, but I hope that what I do say will be of interest and to the point. I may first say, in reply to the remarks made by the mover of the original motion, that this is a matter which has not escaped the attention of the Government. I think if the hon. member had reflected for a moment he would have known that the very existence of this report itself bore testimony to the fact that the Government had this subject on their minds, for, if Mr. Allison Smith had not been brought here by the Government to report on this question, the hon. member himself would not have been in a position to have made his remarks. With regard to what has fallen from another hon. member, the member for Geraldton, as to our having a very able and accomplished man of our own who could have advised us on this question, I may inform the hon. member

that it was at the request of that gentleman himself that the Government took the steps which resulted in Mr. Allison Smith coming here. However clever Mr. O'Connor may be, he himself felt, and I also felt, that the responsibility of dealing with this particular branch of the service was too great a responsibility to be thrown upon him or upon myself; and it was at the instigation of Mr. O'Connor himself that the Government decided to ask Mr. Allison Smith to come here. With regard to certain reflections that have been cast upon Mr. Smith's professional reputation, I may say that he is a man known all over Australia for his special ability in connection with the designing and management, and the location of locomotive workshops. He has been asked to advise the South Australian Government, and he was also called to New Zealand to advise that Government in connection with these questions, and he is also the designer of the finest railway workshops in Australia, at Newport, near Melbourne. So that, in asking for Mr. Allison Smith's advice, we were asking for the advice of the very best authority on this subject. Therefore we may take it that his report may be received with a great deal of confidence by this House. I may say again that the Government had no intention whatever of keeping this report back from the House; but the matter was under our consideration, and our very serious consideration, together with other very important matters—even more important than this—connected with our railways, and which are still under our consideration. We have not yet decided upon the exact course we intend to take; and, when I am prepared to come to this House and announce what decision we have arrived at, I only hope that hon. members will support us in the action we propose to take. Even if this report had not been called for, I may say that before many days the House would have been placed in possession of it, together with other reports dealing with other questions connected with our railways. Some doubts have been thrown upon the correctness of Mr. Allison Smith's figures, and it has been suggested that he may have not taken all the facts of the case into his consideration. But, as Ministerial head of the department, I may say that Mr.

Smith was not asked for his opinion upon such engineering questions as the gradients of our lines; he was simply asked to deal with the workshops. At the same time, I should say it must have occurred to a man of Mr. Smith's experience, that the railway grades on our railways must necessarily have affected the expenditure in connection with our workshops, and the reasonable inference is that he kept this in mind when instituting comparisons between the expenditure here and the expenditure in the other colonies which he mentions. Whether that was a fact or not, I should not like to say. Anyhow, my own opinion is that the improvement of our workshops is a very important matter. But it is not the most important matter in connection with the economical working of our railways. This was on my mind last year, when I drew the attention of this House to certain facts connected with this question, in their relation to our railway expenditure and revenue. I then pointed out that the ruling grades on our Eastern Railway were absolutely opposed to the economical working of our railways. I also gave some figures to the House, and pointed out that while we in this colony had to run 415,000 miles to earn £58,000, in New Zealand they only had to run 330,000 miles to earn £114,000. I am not quite sure about the exact figures, but that is a practical illustration of our position in regard to this question. Instead of making one journey to York, with so many tons, if our grades were different, we have to make two journeys. I pointed out these things to members last session, so that it will be seen that the Government have had this matter of a more economical working of our railways on their minds for some time past. At any rate, I have had it on my mind, and it is a question that has caused me many a sleepless night, for, whatever members may think about a Ministerial position, I can assure them that the responsibilities of my office do not sit very lightly upon my shoulders, and I often think, myself, that the game is not particularly worth the candle. The hon. member for the Gascoyne laughs. I hope some day to see the hon member sitting on this bench, and I may ask him then whether the burden of Ministerial responsibility sits lightly

on his shoulders, and, if he says it does, I shall not think much of him. The economical working of our railways and the safety of the public are matters that touch the Government very much indeed, —not only myself but all other members of the Government; and, in order to be able to deal with this very serious question of our railway grades, we have had an experienced engineer from Victoria here, who has surveyed this portion of our Eastern Railway, and who has suggested a deviation, in order to avoid them, and we hope we shall be able very shortly to commence the work. We shall then possibly have a ruling grade of not more than 1 in 45, instead of the present expensive grades; and this question of the workshops, although an important question in itself, may not then perhaps assume the proportions it now has, when we are told that it involves an expenditure of 33 per cent. beyond what it should do. With all due respect to the opinion of Mr. Allison Smith—and I have very great respect for his opinion, and for the opinions of experts in his position—I am rather disposed to think that he has slightly overlooked the effect of our grades in relation to the expenditure of our workshops. At the same time, there is not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that, in order to effect proper economy in the working of our railways, we must make very extensive alterations in our workshops, not only as regards the buildings but also the machinery generally, and also the local conditions. It will be a question for the Government to consider whether they should recommend an expenditure of £10,000, £15,000, or £20,000 in improving the present workshops, to meet our immediate requirements—and it will do no more,—or whether it will be more advisable to effect a more radical change, as suggested by Mr. Allison Smith, by removing the present workshops, and building new workshops elsewhere. It will be for this House to decide. So far as the Government are concerned, we would be the last people in the world to remove these workshops from Fremantle, except under the pressure of absolute necessity; and should it be the opinion of this House, when the proposals of the Government are submitted to them, that an absolute necessity exists for making a change, I feel sure

that even the members for Fremantle will accept that verdict with the very best grace. I do not know that the Government have any violent opposition to this matter being referred to a select committee, which might have the effect of strengthening our hands. But whether you have a select committee or not, the House will have before it all the information which the Government can possibly place before it.

**MR. CLARKSON:** What strikes me as strange in connection with this matter is that we should go to the expense of importing a competent gentleman from the other side to advise us, when we are supposed to have the greatest confidence in our own Locomotive Engineer (or whatever he is called). It is strange we should have to import a competent man from the other side to point out to us what a dreadful mess we are making of this business. The data upon which this report is based appears to me to be very meagre. They certainly leave room for doubt. No doubt the working of our railways with the present grades is a very costly affair, as I prophesied it would be; and I am sorry to learn that the Government intend to perpetuate the evil in another direction. With regard to this question of removing the workshops, I do not think that local interests should be taken into consideration, or weigh in the balance against the public interests. No doubt those who represent Fremantle will be very reluctant to see these workshops removed from that town; but I do not think that, as against the interests of the colony generally, local interests should be considered for one moment. I therefore have much pleasure in supporting the motion now before the House.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** As this is an important matter, perhaps I should say a few words. There is one important point that has not been touched upon by members who have spoken on the subject, but I, as Treasurer, must refer to it. No one has pointed out where this money is to come from to carry out these works. The hon. member for the Gascoyne certainly did suggest a diversion of the Immigration Vote for this purpose, but, as the hon. member is not behind the scenes, I may tell him that £40,000 will go a very little way to meet the demands made upon the Government

at the present time. Members have no doubt noticed that during the last few months we have entered upon great works in various parts of the colony, involving a large expenditure; and, before this House prorogues, I shall have to take members into my confidence, and I shall have to show them that we shall require a large amount of money in order to enable us to carry out the obligations cast upon us in connection with our railways and other matters. I shall have to show the House that £60,000 has been expended upon land which had to be resumed in Perth for railway purposes, and that we shall require £20,000 more in order to build a new railway station at Perth. I shall also have to show the House that £111,000 at least will be required in order to carry out the deviation works necessary in connection with the improvements necessary on our Eastern Railway. I shall have to show the House that £17,000 or £18,000 will be required in order to re-rail the whole of the Eastern Railway with 60lb. rails instead of 45lb. rails; and I shall have to show that something like £50,000 will be required for equipping that line. All these amounts will come to something like £240,000. [MR. CLARKSON: Enough to build a new line.] There is also the additional £50,000 asked for last year for the Mullewa Railway, which will increase our liabilities in connection with railway improvements to something like £300,000. Besides this, the hon. member now asks us to incur a further expenditure of £50,000 in connection with the railway workshops at Fremantle. [MR. R. F. SHOLL: You think nothing of £50,000 for the Midland Railway people.] There is a great deal to do in this young country of ours to keep pace with the times. But I see no cause for alarm, myself. Members may regard these figures with some apprehension, but they have been before me for some time, and I have got over the alarm, and am able to look at these questions quite equably. It only shows how we are progressing, and how our traffic arrangements are increasing, when we find all this rolling stock and equipments necessary to meet our growing requirements. I hope we shall not hesitate a moment in carrying out these necessary works, because I have it on good authority that we are now losing some £20,000 a year owing to the heavy

grades up the Darling Range, and that as our traffic increases we shall in a few more years be losing something like £40,000 a year, unless we undertake this deviation. Surely, if we are losing all this on account of these wretched grades, we should not hesitate a moment in altering them. With regard to this particular matter of the workshops, I would advise—and I do it with all respect—that this House should not move any further in this matter at the present time. I think the best plan will be for the House not to be in too great a hurry in this matter, but cast the responsibility where it ought to rest, and let the Government be responsible for this matter, and not hurry us more quickly than we want to go. We have not overlooked this question, but I told my hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways that before we decided upon it we should be in possession of the fullest information, not only from Mr. Allison Smith's Report, but that we should also have sections made of all available sites for these workshops between Guildford and Fremantle, and also of the locality of the present site at Fremantle and its vicinity. We also want the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, whose multifarious duties in connection with harbor improvements and other works have prevented him from dealing with this matter yet. I ask, is it wise for this House to deal now with what the Government have not yet had time to deal with? There is no particular hurry about it. I am rather of opinion that if the necessary improvements can be made at Fremantle, and sufficient ground can be obtained, we ought to endeavor to leave these workshops there, because the present site is convenient to the shipping. But there is a difficulty with regard to the extent of land available. It may suffice for our immediate requirements; but we have also to look to our future requirements. No doubt a great deal of the expense in connection with these workshops is caused in consequence of these terrible grades. At the same time, I think the closest supervision is necessary with regard to these workshops. I am not prepared to say that things are altogether what they should be in that place; but I have no doubt my friend the Commissioner will give the matter his attention. There is an immense expense there,

and it requires very careful supervision. I know it has caused my hon. friend a great deal of thought and anxiety for some time past. Having said this much, I ask the House to agree with me in withdrawing this motion at present. We are near the end of the session, and I do not think you would get a select committee to work during the Christmas and New Year holidays, or at any rate to deal with this matter in the way its importance deserves. We shall be having another session in a few months, and the matter is not very urgent. Seeing that we propose to deal with these grades, I would ask those who have moved in this other matter to withdraw it for the present, and leave it to the Government to deal with between this and our next meeting. If the Government are not then prepared to move in the matter, hon. members can then take any course they think is desirable.

MR. RICHARDSON: Will the Government be prepared to bring down some scheme next session?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We shall be prepared to tell you what we think should be done.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I must say I am astonished at the remarks of the gentleman who has the honor of being Premier of this colony at the present time. He says he does not know where the money is to come from to carry out this necessary reform in the working of the Railway Department. I would remind him that this £50,000 would not be required all at once; as Mr. Allison Smith points out, it would be spread over two or three years. It is admitted on all hands, by the Premier as well as everybody else, that something ought to be done to improve the present workshops, and I hope members will not be hoodwinked by any remarks that the Premier has made, about £60,000 being required for this, and £100,000 being required for that, and that he does not know where the money is to come from to carry out Mr. Allison Smith's recommendations. The Commissioner of Railways says that he spends many sleepless nights over this matter, and I am not surprised at it, considering what has been reported to us, and the prospect of the hon. gentleman being had up any day for manslaughter. I hope that the motion for referring this report to a select com-

mittee will not be withdrawn. No harm can possibly come out of it, and obtaining further information on this very important subject. I am astonished, I say, at the Premier saying he does not know where the money is to come from, when nothing is said about any difficulty in finding money to help the Midland Railway. The Government find no difficulty when a foreign company wants their assistance; £60,000 is nothing then. But when the money is required for our own railway, there is a difficulty in finding a paltry £50,000.

MR. SIMPSON formally moved, as an amendment, that all the words after the word "That" be struck out, and that the words "the report of Mr. Allison Smith upon the Locomotive Branch of the Railway Department be referred to a select committee" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Debate continued.

Question—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question—put and negatived.

Question—That the words proposed to be struck out, be struck out—put and passed.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted, be inserted—put.

A division being called for, the numbers were:—

Ayes ...	13
Noes ...	15

Majority against ... 2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Baker	Mr. Burt
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. Canning
Mr. Cookworthy	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Darlôt	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. DeHamel	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Harper	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Molloy
Mr. Loton	Mr. Pearse
Mr. Monger	Mr. Piesse
Mr. H. W. Sholl	Mr. Phillips
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Traylen	Mr. Richardson
Mr. R. F. Sholl (Teller).	Mr. Solomon
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Paterson (Teller).

Amendment negatived, and original motion lapses.

#### RETIREMENT OF INSPECTOR ROWE FROM POLICE SERVICE.

MR. QUINLAN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House the correspondence relating to the contemplated retirement of Inspector Rowe from the Police service



should be reconsidered by the Government with a view to his being dealt with under section 8 of the Superannuation Act, 1871, instead of under section 5, on the ground of special services rendered, and because of the error of the Commissioner of Police in recommending him under section 5 of the said Act, and also in omitting to forward for the consideration of the Government any record of his services or referring in any way to his unblemished and active career." The hon. member said: I move this motion from a sense of duty, inasmuch as I consider it devolves on an hon. member to bring before this House any case worthy of its consideration, when called upon to do so by a constituent. I have been particularly careful in the wording of this motion, knowing the rules of this House with regard to money matters; and all I ask is the reconsideration by the Government of a subject which they have already had in their hands. The motion points to an error by the Commissioner of Police, in having recommended that Inspector Rowe's case should be dealt with under section 5 instead of section 8 of the Superannuation Act. I take it to be an error, inasmuch as the Commissioner must be aware of the length and the valuable nature of the services rendered by this officer, his career extending over some 24 years in the Government service of this colony, and seven years of service under the Imperial Government previous to his arriving here. I refer to this long and unblemished career in order to commend the motion to the sympathies of hon. members. Section 5 of the Act, under which Inspector Rowe's case has been erroneously dealt with, provides for the granting of gratuities for short services only, as follows:—"It shall be lawful for "the Governor in Executive Council to "grant to any person who, being the "holder of an office in respect to which a "superannuation allowance should be "granted, is constrained by infirmity of "mind or body to leave the Public "Service before the completion of the "period which would entitle him to a "superannuation allowance, such sum of "money by way of gratuity as the "Governor in Executive Council may "think proper, but so as that no such "gratuity shall exceed the amount of one "month's pay for each year of service."

In this case, I venture to say that Inspector Rowe's application for leave to retire on account of bodily infirmity, at the age of 54 years, should have been dealt with under section 8, which provides for special services in the following manner:—"It shall be lawful for the "Governor in Executive Council to grant "to any person any superannuation, "compensation, gratuity, or other allowance, a greater amount than the amount "which might be awarded to him under "the foregoing provisions, when special "services rendered by such person, and "requiring special reward, shall appear "to him to justify such increase; but so "that such allowance shall in no case "exceed the salary and emoluments enjoyed by the grantee at the time of "retirement; and the grounds of aforesaid "increase shall be stated in a minute of the "Governor in Council, which shall be "laid before Parliament and be subject "to the confirmation of the Legislative "Council." I appeal to the good feeling of members of this House to support me in asking the Government to re-consider the case of Inspector Rowe. He was offered by the Government £170 gratuity and six months' leave of absence on full pay; but I would point out that if he had remained another six years in the service, until he attained the age of 60 years, he would become entitled to a considerable amount per annum as pension: in fact he would be entitled even now, for having served seven years as inspector, to about £40 per annum, whereas the gratuity of £170 offered by the Government appears to me to be an insufficient recognition of the valuable services rendered by this officer. He originated, and for a long time directed, the police detective department of this colony; and he has been particularly noted with regard to various cases, some of which had not seen the light of day until he took them in hand, with results beneficial to the community. It is right that I should acknowledge the fact that, previous to his accepting the office of inspector some years ago, he certainly did receive a gratuity from the Government; but that gratuity was simply paid out of a fund which had been largely contributed to by himself, namely, the Police Benefit Fund; so that, owing to the services he had rendered, the greater portion of that

gratuity was actually his own money paid back again. The information supplied to me is that Inspector Rowe has originated and directed the detective department during eleven years; and that he for a considerable time compiled and edited the *Police Gazette*. I leave it to hon. members, some of whom are known to be in sympathy with this motion, to substantiate and give further information in support of what I have stated, in asking the Government to reconsider this matter. I will refer also to section 9, which provides for cases of infirmity when the person is under 60 years of age, Inspector Rowe's age being now about 54 years; and I may say that, owing to exposures while performing arduous services for the country, he is now afflicted to such an extent that he finds it necessary to retire from the service at the age of 54 years, and holds certificates from two medical practitioners which substantiate his claim to be considered under section 8 in lieu of section 5 of the Superannuation Act. Section 9 provides as follows:—"It shall not be lawful to grant any superannuation allowance, under the provisions of this Act, to any person who is under 60 years of age, unless upon medical certificate to the satisfaction of the Governor in Executive Council that he is incapable, from infirmity of mind or body, to discharge the duties of his situation, and that such infirmity is likely to be permanent." In asking the Government to reconsider this matter, no harm can arise from their doing so; and I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not reflect in any way upon the Commissioner of Police in saying that the recommendation he made was an erroneous one, for I think he acted conscientiously, and it would not be fitting in me to omit saying so. In conclusion, I ask the Government to accept this motion in the spirit in which I have placed it before the House; and whatever may be the result of the motion, Inspector Rowe will be at liberty, I suppose, to take any other steps he may think necessary.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member no doubt is acting in this matter on behalf of one of his constituents. Well, that is one of the things we have to do for those who send us to

Parliament. We have to listen to their grievances, and when we think they are reasonable we have to represent them to this House. But, in dealing with the application of Inspector Rowe, the Government are not free agents: they are merely carrying out the law. The facts, as far as I remember them, are simply these: this gentleman entered the police force many years ago, and was promoted gradually in the service until he became an Inspector. By the rules of the service, as soon as he became inspector he ceased to contribute to the Police Benefit Fund, and was granted his gratuity under the regulations. The members of the force contribute so much out of their pay to that fund, and there is a grant from the Government of £1,000 a year in aid of the fund. All constables up to the rank of inspector, after so many years' service, receive this gratuity; and each can receive it when leaving the service—that is in the case of promotion to the rank of inspector. That is a great advantage, because a member of the force can utilise this money, which in some cases amounts to several hundred pounds. But it is not so in the case of a public officer, who has no right under the regulations to draw his pay until he retires from the service, or is superannuated after reaching a certain age, or through infirmity. This officer entered the Civil Service as an Inspector of Police, and after serving seven years was unfit to perform his duties by reason of ill-health. He then applied to be relieved, and his application came before us in the usual way. I think the hon. member made a mistake in saying the Commissioner of Police erroneously recommended the case to be dealt with under a wrong section of the Act. The Commissioner of course knew the law, and he brought the application before the Ministerial head of the department, and eventually it came before the Cabinet and the Executive Council. Whatever the Commissioner had recommended, the case would there be investigated on its merits, the services of the officer would be taken into consideration, and also any special services he might have rendered, and it would be competent for the Council to recommend that his case should be dealt with under section 8, and that an amount should be added to his gratuity for those special

services. But under the Act, unless a person serves at least ten years, he is not entitled to a pension; he is entitled only to a gratuity. In this case the gentleman was dealt with under section 5, and he receives a gratuity of one month's pay for every year from the time he entered the Civil Service as Inspector of Police; and he was informed accordingly. I think he appealed again, and the matter was again considered as to whether anything more could be given to him. In these days I may say that we do not try to screw a pensioner down to the smallest pittance, and, for myself, I always try to deal as liberally with him as the circumstances will permit; but in this case I could not, and the members of the Executive Council could not, find that there were any special services for which we could increase the number of years of service, thereby increasing the gratuity, and he was informed accordingly. Of course we have to deal with this statute as the law; and this is not the only case, there being many other cases in which persons who have been some years in the service think they should be better dealt with. In fact, I have never known a case in which the applicant has been altogether satisfied with the amount of retiring allowance or gratuity, for these people always expect that they should have something for extraordinary services which they all think they have performed. The Government have considered this application; we have our Attorney General, who can read the statutes; we cannot see that there are any special services by which we can increase the number of years of service; and, that being so, we feel that we have no power to go beyond what has been awarded. These are the facts, and it seems to me that the House can scarcely move further in the matter. To tell the House we would reconsider this case would be promising nothing, because we have considered it twice already, and I do not think the Executive Council would be likely to come to a different decision by investigating the matter again.

MR. MOLLOY: I have much pleasure in supporting this motion, and I do so for one reason just now stated by the Premier. He said that section 8 of the Act provides for special services. As it has been proved that this gentleman's application has been dealt with under

section 5, I think that the error mentioned by the mover was in considering this case under section 5 instead of section 8. I think the special services which Inspector Rowe has rendered to this country are well known to most hon. members.

THE PREMIER (HON. Sir J. Forrest): Only during the last seven years.

MR. MOLLOY: I am aware that he only entered the service in his higher position during the last seven years, but it is known to many hon. members that this gentleman was specially recommended to this colony to do special work, that he came here with the highest recommendations, and that although he came here in the employ of the convict service, he did so under special arrangements by which he was to be attached to the police department here if he wished to remain. Through the recommendations he brought here, he was entrusted with the organising of a detective department of the police service, which was a want much felt at that time; and that he has done this ably and well no hon. member will question. The result has been manifest in the department as it now exists. It is well known that he has risen from the lowest grade in the service here until he has reached one of the highest; and it is on account of infirmity that he has requested to be relieved from further active service. It is not a necessity that he should be deprived of the rewards which would attach to his having completed a specified term in order to entitle him to a pension on reaching a certain age. Surely it would be well if this gentleman, in view of the provisions of this Act, which would only allow him a small pittance, could spend the remaining portion of the term, so that he might demand an adequate pension for the services he has rendered; but on account of his failing health, he did not wish to impose on the country, because he did not feel equal to the duties of the position. Therefore he applied to be relieved from the duties, and to receive fair consideration on account of past special services. It can be proved that he has been in the service of this colony 24 years, and was in the Imperial service some seven years before he came here; and considering the high testimonials which he brought here, and which have been justified by our experience of him, I think he is deserving

of more consideration than he has received from the authorities in dealing with his case. It is little to ask, that a gentleman such as this should receive consideration in the manner now asked for; and seeing that he is now, at the comparatively early age of 54 years, unable to perform further active service, it is little to expect that the Government, whom he has faithfully served, should give him some little consideration other than that which has been accorded to him. It has been clearly proved that he is entitled to consideration under section 8, because he has given special services to the country in organising the detective department of this colony. It has been mentioned by the mover that Inspector Rowe has had other arduous duties in the compilation of the *Police Gazette*, and this *Gazette* is found to be of considerable service in the prosecution of police inquiries; and when we find that he has never had one complaint made against him during all these years of his service, that, on the contrary, he is recommended by the heads of the department, and that he has been promoted step by step to the high position from which he has just retired, I think he is deserving of more consideration than has been given him. I trust that hon. members will vote in favor of this motion.

MR. DEHAMEL: I have no doubt the Attorney General will have something to say on this matter. The applicant joined the service in October, 1868, and the question is why he should not be allowed one month a year for 24 years instead of one month a year for seven years. That seems to me the only point with which the Attorney General need deal, as far as I am concerned.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): These cases are personal ones, and we must all regret that there is any necessity to endeavor to drive the Government to reconsider a matter of this nature, which they have already considered most fully. I am sure it is the desire of this Government, as of every Government, to deal with officers retiring from the service in the most liberal manner possible. This motion is made and supported on three grounds. Firstly, the applicant is said to have rendered special services; secondly, that an error has been made by the Commissioner of

Police in not recommending the case under the proper section of the Act; and thirdly, that there was an omission by the Commissioner to forward for the consideration of the Government any record of the applicant's services, or to refer to them in any way. The two last grounds are not sound. There was no error on the part of the Commissioner in this matter, for he did perfectly right in recommending the applicant under the section which he did, because he could not recommend this case under the other section; and, further, it is not the fact that the Commissioner omitted to forward the record of the applicant's services, and the Executive Council had before them every record of the applicant's services in this colony and in England. On these grounds, I submit that the hon. member who moved has not made out a case. With regard to the other ground, that the Executive should reconsider this matter because there are special services rendered, I would remark that those special services which are spoken of as coming under section 8 are not services rendered during the period with which we are dealing. This officer entered the Public Service, for the purposes of this Act, seven years ago, and not before. The services he rendered before that period had to be compensated out of the Police Benefit Fund, and were so compensated, for he took the gratuity under that Act, and he received the amount of money that was due to him without any complaint. Up to that moment he was perfectly satisfied. Well, he then came under another description of service, as an officer of the Civil Service, after his appointment as inspector; and then it was that he entered the service for the purposes of the Superannuation Act, and not before. That was seven years ago, and consequently when he applied for leave to retire from the service, the Executive had no power to give him a pension under the Act. It is said we ought to have proceeded under section 8, and recognised special services; but, even if it were so, what were the special services rendered during the last seven years? With regard to them, I say that the mover mentioned no special services. The hon. member for Perth referred to services that have no application to the case, being services rendered years ago, before

the applicant entered the Civil Service. It is impossible, therefore, to do in this case what section 8 requires. It will be seen that the Government cannot act under that section, by making extra allowances for special services, but have to report the matter to the Legislature; and in so reporting it, what special services could they set down as having been rendered within the last seven years? None at all. The special services which have been alluded to were in every instance services rendered before the last seven years. Therefore no good ground of any description has been shown, upon which to ask the Government to again consider this case, which the Government have already considered on its merits, and have dealt with in as liberal a manner as the Act allows. There are many cases of a similar nature—one case in particular I recollect, and I can charge my memory with more than one—in which I have striven to find special services rendered by meritorious officers. It is a difficult thing to put down a description of special services. It is not because a man behaves well in his office and does his duty—that is what we pay him for, and the doing of one's duty cannot be called a special service. Very few officers in this country have ever rendered special services. You may, for instance, call it a special service when an officer, say a resident magistrate, is requested to undertake the chairmanship of a Royal commission on the treatment of the aborigines, and has to travel over the colony at great inconvenience, and he brings up a very exhaustive report, and gives to the Government great assistance in the matter. I think that such an instance as that might be called a special service. But because an officer honestly and faithfully discharges the duties of his office in an every-day sort of way, that is not special service, but it is such service as may be rewarded with a gratuity. If a retiring officer has any demerits or faults—and I think it must be admitted we are not sharp to detect faults and omissions in any public officer asking for a retiring allowance, though possibly we sometimes shut our eyes rather too closely—we never detect the faults or demerits when we can possibly avoid them. But when we are asked to set down special services, we must be able to put them in writing for the consideration of

the Legislature; and I must say that in this case we did not consider that this officer had rendered any special services under section 8 of the Act.

MR. SIMPSON: I have had an opportunity of perusing the papers in connection with this motion, and I am perfectly prepared to admit that the Attorney General has just given us an address in which he has carefully outlined as upright and honorable a way of dealing with the Public Service as one could wish for. But, taking into consideration the history of this officer's services, and the condition of the colony at the time, I do think it might be an act of grace if something more could be done for him. I will not attempt to speak on the legal aspect of the question, for I am no lawyer, and do not aspire to discover the meaning of any law. So far as I can learn, this gentleman was appointed to a particular position some 24 years ago, at that time a most onerous position in this colony. He performed the duties to the satisfaction of the Imperial authorities and of the Colonial ones. His progress since has simply been a natural step by step, which, in that well organised service, and as the result of good conduct, is invariably the reward of an upright man. But at the age of 54 years, debilitated, suffering absolutely from injuries and the effects of exposure during his service of the public, this officer has applied, under medical advice, for permission to retire from the service. Occupying the position of an inspector of police, instead of continuing in that position, and acting on medical advice and his own idea of duty, he applies for permission to retire. The Commissioner of Police then makes a certain recommendation; and while I do not say he is culpable in this matter, for it is not an error of intention, but possibly an error of omission, yet I am advised that the Government are not fully cognisant of all the facts in connection with this matter. I think it would be a graceful act on the part of the Government, if they could recognise the services of this officer by granting something more proportionate to the services he has rendered to the country. This motion is not to drive the Government, but to request them to reconsider the case; and I hope they will award to this gentleman a gratuity proportionate

to the services he has rendered to the State.

Question—put and negatived.

#### FIRES CAUSED BY SPARKS FROM RAILWAY ENGINES.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That this House is of opinion that legislation is requisite to protect farmers, pastoralists, and others from the great losses to which they are subjected through fires which originate from passing railway engines." He said: On previous occasions, when I have brought before this House the same subject matter that is referred to in this motion, the Premier has said something to the effect that no complaints had been made to him concerning these fires. Now, during the current session he has admitted that complaints have been made to him; and I now bring forward this motion for the purpose of getting before the House some of the statements made by those who are suffering in the manner indicated by the motion. First of all, the statement of the Greenough Farmers' Club is:—"The club cannot too forcibly "bring under your notice the great "danger to life and property caused by "sparks and cinders emitted from the "locomotives on the railway lines. Early "as it is in the season, several fires have "already occurred in the vicinity of the "line. This is a matter that should "receive serious and immediate attention "on the part of Parliament." Towards the close of last summer, communications were forwarded to me which were too late to be of use in the House; and I therefore propose to use these now, in support of my contention that some legislation is necessary. Here is a letter from Mr. F. Pearse, of Dongarra, to Mr. Morrell, as follows:—

Dongarra, 24-2-92.

DEAR MR. MORRELL,—

Mrs. Waldeck has just sent on to me the letter which you read from Mr. Traylen, respecting fires lighted along the railway line by the engines. Mr. Traylen says the Government stated that they burned alongside the lines, had spark arresters, &c. Probably they refer to the Geraldton-Mullewa line, but it certainly does not apply to the Midland. I am sorry this matter was not mooted earlier, as it is now getting late in the session—I am afraid almost too late to do any good at this sitting. From my own knowledge and experience, I know to my cost that sparks from

the engines have done considerable damage to property between here and the Greenough. The summer before last two of my tenants, Johnston and Sloper, had their wheat crops totally destroyed. The same fire destroyed two haystacks of mine (90 tons) and burnt out a family named Ptester of all they possessed—house, stables, pigstye, the pigs roasted to death, and the family narrowly escaped, saving nothing but the clothes they stood in. Last summer Sloper, Ptester, Mrs. Waldeck, and myself all suffered losses in the same way, and were in continual dread of being swept clean by these fires. I had about 90 chains of fencing burnt, besides my sheep paddocks being left bare of feed. This summer the material trains have not been running so often, consequently there have not been so many fires, although Sloper, Ptester, and Mrs. Waldeck have not escaped having losses. Sloper and Ptester are tenants of mine, and each have had about half of their wheat crops and some hay burnt. Our member, Mr. Phillips, can support Mr. Traylen, and he knows all about the damage done here, and eastward of Dongarra to the Irwin.

Yours faithfully,

F. PEARSE.

'P.S.—This is written hurriedly, but if of any service, you can send it to Mr. Traylen, if you like.—F.P.

Another letter is from a lady who manages a farm at Dongarra, and, writing to Mr. Morrell, she says:—

Bonniefield, Dongarra, Feb. 25, '92.

DEAR MR. MORRELL,—I send you list of fires caused by engine September 16th. My stable caught light, doing a great deal of damage to roof and manger, a horse with saddle on, a hole burnt through saddle, the horse's back burnt, the manger and neck ropes burnt, harness destroyed. We had a very great difficulty in saving my stack and harness room, the roof of which very much damaged. On the 24th of October set fire to stable seven times; 5th of November, burnt horse paddock full of good feed, 9½ chains new fencing, about 20 acres feed. From the 8th October until near Christmas we had five fires on dunghill close to stable and haystack, one in corn yard 49 yards from the line (we had another further from the line than this). At four different times we had the greatest difficulty in saving our barley before reaped. About ten times our wheat, only for the greatest exertions of my sons and sometimes neighbours, must have gone. On different occasions my sons have had to leave horses in reaper and binder and in stripper, and run to put the fires out. In fact they had, on hot days, to keep riding horses and saddles tied behind the carts or close to them, and gallop off. This was nearly an every-day occurrence for weeks; in short, myself and family and servant often having to work at the fires until quite exhausted. Sometimes we were washing: the water out of tubs, tanks, and all had to go; sometimes a batch of bread ready to go in

oven; sometimes just going to dinner—all had to be left, and we had to run. It has been a dreadful time to us, and we would not go through it again for any money; and it is only through the help of God that we have produce saved. And my neighbours will, I am sure, endorse what I say, that only for the help my sons gave, our own farm, Nargo, must all have been burnt on several occasions. We have lost a great deal of time, besides living in dread night and day. You will see it is useless compelling farmers to plough each side of the line. You see the sparks go over two chains, at times, and who is to pay the farmer for all this lost ground? I paid £4 10s. per acre for my ground, and the line runs from end to end of it. We have had five fires since Christmas, one engine making all these (the Geraldton). I blame the engine driver for this; at times he goes at such a speed. I can now almost tell when the engine passes if we shall have a fire. The last one was last week. I have had to build my haystacks a considerable distance from my stable, which, to say the least of it, is very inconvenient. I must say the line is inconveniently close to my place; the fence goes close up to my stable, and the fence has completely blocked my cottage doors and windows up. Independent of the fires I have mentioned, there have been dozens of others. I had to keep my little boy at home with a horse and saddle, just to ride after the engine to put out fires. I have not made any noise about it, for fear of them really burning me out purposely in spite.

I remain, yours truly,

ISABELLA WALDECK.

P.S.—There are 67 holes burnt in stable and harness room roofs.—I. W.

I do not think I can add anything to strengthen these letters, but only to plead that, for the sake of my constituents, the Government will do something to save them from these very heavy losses, and from the continual dread in which they live.

MR. PIESSE: I rise to support the motion of the hon. member. It is quite time that something should be done to prevent these fires occurring, especially in the district mentioned; and no doubt very great distress is being caused by fires from locomotives, and some provision should be made for preventing them. I must commend the Government for the action taken in the Eastern districts for preventing fires; and if the same action be taken in the more Northern district, I think there will be very little complaint from the people living near the railway lines in that district. The steps taken in the Eastern districts have been very effective, although some

two or three years ago we had complaints. Now that the measures have had a good result, I cannot see why such measures should not be taken in the Northern district.

MR. CLARKSON: I, unfortunately, live in the one of the driest districts of this colony, and I have never known an instance in my district of an engine setting fire to the bush. I must say that the settlers in that part of the colony take means to prevent fires. Where their corn-fields are adjacent to the railway, they burn a strip of land alongside the line. I could show you to-day fields of corn growing quite close to the railway, and the owners do not seem in the least afraid of fires from engines. The hon. member for the Greenough has given us a long account of misfortunes by fires, but I could not notice that the writers of those letters attributed the fires to the train at all. They seemed to complain of having been called away to fires. Unfortunately, I have been frequently called away to bush fires, but they were not caused by trains. It seems to me that more is attributed to trains than should be. My district is a very dry one, yet I have never known a single instance of an engine setting fire to the bush.

MR. PHILLIPS: I endorse the remarks made by the hon. member for the Greenough. I think the hon. member for Toodyay is mistaken about railway engines not causing fires. I was up the Newcastle line the other day, and I saw a fire run along the line, and burn the only bit of grass I saw there.

MR. RICHARDSON: I think the motion deserves the attention of this House. When the hon. member for Toodyay says he never knew an instance of an engine setting fire to the grass in that country, he must have a very different kind of grass or a different kind of engine. In other districts, where I know the country is ten times more difficult to set alight, it is almost a daily or weekly occurrence to have the bush set on fire by the engines. It is very nice to be philosophical about the troubles of country settlers, but I think it is absolutely cruel for settlers such as those mentioned at the Greenough to be exposed to such hardships and dangers, as a result of public works, and making them scape-

goats for the rest of the community enjoying railway communication. I think some legislation is necessary, or some contrivance by which settlers can have their property made to some extent safe from these harassing dangers caused by passing engines. It means absolute ruin to the poor settler to have his crops or his feed burnt, just when it is most valuable. What are his stock to do when his feed is burnt? Those who do this injury might as well take possession of all he has got. It is very serious indeed to the settlers. The hon. member for the Greenough has alluded to particular cases, and I dare say instances could be multiplied where settlers do suffer great losses, and are also put to turmoil and anxiety by these harassing fires, not knowing the day when they may be burnt out. This matter is worthy the serious attention of this House.

MR. PATERSON: One of the greatest matters of anxiety in the summer is the occurrence of bush fires, caused by passing engines. Only on Saturday last I saw a fire caused by a locomotive engine, and the fire was still burning. If the Government can do this sort of thing surely they can also make some provision for securing the country settlers from such severe losses. To lose one's grass in the summer is more serious to the settler than most people understand. We can all manage to get through the winter, and we look to provide for our stock during the summer; but in the summer the grass gets particularly dry, and if we lose the feed then, what are the settlers to do?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What do you propose?

MR. PATERSON: Some legislation. The Commissioner of Railways told us last session that he had cleared portions along the line, and that very few fires occurred. Why cannot that be done in other districts along the railway, and then this trouble would not arise? Along the Jarrahdale line you cannot plough the land, and the settlers cannot be always alongside the railway to see when and where the fire is cast out. On one occasion I had to deliver some chaff at a certain place, and was called away to attend to a fire in another place. I could not do both things at the same time. Every year, since I have been at the place

where I now live, we have been burnt out.

MR. COOKWORTHY: As to the direction that legislation should take, I say the railway companies are the chief sinners; and if they were bound to burn off inside their fences, there would be very little fire outside. If it is necessary, an Act of Parliament should be passed for that purpose; for, if the inside of the fences was burnt by the linemen, there would be very little fire outside.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I do not suppose that anyone wishes to accuse the Government of treating this matter lightly, but we are simply asked to pronounce "That this House is of opinion that legislation is requisite to protect farmers, pastoralists, and others from the great losses to which they are subjected through fires which originate from passing railway engines." But what sort of legislation? What is it that you desire? I have had, on previous occasions, to point out that people can protect themselves far better than an Act of Parliament can do it. If you cannot discover how a fire originates, how will an Act of Parliament discover it? If a man living on the spot cannot prove that a passing engine sets fire to his crop, how can legislation prove it? The Government sympathise with these people who get burnt out, but if the persons on the spot cannot find out how a fire occurs, I cannot see how an Act can find it out. We know that all engines running through the country are running under some statute: that they are bound, under the law, to use spark arresters; and that if they do not, the parties running the engines are liable, and they are also further liable if they set fire to grass and stuff within their boundary. This is why the Commissioner of Railways has been clearing his boundary, so as not to allow a fire to run from his line on to adjoining land. The occupiers of land might also burn alongside their land, as a precaution. The only direction in which legislation can proceed, so far I can judge, is that every occupier along the railway line might be obliged to burn off a certain number of chains on their own land, and the companies be obliged to burn off a chain, say, on either side of their line. It comes to this: whether you will have railways running or not,



But if the private companies do not use the means which the Government are using, I should think that any such company would probably adopt such means if it were sued for damages by some one who suffered from a fire.

MR. TRAYLEN: I am put in the position of the old man and his donkey, as in the fable, being advised in this way, and then in the opposite way, and not knowing which way to act. I have come before the House with an abstract resolution, and was told I should propose something definite; and now I come before the House with a definite resolution, and am told by the Attorney General that legislation is not necessary. Does anybody know what I ought to do, under these circumstances? I thought this evening I would read a statement of facts from settlers in the district I represent, which should draw blood from a stone; yet what reply have we from the Attorney General? He tells us about going to a solicitor. How much money have these farmers and pastoralists with which to go to a solicitor? Then there is the difficulty mentioned by the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. Paterson), the actual difficulty of seeing the spark; for to go to a court with the prospect of winning one's case, we must be able to see the spark coming from the engine; and then we have to listen to some silly words about burning alongside the line. Some sparks carry two chains: are we to burn two chains along each side of the line, when there is the simple method of compelling these companies to use spark arresters, which the hon. gentleman can compel them to use if he tries? The mere fact that Acts of Parliament are broken is no argument against our having an Act to compel these companies to respect the property of those persons through whose lands they run. The hon. gentleman knows that, if he chooses to compel them, they can burn coal, and only coal, during a period of the year. He might learn also that there is a kind of wood which readily gives off these sparks on the Dongarra line. Does the hon. gentleman not know—if only he would know—that there are such things as sea breezes at Dongarra, and that the ordinary carrying of a spark is supplemented there by the sea breeze carrying it a hundred yards? If

he would take the trouble to know what Dongarra is as a place for fires, he might learn that it has been swept from end to end by fires, in which numerous families have lost their all. I cannot help thinking there is a great deal of hard-heartedness towards my constituents at the Greenough, and others who suffer in like manner.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): How do you make that out?

Motion—put and passed.

#### COMMISSION ON GOVERNMENT AUCTION SALES.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per centum is too heavy a commission to pay for the conduct of Government auction sales, and that in future tenders be invited from persons willing to conduct such sales." He said: We know that in the other colonies tenders are always invited for auction sales. I do not seek to bind the Government to call for tenders for any particular sale. They may call for tenders for each sale, if they like, or for a year. But surely, under Responsible Government, tenders ought to be called for such simple things as these sales. In the past we know that it was perhaps necessary that the Government should have some particular man in each district to conduct these sales; but all that has been done away with since the introduction of telegraphs and railways, so that now the responsibility of conducting sales at any particular port or place is not of the importance that it was some ten years ago. I think, therefore, that though  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. commission may not have been too much to pay when this rate was first fixed, yet when we know there are responsible people willing to do the same work for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., it does appear to me that we ought to do our utmost to save even in these small things. It may be said that the purchaser has to pay the commission. To a certain extent that is true; but if, when we go to purchase at an auction, we know we have to pay a percentage of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  instead of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , it is certain we shall stop in our bidding at a line which will enable us to get the articles at precisely the same price as though we paid the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent only.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not see the logic of that argument.

MR. DEHAMEL: Undoubtedly, the argument is right. I know that the course in England always is that the purchaser pays the commission. [AN HON. MEMBER: No.] I have purchased many a time at auction sales, through a broker, and he has always had to pay a commission for me. [AN HON. MEMBER: He has charged it, no doubt.] If the rule is different here, it strengthens my position in saying that the Government actually pay 1s. 6d. in the pound for the conduct of these sales, instead of 6d.

MR. A. FORREST: It does not cost the Government anything.

MR. DEHAMEL: It does not matter who has to pay the commission. If the sales can be conducted for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. instead of 7 per cent., then I say it is the duty of the Government to sell these goods at the lowest commission, and more particularly when we have been told to-night by the Hon. the Treasurer that the Government have overrun the constable to the extent of £300,000. [AN HON. MEMBER: Question.] Then the Hon. the Treasurer has told us that the Government will be forced to overrun the constable to the extent of £300,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I shall ask your consent to it.

MR. DEHAMEL: I shall not give it. It is all the more necessary that we should economise in these small things. This motion must commend itself to the good sense of members of this House.

MR. TRAYLEN: I second the motion.

MR. A. FORREST: I think the hon. member for Albany has made an error in this motion, because I presume the sales made by the Government, as referred to in the motion, are sales of goods not cleared at the Customs by those to whom they belong. Assuming they are Government sales, the commission is not paid by the Government, but by the owners of those goods; but I agree that  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is a very high commission, and I am astonished it is so high, because the usual commission is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for cash. I was under the impression that the sales in Albany were chiefly Customs articles which people did not clear; but the motion also says "Government auction sales," and I can hardly believe that the Government pay  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for sales of land.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No; the police officer sells all land.

MR. A. FORREST: A commission of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on auction sales would be quite sufficient.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is too much. I believe that at Fremantle the usual commission on Customs sales is 5 per cent. Of course the Government do not pay this money. It is deducted from the goods. We are in a position of trustees for persons who have property there, and it will be our duty not to give more than is reasonably necessary. I will take steps to alter this state of affairs at Albany, and will try to make the commission the same as elsewhere. The sales at Albany cannot be large, but in this case they seem to have amounted to £300. In the latter part of the motion, I really think the hon. member for Albany is interfering with the administration of the Government about advertising auction sales. A man might tender at a very low figure, and might never pay up the money received at the sale. It is not advisable to accept the lowest tender always. It is better to have our own people to conduct the auction sales at a regular rate. At Fremantle the appointment has continued for the last 30 or 40 years, and the ordinary commission paid is 5 per cent., and I suppose  $2\frac{1}{2}$  is for the guarantee of the money. The other sales that the Government have are very small indeed. About the colony generally we have no sales of Government property. The land is always sold at the local Resident's office, he or his clerk performing the duties of auctioneer. Perhaps the House will be satisfied if I promise that in future at Albany the commission shall not be more than 5 per cent., and I do not think the other part of the motion should be acceded to, so long as we have reliable people to do the work.

MR. SOLOMON: There is no doubt  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. is a very high commission, considering that all these auctions are cash transactions, and that the auctioneers do not deliver the goods, but only receive the money.

MR. DEHAMEL: Having regard to the Premier's promise that he will investigate the matter, I am prepared to accept that assurance and be satisfied. By the

leave of the House I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SCAB ACT, 1891, AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill having been recommitted,—

Clause 3.—“Incorporation and short title,” was amended by the words, “After the first day of March, 1893,” being inserted at the beginning of the clause.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to, and the Bill reported with a further amendment.

WEST AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE, EXECUTOR, AND AGENCY COMPANY, LIMITED (PRIVATE) BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 7, inclusive:

Agreed to, without comment.

Clause 8.—“In all cases in which probate or letters of administration shall be granted to the Company, all the capital both paid and unpaid, and all other assets of the Company, shall be liable for the proper administration of the estate committed to the Company. The Company shall before obtaining any grant of probate of any will or letters of administration possess a paid-up capital of not less than Six thousand pounds, of which paid-up capital Five thousand pounds shall be invested in the purchase of debentures or inscribed stock of the public funds of the colony or in the purchase of the debentures or bonds of any Municipality in the colony as the directors of the Company may select in the name of the Treasurer in trust for the Company, but transferable only upon the joint consent of the Treasurer and the Company or upon the order of the Court or a Judge. When and so long as the said sum of Five thousand pounds or such other sum as may hereafter be prescribed and required by law shall remain deposited and invested as aforesaid, the Court may grant letters of administration to the Company without the bond required by law when administration is applied for by private persons.”

MR. LOTON moved, in line 7, to insert the words “deposited with the Treasurer or,” between the words “be” and “invested.”

Question—put and passed.

MR. LOTON moved, in line 14, to strike out the words “deposited and.”

Question—put and passed.

MR. LOTON moved, in line 14, to insert the words “or deposited with the Treasurer,” between the words “aforesaid” and “the.”

Question—put and passed.

MR. LOTON moved that the following words be added at the end of the clause: “Provided that the amount of capital to be paid up and the sum to be deposited or invested as aforesaid may be hereafter increased, as Parliament, by any Act to be hereafter passed, may prescribe.”

Question—put and passed, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 13, inclusive:

Agreed to, without comment.

Clause 14.—“Every application for such consent, as in the two preceding sections mentioned shall be by motion, and notice of the intended application shall be advertised once in one daily newspaper published in Perth seven days before the making thereof, and in case of an executor or administrator of a testator or intestate who died in Western Australia a like notice shall also be advertised once in some local newspaper (if any) circulating in the district in which the testator or intestate resided at the time of his death: and the Court may require any person resident in Western Australia and entitled to the immediate receipt of any of the income or corpus of the estate in respect of which the application is made to be served with notice thereof, and the costs of such application shall be in the discretion of the Court and may be ordered to be paid out of the estate, and such consent shall not be given in any case of a will in which the testator has expressed his wish that the trusts thereof shall not be delegated or that the Company should not act therein”:

MR. LOTON moved, in line 3, to strike out the word “once,” and to insert the words “three times,” in lieu thereof.

Question—put and passed, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 27, inclusive:

Agreed to, without comment.

Clause 28.—“The sum of Five thousand pounds, to be invested as hereinbefore provided, shall be held by the Treasurer as a security for the due performance by the Company of the duties of the offices

of executor and administrator under any grant obtained in pursuance of this Act, and shall in the event of the winding up of the Company be applied in satisfaction *pari passu* of any claims established by any persons entitled as beneficiaries under any probate or letters of administration granted to the Company in priority to all other creditors of the Company; and, in addition to the said security, the persons so entitled shall be at liberty to rank as ordinary creditors of the Company for any balance, if the said sum of Five thousand pounds shall be insufficient to satisfy the claims so established."

MR. LOTON moved, in line 1, to insert the words "or such other sum as may hereafter be prescribed," between the words "pounds" and "to."

Question—put and passed.

MR. LOTON moved, in line 10, to insert the words "or such other sum as aforesaid," between the words "pounds" and "shall."

Question—put and passed, and clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 29 and 30:

Agreed to, without comment.

Schedule:

Agreed to.

Title and preamble:

Agreed to, and Bill reported, as amended.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL — INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

The following Message was delivered to and read by Mr. Speaker:—

*Mr. Speaker,*

"The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to a Bill intituled 'An Act to provide for the establishment of Industrial and Reformatory Schools,' subject to the amendments contained in the Schedule annexed, in which amendments the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

"GEO. SHENTON,

"President.

"Legislative Council Chamber, Perth,

"December 19th, 1892."

*Schedule of Amendments made by the Legislative Council in "The Industrial and Reformatory Schools Bill."*

No. 1.—On page 1, clause 2, line 1, strike out "in Council."

No. 2.—On page 3, clause 6, strike out sub-clause 7.

No. 3.—On page 5, clause 19, line 1, between "Industrial" and "Reformatory," strike out "and," and insert "or" in lieu thereof.

#### *Consequential Amendments.*

A.—Consequent on amendment No. 1, strike out the words "in Council" in the following clauses:—

Clause 3, line 1

" 4, " 1

" 10, lines 3 and 6

" 14, " 2 and 6

" 15, " 2 and 9

" 24, line 1

" 35, lines 2 and 7

" 36, line 4

" 37, lines 2 and 3.

B.—Consequent on amendment No. 3, strike out "and," and insert "or" in lieu thereof, between the words "Industrial" and "Reformatory," in the following clauses:—

Clause 20, line 1

" 21, " 1

" 22, " 1

" 37, " 3.

C. LEE STEERE,

Clerk of the Council.

19th December, 1892.

Ordered—That the consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's Message be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday, 20th December.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:17 p.m.