

Amendment, in its altered form, put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

On the motion of MR. A. FORREST, progress was reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:11 o'clock p.m., until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th August, 1899.

Petitions: Companies Duty Bill—Question: Court-houses, Perth and Fremantle—Public Education Bill, third reading—Companies Duty Bill, second reading; adjourned—Sale of Liquors Amendment Bill, in Committee; Recommittal, reported—Dog Act Amendment Bill, Legislative Assembly's Message, Division—Insects Pests Amendment Bill, first reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITIONS—COMPANIES DUTY BILL.

HON. A. B. KIDSON presented a petition from representatives of incorporated companies carrying on business in Western Australia; also a petition from banks carrying on business in Western Australia, referring to the proposed tax in the Companies Duty Bill.

Petitions received, read, and ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—COURT-HOUSES, PERTH AND FREMANTLE.

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Colonial Secretary: 1. Whether the attention of the Government has been called to the inconvenience felt by the magistrates and solicitors in the Perth and Fremantle courts, in consequence of

the acoustic properties of the courts being defective. 2. Whether any steps will be taken to remedy the defect.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied:—1. The attention of the Government had not been drawn to the matter. 2. The Architectural division had been directed to investigate it, and remedy any defect which might be found.

PUBLIC EDUCATION BILL.

THIRD READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Bill be read a third time.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: With reference to Clause 19, did it apply exclusively to boys?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There were, he believed, bursaries for girls.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: That would be dealt with by regulations?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

COMPANIES DUTY BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell): It is with diffidence I rise to move the second reading of this important Bill. That feeling is caused, in a great measure, by the objections that have been urged against the Bill, and because I think the contents of such an important measure require more exhaustive treatment, perhaps, than I am able this afternoon to give it. I shall be bound to state reasons why the Bill has been introduced, and why it is the earnest desire of the Government that the Bill should be carried into effect. It is well known that we are hopefully anticipating a considerable increase in the agricultural and horticultural products of the colony, which will enable us to supply the wants of this community without having recourse to outside help. This will, to a considerable extent, affect the revenue through the customs of this colony. That is a reason which will commend itself to all hon. members, and it is necessary if such be the case, and all hope that it will be, and expect that such will be the case in the near future, therefore we must have something to

take the place of those duties to provide for carrying on the government of the country for the construction of public works, and to provide revenue to pay interest on the loans which have been already floated on the English market, and other loans that have been authorised and will have to be raised to continue the works that have been commenced. I may mention several of these works. The Coolgardie water supply scheme and the Fremantle harbour works have not been completed yet, and it is proposed that lines shall be constructed, —I am glad to think we shall have the almost unanimous assent of this House to these proposals this year—from Menzies to Mount Malcolm, and the line to Mount Leonora.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Question?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I may say, in passing, that there is no doubt that the second line is desirable, as it is expected that the district will be one of the most magnificent goldfields of the colony: I have heard it described as a second Kalgoorlie. These are reasons which have influenced the Government in bringing forward this Bill. We have also a considerable overdraft, amounting to something like, speaking from memory, £260,000. Some of this overdraft I hope will be wiped off by the revenue which has been secured during the month of August. Any wise statesman and Treasurer who has to deal with the finances of the colony will do right in endeavouring to get on the safe side; and from the causes I have already mentioned, the revenue may possibly decline a little unless we have a considerable acquisition to the population of the colony. I do not know that there are any expectations at the present time in this direction, or that we shall have any rapid increase like what was experienced in 1895-96-97; therefore, to keep the finances of the colony straight, it has been found necessary to have recourse to additional taxation. Everyone knows that direct taxation is not always palatable; in fact, I think everyone is opposed to it. People would rather pay through the customs-house in indirect methods much larger contributions to the Government than they are willing to pay in direct taxation. For that reason an income tax at all times is

most unpopular; yet I think most members will agree, when the necessity arises for the introduction of such a tax, that an income tax is one of those taxes which press most equally in its incidence on all portions of the community. When such a tax is adopted in this colony, I hope it will commence at a very low standard. This Bill, the duty of moving the second reading of which is cast on me this afternoon, is one imposing direct taxation upon incorporated companies—those who are carrying on business in this colony, and some of whom are deriving very large profits from the business they carry on. I am aware that a desire has been generally expressed throughout the colony—I am not quite sure whether it has been expressed on the goldfields, but from every other part of the colony the desire has been expressed that the country should receive some benefit from the immense dividends which are declared by the great gold mines situated in this country, and which have been stated to amount already to about two million pounds. That is the amount which has been paid in dividends in this colony, and from which we derive no other benefit than the expenditure on account of wages and the introduction of capital, and which was introduced when the leases were first taken up, but which bears no comparison to the value of the mines. It was found, on looking carefully into this question, and with that feeling and principle I quite agree, that it would be a very doubtful policy if the Government taxed one industry in the country and allowed others, standing to some extent on the same footing, to go free. I believe such kind of legislation is scarcely ever admitted in any part of the world. I believe a gold tax has been imposed in some places; in fact, we put on a gold tax here, when our gold mines started, of 2s. 6d. an ounce, but we found that the tax was distasteful and so difficult of collection, and the real quantity of gold being discovered or raised was not being disclosed, but was being taken away privately without the return of such exportation being made at the customs-house. On this ground the tax was repealed, and the feeling still remains that, if we attempt to put a tax on all the gold raised, it would be inequitable in its

incidence, because the alluvial miner and the leaseholder who are exploiting—to use a word which we heard yesterday—are deriving scarcely any profit, but perhaps losing money by the expenditure of capital and labour, and such a tax would press very heavily on them. They would have to pay the same as the owner of a big mine, which declares from time to time such large dividends on the working of that mine. No matter what the amount may be, it would be unsatisfactory to those engaged in the enterprise. I think it would create a bad feeling, not only in this colony amongst our own population, but in other parts of the world where our mines are owned. It becomes necessary for the Government to face the question, and to realise the necessity for increased taxation, to take into account all the circumstances, and to deal with them. It was found necessary to include not only gold-mining companies, but other companies and banks, and some of the insurance companies of the colony. I think the questions arising out of the provisions of this Bill, with regard to the taxation pressing on different companies, will be much better dealt with in Committee, and I believe I am right in stating that this House will consent to the second reading of the Bill, and carefully consider its various clauses when passing through Committee. Possibly members may desire to move amendments, and I can only say, as far as I am concerned, I shall be happy to consider those amendments in a right and proper spirit; and if amendments are carried in this House, no doubt they will be considered in another place with the courtesy that always is extended to amendments made by this Chamber. When I say “amendments,” I mean “suggestions” which are sent to the Assembly for amendments in a Bill. Of course, any interference on the part of this House with a duty Bill is a serious responsibility for members to take upon themselves. The Legislative Assembly are considered to be the representatives of the people; and the exponents of the Government being largely represented in that House, I feel sure, if this House disagree with some of the provisions in the Bill and wish alterations made, hon. members will approach the consideration of the subject in a serious manner, as it may change the fiscal policy of the Gov-

ernment. I do not know that I need say anything more on this subject generally. I may refer to one or two salient features of the measure. It is a Bill to impose duties in respect of dividends or profits of incorporated companies. In the case of companies carrying on business here, who have their head offices here, the tax will take effect on the dividend itself. The Colonial Treasurer, or other officer of the Government appointed to superintend the operations of the measure, shall raise, levy, collect, receive, and account for such duties, and put the law in execution, and do all such things as are necessary or expedient for the due administration of the Bill. Clause 4 requires returns to be made of dividends declared, and the duty payable thereon. A duty of 5 per cent. is fixed upon the dividend. I need hardly say that, if dividends to the extent that have been paid in times past continue to be paid by the mining companies of the colony, considerable revenue will arise from that source, apart from the tax on other companies carrying on business in this country. It is expected from mining companies that the largest proportion of the revenue will be derived. When and so often as any dividend is declared payable to any shareholders in a company carrying on business in Western Australia and not elsewhere, and not being a mining company or a company which carries on insurance business only, such company shall forward to the Colonial Treasurer a return of the dividend declared, and on that dividend a duty of 1s. in every 20s. has to be paid. It is provided that the duty payable in respect of the first dividend shall only be in proportion to the time that has elapsed up to the time on which the dividend is declared, as compared with the whole period that has elapsed since the last preceding dividend was declared. That is only a right and proper provision to make, but it is a minor point. Clause 5 deals with mining companies and every company carrying on business within, and also beyond, Western Australia on or before the first day of April in every year. These companies are to forward to the Colonial Treasurer a return, and so on. There is a proviso that a company which balances its accounts on the 31st December shall, within three months after that balance is struck, send in a return to the

Colonial Treasurer, and every company shall pay five per cent. on its dividends. The Bill also provides that mining companies, which may declare a dividend at different periods of the year, must, before paying that dividend, pay the tax upon it to the Colonial Treasurer. As we know, mining companies declare dividends at certain periods as often as they have funds in hand, which will enable them, after careful consideration of their position, to do so. Clause 6 provides that insurance companies of every sort, except life insurance companies, fire, fidelity, guarantee, and marine insurance, and so on, shall make a statutory declaration under the hand of the manager, and forward to the Colonial Treasurer a return in a prescribed form, and containing the prescribed particulars. In the case of companies which have not their office or chief place of business in Western Australia, a return has to be made by the company's manager—that is the principal manager, I presume—stating the amount of the premiums received or in any manner charged in account by such company, or by its agent or agents in Western Australia, during the year ending on the preceding 31st day of December. "Such premiums shall be the net premiums, and shall exclude any portion of such net premiums actually paid away by way of reinsurance effected in Western Australia with any other company. The company shall, at the same time, pay to the Colonial Treasurer, in lieu of the duty and sums of money payable under the preceding sections of this Act, a sum equal to 20s. for every £100, and a proportionate sum for every part of £100 of such premiums." Clause 7 provides that trustees shall be equally liable with the principals, and this, of course, will commend itself to members as being necessary. Clause 8 deals with the winding up of any company, and provides for the payment of duty upon any sums beyond what may be distributed to the shareholders on their shares actually paid up.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: It will never be enforced.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member has had some experience in winding up which has not been satisfactory to him, and hence the objection; but our desire is to provide for every con-

tingency which may arise, and so as to prevent these shareholders from winding up and paying to themselves all the money they possess—profits and all which they have acquired. They will have to pay upon those profits, but not upon the principal subscribed and repaid during the winding up. Clause 14 is one to which we find, by petitions presented this afternoon, objection is raised. I have ascertained that the managers of the banks which carry on business in this colony, whose head offices are outside the colony, are taking strong exception to the provision for the appointment of an officer under the hands of the Treasurer to inspect their books and accounts, and everything that will throw light upon the declaration of a dividend or profits which may have accumulated during the year. It appears this is the practice wherever an income tax prevails, and it is asserted in this petition that, in consequence of this tax upon profits, the Bill partakes somewhat of the nature of an income tax. This inspection takes place in South Australia and I believe in some of the other colonies where an income tax prevails, and it is certainly necessary if we are to have correct accounts. Although the officers of these institutions may be above suspicion, it is desirable that the Government should have this power of inspection. In the case of a bank whose head office is in this country, there is, of course, no necessity for that sort of thing, for statements are made every half-year, the dividends declared, and a full statement of accounts furnished. Life insurance companies carrying on business here (which, however, are not affected by the Bill) have to make, under the Life Insurance Companies Act, the same return annually for the information of the country and of the Government. One can easily understand why the managers of a bank—

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Some banks.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Some banks—one can easily understand why they look with dislike upon an inspection of their books, but I have already said they have to submit to it in other colonies where an income tax prevails, and it is no more objectionable here than there. I take it that only when a suspicion arises in the mind of the Treasurer that fraud or trickery has been practised

will he direct the officers to make a searching inquiry into the books of a bank or other company. I apprehend there will not be very much difficulty, trouble, or annoyance upon that score. It has also been represented in the petition brought forward this afternoon that, as far as these companies are concerned, it is undesirable they should be called upon to state their profits made in the colony. Of course, members are aware this question was threshed out in another place, and it was considered inadvisable to permit what would happen in some cases. A bank might make large profits here, while in another part of the world it might be carrying on business in some of its branches at a loss, perhaps, or a small profit, and if the duty were collected upon the assets of that bank here we might lose a considerable amount of revenue rightly belonging to us. We know, with regard to the disaster which overtook some institutions a few years back, that they did not suspend through losses in this country, for we have every reason to believe those banks which went down were doing a profitable business here; but, in consequence of the management of their business in other colonies, they came to grief.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: In another colony; only one.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: In another colony, then. I accept the hon. member's statement, but I was under the impression it was more than one.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: The New South Wales banks went just the same.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are good grounds why this principle should be adopted; and although it may involve trouble and some inquisition into the accounts of banks, yet it is in the right direction, at any rate as far as the interests of this colony are concerned. No doubt members will direct their attention to that point when we get into Committee, and the matter will be open to argument. Clause 15 provides a penalty for omitting to make returns; but, as these provisions are only machinery to carry the Bill into operation, I do not need to call attention to them, except to indicate what they are. I do not know there is any other important feature in the Bill to which I have not alluded. If there is, I shall be happy to give any in-

formation in my power afterwards. I only desire to again mention that the Government are exceedingly anxious to have the Bill passed into law. I trust members will give me every assistance possible to pass the second reading, and get the Bill into Committee, and in debating all that it is necessary to discuss.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: What amount will the Bill produce?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not able to tell the hon. member, but the amount will be a very useful addition to the revenue of the colony, especially, as I have already said, in view of a possible falling of the revenue from customs upon produce, which will in the future, I hope, be grown in sufficient quantities in the colony to obviate the necessity of importations from abroad. I commend the Bill to the careful consideration of members, impressing upon them the responsibility of the House with regard to the fiscal policy of the colony; and I need hardly remind them of their duty to the country to see that the revenue shall be sufficient for the purposes and duties we have undertaken. I refer again just for a moment to the loans already voted, and to those in prospect, to carry to fruition the works sanctioned by Parliament, especially the Harbour Works at Fremantle and the Coolgardie Water Supply Scheme, which must, in the interests of the country, be carried to completion. I move the second reading of the Bill.

HON. F. M. STONE (North): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate until this day week.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

SALE OF LIQUORS AMENDMENT BILL IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 4—Certain persons buying liquor, etc., from an unlicensed person not to be regarded as an accomplice:

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved that the clause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—

Notwithstanding any rule of law to the contrary, the evidence of an officer or constable of police, or officer of excise, on any proceeding before any court of law, against a person charged with a breach of Section 39 of the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act 1880, shall

not be deemed to be, nor treated as, the evidence of an accomplice or accessory, so as to require corroboration, by reason only of the fact that such police officer or constable, or officer of excise, purchased or obtained the liquor, the subject of the prosecution, from the person charged.

For some reason the person who drafted the Bill had thought fit, although the original Act was called the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act, to introduce a new short title called the "Sale of Liquors Amendment Act," which was misleading. The object of the Government in inserting this clause was—in consequence of a certain rule of law, that the evidence of an accomplice required corroboration before a jury ought to convict, or before a judge or a magistrate would convict—to provide that the evidence of a police constable or officer of excise, although uncorroborated, should be accepted. The clause in the Bill would not carry out the intention of the framer. The wording of the clause was nonsensical, and conveyed to his mind nothing. By his proposed new clause the whole thing was put in a nutshell, and would carry out the intention of the Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was not the slightest objection to the amendment, which more clearly gave the intention of the clause.

Amendment put and passed, and new clause substituted.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

RECOMMITTAL.

On motion by the **COLONIAL SECRETARY**, the Bill was recommitted.

HON. R. S. HAYNES moved that the following be added to Clause 1:—"And shall be incorporated with and form part of the said Act."

Put and passed.

Bill reported with a further amendment, and report adopted.

DOG ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S MESSAGE.

The Legislative Assembly having disagreed to one amendment made by the Council in this Bill, the Assembly's reasons for the same were now considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

Amendment number 3.—New clause added to stand as Clause 12: Registering officer to supply metal disc with date and

number of registration and of district to be attached:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Council's amendment be not insisted on. The clause was inserted with a view of making the Dog Act more efficient; but probably there was a good deal in the reasons submitted by the Assembly, that the clause would create inconvenience and some expense. Seeing that the Legislative Assembly had agreed to two of the Council's amendments, the Council should not insist on this amendment.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: On most occasions when the two Houses disagreed, except on important matters, we should not insist on an amendment; but in this case the reasons given by the Assembly, that the proposed new clause would cause expense as well as be inconvenient, was not likely to be obeyed, and would be troublesome to enforce, were such that we should insist on the new clause being inserted in the Bill. If the new clause were incorporated, it would be necessary, on the registration of a dog, for the roads board or municipal council to supply a disc, and that disc should be worn on the collar. As to expense, the disc would not cost a penny at the outside; for in South Australia and Victoria the cost of the discs supplied amounted to a halfpenny each. It was absolutely necessary to have some way of establishing the ownership of a dog, and that could only be done by means of a disc. Time after time, both in South Australia and Victoria, the production of a disc found on a dead dog had been accepted by the Supreme Court as sufficient evidence regarding the ownership of the animal. The other House had sent down an answer which was really nonsensical on the face of it, and he intended to take the opinion of this House as to whether it should be accepted. It was said the proposal in the new clause would not be likely to be obeyed; but if a person failed to obey the law he would have to pay a fine. There was no reason foreshadowed by another place why the Council should not adhere to the amendment, and he urged that the amendment be insisted on.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The main question was whether the Bill was worth passing at all without this clause. He

did not care whether it was passed or not. It was asked for by the people, and the roads boards would have to carry it out if it were passed. His experience of roads boards—and he was a member of one himself—was that it was very hard to get them to carry out the work they already had. If the Council insisted on the amendment, the Bill would be wrecked. The experience of Mr. Piesse was that the discs were not torn off, but he had heard it argued that a disc might come off. A man might have a valuable dog, and the disc might be torn off and the animal destroyed.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: The Bill was useful, but the reasons given by the Assembly for not agreeing to the amendment were scarcely such as one could assent to. The new clause might be inconvenient, but he could not see that it would be expensive. He supposed, at the outside, a disc would cost a penny.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There must be a collar.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: No man should have a dog without a collar; and an ordinary collar would be worth twopence or threepence. The great advantage of the clause was that, if discs were adopted, people could tell whether dogs were registered or not. In Perth, mangy dogs were running all over the place. He knew of persons who had valuable dogs, and these mangy curs got with them, a frightful breed being the result. From some cause the collar and disc might get off a dog, but it did not necessarily follow that the animal would be destroyed on account of that, for, if it were a valuable dog, surely the constable would exercise his judgment. If ordinary collars were used, not one dog in a thousand would lose its collar or disc. Mangy curs would be killed, because people would not register them in Perth, and he hoped the number of dogs would be reduced by 75 per cent. At present there were three times as many dogs in Perth as there ought to be. One of the greatest evils now visiting this colony was not typhoid, but hydatid disease. When in a surgery the other day, he saw some dozens of hydatid cysts which had been removed from bodies of persons. A child from the Collie was brought to Perth the other day with a hydatid cyst on the brain, and after an operation, by which the cyst was removed, the child died. Hydatids were removed

from all parts of the human system, and the medical opinion was that the germs were received from tapeworms given off by dogs. There was a great danger in having a number of mangy dogs running about the streets. He was informed that the death rate among the aborigines of New South Wales, from hydatid disease, was 70 per cent., and about 10 per cent. of the deaths in this colony, from diseases other than natural causes, were due to hydatid cysts. 30 per cent. of the operations performed in this colony were for the removal of hydatid cysts. That was much higher than in any other colony, and it was due to the number of mangy dogs allowed to run about the streets in towns. If we could devise some means by which the number of ownerless dogs could be reduced, we should be doing great good. If this aspect of the case had been brought before members in another place, this new clause would not have been rejected; and he was convinced that when the point in reference to hydatids was brought under the notice of those in charge of the Bill, the clause would be accepted. Without discs, dogs could be taken by the police and destroyed. It would be better to destroy 50 valuable dogs than to allow one mangy animal to go about spreading hydatid disease.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Dogs with discs might spread hydatids as well.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: But this clause would reduce the number of unregistered dogs.

HON. C. A. PIESSE hoped the Committee would not insist on the amendment. If we insisted on this clause the Bill would be lost. The object which this clause sought to attain was met to a certain extent by Clause 9 of the Bill. We all knew that native women had dogs in their bedrooms; and in the aborigines' camps the dogs camped with the aborigine men and women. He could tell hon. members more dreadful things than that. If this clause was not insisted on at the present time, next session a Bill could be brought forward embodying this provision.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	9
Majority for	...	...	...	1

AYES.
 The Hon. H. Briggs
 The Hon. D. K. Congdon
 The Hon. J. W. Hackett
 The Hon. H. Lukin
 The Hon. D. McKay
 The Hon. E. McLarty
 The Hon. C. A. Piesse
 The Hon. G. Raudell
 The Hon. J. E. Richard-
 son
 The Hon. W. Spencer
 (Teller).

NOES.
 The Hon. R. G. Burges
 The Hon. C. E. Dempster
 The Hon. R. S. Haynes
 The Hon. A. B. Kidson
 The Hon. W. T. Loton
 The Hon. H. J. Saunders
 The Hon. F. M. Stone
 The Hon. F. T. Whit-
 combe
 The Hon. F. T. Crowder
 (Teller).

Question thus passed, and the Council's amendment not insisted on.

Resolution reported and report adopted.

INSECT PESTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday week.

Put and passed.

The House adjourned at 6:15 until Tuesday, 12th September.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th August, 1899.

Paper Presented—Question: Export duty on Gold—
 Question: Vines at Subiaco—Question: Mail Con-
 tract, North—Insect Pests Amendment Bill, third
 reading—Rural Lands Improvement Bill, Recom-
 mittal, reported—Bills of Sale Bill, Amendments on
 report, reported—Motion re Petition: North Perth
 and Health Board—Municipal Institutions Bill, in
 Committee, Clauses 170 to 210, progress—Wines,
 Beer and Spirit Sale Amendment Bill, in Com-
 mittee, progress—Electoral Bill, in Committee, re-
 ported—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Return showing value of Australasian imports into and

exports from Western Australia during half year ended 30th June, 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—EXPORT DUTY ON GOLD.

MR. HIGHAM (for Mr. Rason), asked the Premier, Whether, seeing the large quantity of unminted gold which continues to be exported from Western Australia, the Government would consider the advisability of imposing an export duty on unminted gold.

THE PREMIER replied: The Govern- ment is aware that a large quantity of gold is being exported without going through the Mint. Until the gold pro- ducers have had experience of the advantages of the local Mint, this will probably continue, though in less quan- tity. The Government considers that it is not advisable at present to specially legislate in the direction named.

QUESTION—VINES AT SUBIACO.

MR. QUINLAN asked the Commis- sioner of Crown Lands: 1, What had been done with the vine plants grown in the Quarantine Grounds of the Agricul- tural Department, Subiaco; 2, What ten- ders, if any, had been received for pur- chase of same; what were the names of tenderers, and the price offered; 3, whether it would not be advisable to dis- tribute the plants throughout the different districts free of charge.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied: 1, Tenders were adver- tised for. 2, J. Hawter, £40; W. G. Brookman, £27 4s.; J. Weidenbach, F. Craig, W. J. Price, A. H. DuBoulay, for small lots. 3, Not considered advisable by the Viticultural Expert.

QUESTION—MAIL CONTRACT, NORTH.

MR. WALLACE asked the Premier: 1, Whether any contract had been let for the conveyance of mails from Pindah to Nancarrong; 2, If so, to whom and at what price; 3, Whether tenders were publicly called for this service; 4, If not, why not; 5, Whether the Postmaster- General recommended the service; 6, How many persons would be served by this service.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes; 2, W. and S. Burges, at £75 for one year; 3, No; 4, Because the service was a