

but I would not do it for the member for Geraldton.

MR. SIMPSON said: You never asked the member for Geraldton.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said: I would not do so.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12:40 o'clock, a.m., of Friday, 14th September.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 17th September, 1894.

Importation of Coal into the colony—Droving Bill: first reading—Minister for Mines acting as Director of Mining Companies—Publication of Speeches of the Premier in pamphlet form—Trial Surveys of Railways, &c., between Marble Bar goldfields and the coast—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): further considered in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

IMPORTS OF COAL INTO THE COLONY.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Treasurer,—

1. The total number of tons of coal imported into the colony for the year ending June 30th. 1894.

2. The number of tons discharged at each of the ports of the colony for the same period.

3. The value of the total coal imports.

4. The existing contracts for the supply of coal to the Government, and the particulars of said contracts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—

1. 16,535 tons.
2. At Fremantle ... 10,078 tons
At Albany... 5,849 „
Other Ports ... 608 „
Total ... 16,535 „
3. £15,024.
4. Particulars are now laid upon the table.

DROVING BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

MINISTER FOR MINES ACTING AS DIRECTOR OF MINING COMPANIES.

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker—In rising to move the motion of which I have given notice, “That in the opinion of this House it is undesirable that the member of the Cabinet entrusted with the administration of the Goldfields Act and the Mineral Lands Act should occupy the position of director in any companies or syndicates which are lessees or claimholders under the provisions of the said Acts”—in submitting this motion I feel I have a duty to perform that requires much delicate handling, and, perhaps, it would be well for me to state, in initiating the matter, that I—and I believe the House and the country—have the most perfect confidence in the integrity of the gentleman who at present administers these two Acts. But members know that under both these Acts large deliberative and discretionary powers are left in the hands of the Minister. One of the regulations under the Goldfields Act provides that the Warden's recommendation with regard to certain matters coming before him shall be forwarded to the Minister for his decision and confirmation.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What matters are those?

MR. SIMPSON: Recommendations for forfeiture is one,—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Governor-in-Council.

MR. SIMPSON: And recommendations as to the granting of leases.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Governor in Executive Council.

Mr. SIMPSON: Then I presume, if they go before the Governor in Council, the Minister holding this position would sit as a member of the Executive Council, and would take part in the deliberations of the Council, and also vote. That is the procedure, no doubt about it. I think it is an awkward and an invidious position to place a Minister in. It is also an invidious position to place a director in. I imagine that, in the event of any litigation brought in the Warden's Court over a dispute connected with a mineral area—say a jumping claim—the Minister, if also a director of a company concerned in the dispute, would take care that every tittle of evidence was produced, and every argument adduced, to support the claim of his shareholders in the Warden's Court. That, I presume, would be his action as a director. Subsequently, the result of these proceedings would come before him in his other position as a member of the Executive Council, when those proceedings were reviewed. I do not think I need suggest that a Minister so placed would find himself in a very delicate and awkward position. To illustrate the position I might point out it is the practice, in our Supreme Courts, for a Judge to retire from the bench in any case in which he is interested as a shareholder or otherwise. I think this is a good precedent to follow. We could appeal to no higher institution for an example than the Supreme Court of the country. I do not think that the same practice would work ill even in the Executive Council. Our mining industry is assuming such important dimensions that I think it is very desirable there should be no possibility of any doubt arising in the public mind as to the decisions of the Executive. I cannot think that any possible harm would be done by this resolution. It is not particularly aimed at the present occupant of the office; it is simply affirming a principle to which I think no objection can fairly be taken—that the Minister of Mines should not occupy the position of a director in any company which holds its lease or claim under the provisions of the Acts which that Minister is called upon to administer. I think I am within the facts when I state that the occupancy of this dual position is almost unparalleled in any other part of Aus-

tralia. Without further words I beg, with deference, to submit the resolution standing in my name.

After a considerable pause,

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) rose and said: As there seems to be hesitation on the part of members to speak on this subject, I think I might, perhaps, say a word or two in regard to it. Looking at the resolution in the abstract, I agree it is always better that persons should have no interest whatever in cases that may be brought before them for adjudication. That is, I think, a reasonable view to be taken of this proposition in the abstract. But members must recollect it is not only in regard to mining matters that this principle would apply; there are many other interests in this country besides mining to which the same principle would apply. Whilst admitting that, as a rule, it is far better for anyone who feels within himself that he is in any way interested in a case that comes before him for adjudication to take no action in regard to that adjudication, still, we know that, in our circumstances, and under our Constitution, gentlemen are called upon to occupy seats in this House and to become members of the Ministry who are business people, men who are engaged in other avocations, in the ordinary affairs of life; and there can be no doubt that if you apply this principle, if you place these restrictions, and impose these conditions as to who are eligible to become Ministers of the Crown and who are not, you will narrow the circle of selection. I think there can be no doubt about that. For instance, most people in this colony who have attained any position of mark or influence are possessors of land, or are probably engaged or interested in pastoral or in agricultural pursuits; will it be said by the hon. member who has brought forward this resolution, or by any other member in this House, that any gentleman who is the owner of pastoral properties, or who is interested in landed property of any kind, would be unfitted to occupy the position of Minister of Lands? I do not think the hon. member would go so far as that, although it is the only logical outcome of his resolution. I think this, however: that no one called upon to occupy the position of the head of a department, as a Minister of the Crown,

should increase or extend his connection with interests connected with the department over which he presides. I have no doubt that whoever would be called upon to form a Ministry would be careful, so far as he could, in not selecting as a Minister over any particular department a man whose own personal interests were mixed up with the interests of the department, because it might give rise to a feeling that he might be inclined to serve his own interests at the expense of the interests of the public. I do not say that he would—I say that as a rule he would not; but there would be such a feeling possibly amongst some people, who are always suspicious, and I think that should be avoided if possible. I think there is a great deal less in the objection raised by the hon. member than really exists. If any member of this House, being a member of the Executive, happens to be a director of a company, which is a going concern, and the interests of that company are in any way brought under his notice, I guarantee he never hears those interests mentioned from the time he enters his office until he leaves it again. Supposing he were a director of Fraser's, or Fraser's South, or Bayley's Reward, or any other going concern, the interests of his particular company would never come before the Government. I do not know of a single instance, since I have been a member of the Government, in which a case connected with a duly floated going concern has ever been the subject of a reference to the Executive Government. So that there is not much in the objection after all, so far as this resolution is concerned. If you were a promoter of a company, and personally interested, there might be something in the objection, though I think less than is suggested by this resolution. Even supposing a case did come before the Executive Government in which a Minister happened to be concerned as a director, I think his own good taste, and his respect for the feelings of his colleagues, would deter him from saying anything about a matter in which he was in any way interested. I can say this for myself: I should pay very little attention to his arguments if I knew he was personally interested. Such a thing has not occurred, and I do not think such a thing is likely to occur—I hope not, at any rate. I think I have known all the

cases that have been brought before the Executive since I have been a member of the Government—and that is a good many years—and I know of no instance in which a member of the Cabinet who was personally interested in the decision of that body ever took part in any discussion in regard to it, in the Cabinet, unless, perhaps, he might be referred to for some information. I hope the same practice will long continue. Although, as I have said, I am quite in accord with the principle of this resolution in the abstract, I hope the hon. member has carefully considered what the result of it may possibly be in other directions, and how it may, perhaps, pinch in some places, in the future, where he never intended it to pinch. My idea is that unless there has been a public clamour about the matter it is undesirable to raise a question of this kind. Unless some Minister has done something that he ought not to have done, or given cause for some suspicion as to the *bona fides* of his actions. I do not see why we should raise these abstract questions for the sake of discussing an abstract principle. I like to deal with things in a practical way; and, if any Minister of the Crown, whether I sat on this side of the House or on the Opposition side, did anything that I considered was not right in his position as a Minister, I should come into the House and lay my finger on the very spot, and I should say, "So and so has occurred, and I want to know the reason why." I have no doubt that most members of this House will agree with the abstract principle involved in this resolution,—that is, that a Judge, or any man in the position of a Judge, should not mix himself up in questions that are likely to come before him. But I may say that, as a matter of fact, under our statutes, the decision in regard to matters connected with the forfeiture of leases does not rest with the Minister of Mines. He merely has the right of making a recommendation; the decision rests with the Governor in Executive Council. Every question of forfeiture comes before the Executive, if it is opposed; if it is not opposed, we take it for granted there is no defence. But when there is a defence raised, the case comes before the Executive, and it is thoroughly inquired into by every member of the Executive, and a decision is only

arrived at after a careful consideration of all the *pros* and *cons*. Therefore, the Minister of Mines is not in that position which the hon. member for Geraldton thought he occupied. In larger countries where the duties of Ministers are more complicated, and the Executive Government are not able to give such questions as these so much consideration as we are able to do here, the position of a Minister of Mines who has to deal with such questions entirely on his own responsibility would be different. But, as I have already said, there has been no case of the forfeiture of a lease decided by the Executive Government in this colony in regard to which every member of the Cabinet has not made himself acquainted with all the facts of the case, and decided accordingly. I feel bound to say this for my hon. colleague—I do not suppose he will speak on this question himself—I feel bound to say this of him, that he would never think of expressing an opinion at a Cabinet meeting on a matter in which he was in any way personally interested.

[MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.] That is the opinion I have formed of him, after my experience of him, and knowing him for a long course of years. I do not believe there is a man in this colony who has a higher idea of what is just and right, and of what is due to his own self-respect, than my friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands; so that I cannot see that this motion is in any way pointed at him.

[MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.] As an abstract proposition probably members may be inclined to agree with the resolution, but members should consider whether it is not possible that it may pinch in other directions, and in places where it is not intended to pinch. There are many other interests besides the mining interests which members of the Government have to deal with, and I say it would be restricting the area of selection very much, and in my opinion unnecessarily so, if you applied this principle to every department of the Government. We are only a struggling people, most of us in this country, and men would hesitate to accept the position of a Minister of the Crown—which is a temporary position after all—if a condition attached to their appointment was that they should give up their private concerns, and everything connected with what was probably their means of

livelihood. I think these questions had better be dealt with as they arise, and when there is some definite cause or occasion for dealing with them; and, for my part, believing as I do that there is no real ground for bringing forward this motion, I regret very much that the hon. member for Geraldton has moved it.

MR. RANDELL: I may say that I seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion only, and that I do not share in the regret expressed by the Premier that the motion was brought forward, because it has elicited from the hon. gentleman a very excellent speech in reply, which I think went far to reassure members, if they needed to be reassured—which I do not think they did—that no members of the present Executive allow their private interests to clash with the performance of their public duties. I feel the full force of what the Premier said about narrowing the circle of selection for those who may be required to fill Ministerial positions to carry on the Government of the country. Once this principle were applied it would have to be extended in other directions, and, as the Premier pointed out, it might pinch in places where it was never intended to pinch. Though, perhaps, there may be no necessity for such a resolution at present, I am rather glad it has been moved, because, as I have said, it has elicited from the Premier a very statesmanlike reply, and placed before the country in a very clear way his ideas of the spirit which should guide Ministers in the administration of public affairs. I do not intend to say any more, as I do not think any attack was intended to be made upon the present holder of the office. I am only glad an opportunity has been given for eliciting from the head of the Government a speech of so very instructive and able a character—I will not say in defence, for I do not think any attack has been made, but in explanation, of the practice which at present prevails when questions of this kind are brought under the consideration of the Executive Government.

MR. LEAKE: I should not have made any observations upon this resolution had it not been for the remarks that fell from the Premier. I am quite certain that the hon. member who moved this resolution was perfectly sincere when he said he wished to make no personal charge

or suggestion against the Commissioner of Crown Lands [MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear.] Nor do I, in the few observations I propose to address to the House, intend to do so. But it is just as well not to be led astray from the subject matter of this resolution. There is a principle involved, and it is a sound principle, and it is this: that no person should be called upon to adjudicate in any matter in which he has directly or indirectly, express or implied, any personal interest whatsoever. There is nothing offensive in the resolution, and I hope the House will support it. It is not sufficient for the Premier to say that no instances have yet occurred where this has been done. Do not let us wait until the necessity for the application of this resolution arises. Let us affirm the principle as clearly and as emphatically as we can. The Premier himself acknowledges that, in the abstract, the resolution is good. If it is good, then let us carry it. No harm can be done, but good may be done. We know perfectly well that Ministers are interested in goldfields leases. I say we know it; and it is quite possible that questions may arise in regard to those interests at different times; and it is just as well that a warning note should be sounded that this House will regard with the greatest possible suspicion anything which may possibly place any member of the present Ministry or of any future Ministry in what I may call a false position. There is no parallel between the relation of the Minister of Lands to the pastoral and agricultural interests and his relation to the mining interests, because, as regards the pastoral and agricultural interests, no judicial functions are required to be exercised by that Minister, or by the Executive Government; or, at any rate, not to the same extent, or involving any such important considerations as present themselves when we come to view the powers of the Commissioner under the Goldfields Act. I would not have referred to an incident that recently occurred, and which was brought to the notice of the House, but for the remarks of the Premier. The hon. gentleman says no cases have occurred calling for a resolution of this nature, and that there has been no public clamour, and that if any person has any knowledge of

anything of the kind, he should not bring forward abstract resolutions but lay his finger on the spot. I hope, if I do so, he will not conceive that I am making a personal attack, or impugning the integrity, personal or professional, of any person in this House. A short time ago we had an illustration of how unfortunately placed Ministers may be at times, when they least expect it. The other day certain papers were laid on the table of the House relating to the Londonderry jumping cases. What was the result of the dispute in that instance? The dispute arose upon a legal principle, and that legal principle was decided by whom? By the Executive Council; not by the Supreme Court, not by a legal tribunal. The solicitors for the jumpers (as I call them) were Messrs. Stone & Burt, who represented the case for the jumpers to the Executive Council; and we find the Attorney General, a member of that firm of solicitors, being called upon to decide a disputed law point in favour of his own clients. [THE PREMIER: He didn't do it, though.] I did not say he did. I should be ashamed to impugn the integrity of the Attorney General, whom I know, and whom everyone in this House knows, very well. But when we are called to furnish instances, in a public assembly like this, and we know of any instances, we should not be afraid of giving them. I say the Attorney General was unfortunately placed in a false position in the instance I refer to.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: He is not the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

MR. LEAKE: No. He had to adjudicate upon a legal principle, and, unfortunately, the adjudication was in favour of his own client.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This resolution would not touch him.

MR. LEAKE: No; but it is an illustration of the delicate and false position in which Ministers are sometimes placed, and how careful members of the Executive should be that they do not allow the possibility of a suspicion or suggestion being raised against them. Nobody can deny that the action of the Government in regard to that particular case gave rise to a good deal of adverse comment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What about your own action?

MR. LEAKE : What about my action ?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I suppose you had no interest in the case ?

MR. LEAKE : I had no interest then, but I have now.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : You had before, too.

MR. LEAKE : No, I hadn't.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : Yes, you had. I can prove it.

MR. LEAKE : The hon. gentleman's veracity has never been impugned, and I do not impugn it now. I gave this instance because the hon. gentleman challenged members to refer to any instance in point. It is really a pity the hon. gentleman cannot discuss these things without introducing what we may call a personal element. I am endeavouring not to do so myself. I am arguing for the principle ; and I intend to support that principle ; but, having been challenged to put my finger upon a spot, I have done so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : You said you had no interest in the case.

MR. LEAKE : I said I had none then, but I have now.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : You had before, too.

MR. RICHARDSON : It strikes me there are one or two points which this resolution, as worded, does not guard against, and which might commend it very seriously to the consideration of the House. At present it falls short of guarding against a member of the Executive being interested otherwise than as a director. There is nothing to prevent the Minister being interested in any mining company as a promoter or as a shareholder ; it simply guards against his becoming a director. He may have a far larger interest in a concern as a shareholder than he might have as a director, and unless you can introduce a principle that would be so far-reaching and so searching as to prevent members of the Executive from being, directly or indirectly, interested in any case that comes before them, the resolution falls short of what it is intended to accomplish. It appears to me that the instance mentioned by the hon. member for Albany does not seem to touch this resolution at all. The hon. member referred to the Londonderry case, but he did not show us that any member of the Executive was a director in

that instance, and, if not a director, the resolution has nothing to do with the case. I admit, as other members do, that the principle involved in this resolution is a very good principle indeed. If we could guard against members of the Government being directly interested in any matter at all, whether it was connected with land, or mines, or companies of any kind, it would be a very good thing. But where are you going to find such men ?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : They would probably be no good if you did.

MR. RICHARDSON : Very possibly they would not. If they had no interest whatever in any of the industries of the colony they would probably be mere adventurers, seekers of office for the emoluments of office, and men to whom we would not care very much to trust the reins of Government, having no stake at all in the country. Where this resolution fails is in this : it touches one little point only, and leaves about a hundred more untouched ; and unless we can lay down a rule, as I have said, that no Minister of the Crown shall have any direct or personal interest or stake in any of the interests of the colony—pastoral, agricultural, mining, or commercial—I do not see how you are going to guard against the possibility of his being interested in something that may have to be dealt with by him as a member of the Government in office. The hon. member for Albany says that the Minister of Lands does not exercise any statutory functions as regards pastoral or agricultural lands in the same way as he does in regard to mining matters. But what about the forfeiture of pastoral leases, or of land taken up under special occupation, by any of his sisters, or his cousins, or his aunts ? I can conceive hundreds of cases where his decision would affect very large interests in other directions than mining ; and how it would be possible to guard against every possible contingency of this kind I cannot see. It seems to me that the only practical way of dealing with it is, as the Premier says, to trust to a Minister to have sufficient sense of self-respect and sufficient good taste not to take part in deciding any case in which he is himself interested, or that, if he did do so, his brother Ministers would have sufficient strength of mind to pay no heed to what he said.

MR. MORAN : I think it was Bobby Burns who made use of the words—

O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursel's as others see us.

I think those words apply very forcibly both to the introducer of this resolution and to the hon. member for Albany, who supported it very strongly, and who had the effrontery to bring forward as an illustration a case in which I know both of these gentlemen are interested. Moreover, the similarity between that case and the principle which this resolution deals with is about as close as the similarity between the moon and a wire fence. I think it was simply in order to be able to bring forward some of his own little grievances, which have particularly agitated him of late, that the hon. member for Albany has supported this motion. The Ministers of the Government in this colony are simply the executive body of this Parliament, and the same principle that you seek to apply to Ministers applies with equal force to members of this House, who are called upon to advocate and vote for local railways and other public works by which they and their constituents may benefit to the extent of hundreds and thousands of pounds. Where does the difference come in? What is the difference between a private member of this House and a Minister?

MR. SIMPSON : £800 a year.

MR. MORAN : The principle is exactly the same. Need I refer to an instance where the pastoral interest was so strong in this House as to secure a remission of rents amounting to something like a quarter of a million? [SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Nonsense.] I am just bringing that forward as an illustration. This principle applies just as much to private members of this House as to Ministers, and if you insist upon it in one case you will have to insist upon it in all cases, if you want to be consistent. The only remedy is to pay members a sufficient salary to enable them to live without having occasion to dabble in any other business or occupation. The same remark applies to Ministers of the Crown. A lop-sided motion like this, dealing only with one Minister, is not only invidious but ridiculous, when we all know that the principle is one that affects

the whole question of parliamentary representation. There are many men interested in mines and other concerns who hold ten times as much interest in them as many a director does, yet this resolution is only aimed against a Minister holding the position of a director. A mining director is not necessarily elected to that position because he has a big interest in the concern, but because he is a man of shrewdness and experience, and has a clear insight into the working of the mine. A private member may, perhaps, become the owner of half an interest in a mine, and there is nothing to prevent him from having a voice and taking an active part in framing or interpreting the regulations governing the working of mines and leases, and he may use all his influence to benefit himself and to protect and advance his own interests; yet you hold him blameless. I do not know whether such a thing ever occurred in this House, but it may occur. A Minister may be a director of a company and yet have such a paltry interest in the concern that it would not affect his decision in the slightest. Then where does the force of this resolution come in? Unless you make it general in its application, where is the justice of it? As I have said, a private member may have a large interest in mining concerns and use his vote and influence as much as he possibly can to further his own interests, and this resolution would not touch him. Nor would it touch a Minister unless he was a director, although he might own half the claim or the lease. I do not see where you are going to draw the line. Why should we draw it at mining leases and apply it only to one particular Minister? Why not apply it to all interests, to all Ministers, and to every member of this House? If you carried out this principle to its logical conclusion, so as to remove all suspicion of log-rolling and of serving personal interests, you would have to compel every Minister before he entered upon office, and every member of this House before he took his seat, to divest himself of all his property, all his goods and chattels, and go to live at an hotel. A Minister may have a large personal interest in a concern and the public may know nothing about it, but the moment he becomes a director, and his interest in the concern becomes public, you propose

to put the screw on. But so long as the thing is kept quiet, and the public know nothing about it, he can do as much log-rolling as he likes. However good the principle may be, the way it is proposed to apply it in this resolution is simply a farce.

MR. SIMPSON: I shall not trespass long on the patience of the House in replying to the objections that have been raised to this motion; nor is it necessary that I should reply at all to the wild incoherencies of the hon. member who has just sat down. With regard to some of his statements, I can only say that they exhibit the most remarkable economy of truth I ever witnessed. In regard to the speech of the hon. the Premier, I heartily agree with what he said with reference to his colleague, the very much esteemed and highly respected Commissioner of Crown Lands; and, if the hon. gentleman had accepted the resolution in the spirit in which it was offered, no personal element need have been introduced into this debate at all. I alluded to no blot, I hinted at no dark spots, I did not insinuate anything against anyone; I simply wished to have a principle affirmed, that principle being that the member of the Cabinet entrusted with the administration of our mining laws should not occupy the position of director in any companies or syndicates who work under those laws. I simply asked the House to affirm the principle that, where possible, it is desirable that such a collision of interests should be avoided. The Premier admits that the resolution in the abstract is a good one, and one which he agrees with. I only ask the House to adopt it as an abstract resolution. The hon. gentleman further admitted the principle when he said he considered that no Minister, after accepting office, should extend his connection or further identify himself with interests that his department had to deal with. That, I say, distinctly affirms the principle of my resolution. I think, perhaps, the Premier did not convey exactly what he wished to convey when he said he thought the black spot should make its appearance first,—that the evil referred to should occur first—and that we should then deal with it. I think that would be a very unwise course of procedure to adopt. I think prevention is better than

cure, and that if by affirming a resolution like this we can prevent this evil ever arising, we shall be acting distinctly with greater sagacity. I do not wish or intend, by this resolution, to convey anything invidious or to throw any doubt upon the integrity of any Minister, but I am strongly of opinion that this House would be acting wisely in adopting the resolution. I have had a good deal to do with mining, and I have had considerable experience as a director of mining companies, and I say frankly I could not in that position do my duty conscientiously towards my shareholders, and also towards the public as a Minister of the Crown. I do not care how high a man's integrity may be, or how pure his motives or his principles, he cannot rise superior to human nature, and every man's nature is warped in some degree, however unconsciously, in the direction where his own interests lie. It is useless to deny that fact. Therefore I do maintain that the affirmation of the principle embodied in this resolution would be decidedly a gain and an advantage, and remove all feeling of doubt or distrust from the minds of the mining community in the future. As to what the Premier said, that we should wait before dealing with this question until there was some public clamour raised, I entirely disagree with him. To my mind the time to adopt all necessary reforms is not when the public mind is excited and inflamed. It is better and wiser to deal with such reforms when that popular excitement has died away, or before that popular clamour has arisen. In that respect the Premier's views and my own are entirely at variance. As to there being no feeling on this matter in the public mind at present, I may say that from one end of our mining areas to the other I have heard it referred to as a thing that was never known in the mining history of any other Australian colony. I do not mean to say that the history of mining development in Australia has been characterised only by wisdom and sagacity, and that we should unhesitatingly accept the teachings of that history; but I do not hesitate to say that in affirming the principle embodied in this resolution we cannot possibly do any harm to the country, and undoubtedly, to my mind, we would do good.

Motion put and passed.

PRINTING THE PREMIER'S SPEECHES
IN PAMPHLET FORM.

MR. LEAKE moved:—"That, in the opinion of this House, the practice of printing the speeches of the Hon. the Premier, exclusively, in pamphlet form, at public expense, should be discontinued; and that, if any such pamphlet be printed, it should include the full report of the debate, so as to show the arguments against, as well as for, any particular resolution." The object he had in view was, he thought, concisely put in the resolution, and he did not suppose that even the Premier himself would object to it. Members would recognise that, if it was desirable the speech of any member upon any subject should be published, it was with the view of possibly inducing members to vote in the direction that the speech indicated; and, in all matters, he thought it was as well to hear both sides of a question. Particularly was this the case in important matters brought before the Legislature by the Government as part of their policy. He really saw no necessity to have the speeches of the Premier printed in pamphlet form, nor was it fair, unless the speeches of other members in reply were also published in the same form. There was also this to be considered: according to the standing orders, he believed, they were not at liberty to refer to the printed debates of the current session, therefore no member could make use of these pamphlets in the course of debate. But if it was necessary at all to have the Premier's speeches printed in this form, it was equally necessary that the speeches of members on the other side should also be printed. He referred particularly just now to the Premier's speech on the Agricultural Bank Bill. It was equally important that, side by side with that speech, the very able and vigorous attack made upon it by the hon. member for Nannine should also have been printed. The same argument applied to the Premier's speech on the Loan Bill; and, unless this practice was checked by the House, it might grow into unnecessarily huge dimensions. The Government, he thought, derived undue advantage from the present practice. The Premier could not complain of the liberal manner in which he was treated by the daily Press in the reporting of his speeches. In fact, the reports in the Press were always

fair; the newspapers treated every member fairly and justly in this respect, and gave them as much space as they could reasonably expect. They could not all expect to be reported verbatim, but the Premier generally was; and it was quite unnecessary to have these pamphlets published. But if one member was entitled to have this privilege, other members should have it. He had no personal feeling in the matter, and, with these few words, he commended the resolution to the House, and asked members to vote for it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had not intended to speak on this motion, but he should like to make the position of the Government clear. He thought he might at once dismiss any personal feeling in regard to it; the only object he had in view in publishing any important speech dealing with an important measure like the Loan Bill or the Agricultural Bank Bill, was that members might have an opportunity of seeing exactly what the views of the Government were with regard to the Bill. If members thought it was of no use to them, or they did not desire it, no one would be more pleased than himself to discontinue it, because it gave him a considerable amount of trouble to have to revise these speeches at a moment's notice, so as to get them out quickly, in order that members might be placed in possession of them at the earliest possible moment. If, however, members did not care to have them he would be only too glad to discontinue the practice. The hon. member's suggestion that all speeches in the course of a debate should be printed in the same way was somewhat absurd, because the debate would be over and the question decided before all the speeches could be printed and the House placed in possession of them in this form. He was not at all surprised at the action of the hon. member in bringing forward this motion. He did not recognise that the hon. member had been prompted to bring it forward by any friendly spirit. He recognised it rather as part of that programme of hostility to the Government and misrepresentation which he had entered upon ever since he came to the House. As to the expense of these little pamphlets, he might say that these reports were merely the *Hansard* reports, and they afterwards found their

way into the *Hansard* volume, in due course, without any additional expense. He had been under the impression that these pamphlets were of some service to members, for purposes of reference, when dealing with the subjects brought before them. Take the Loan Bill, for instance, or the Budget speech; he thought members would be glad to have the exact views of the Government before them when the debates were continued. As for any undue advantage obtained by the Government, he thought the reports in the daily papers, on important occasions, were very much the same as these pamphlet reports. The practice was not without precedent in other places, at any rate as regards the publication of the Treasurer's budget speech. They were generally printed in this form, and bound up with the "Votes and Proceedings." He could only repeat that if members did not care to have these pamphlets, he had no desire whatever to continue the practice. They were of no advantage to him personally. With regard to his speech on the Agricultural Bank Bill, he might say that the reason why he had that printed was at the request of the hon. member for Geraldton, who asked him to be good enough to try and get it printed, in order that members might have it before them when the debate on the second reading was resumed.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) reminded the House that these speeches of the leader of the Government were not printed for the edification of the hon. member for Albany alone, nor for the edification of other members alone; these publications were intended to reach outside the walls of that House, and outside the colony. He would ask was it not a good thing that all the best and most reliable information, financial and otherwise, that could be given about the colony should go abroad in this convenient form? He ventured to say that the dissemination of these speeches of the head of the Government upon important measures that came before Parliament did a great deal more good for the colony abroad than anything that was likely to be done by the utterances of hon. gentlemen who sat opposite for a considerable period. The question was not worth labouring; he

thought there was an element of absurdity about it, and that when the hon. member put his motion on the notice paper he must have been stroked the wrong way by his friend the Premier.

MR. PIESSE hoped the House would not agree to the resolution. He thought the majority of members would admit that the publication of these official reports of the Premier's speeches on occasions of importance had been of great service and great convenience to them. As to members not being able to make use of them in the course of debate, he thought the hon. member for Albany was wrong. The standing order did not prevent members from referring to them; all it said was that members were not allowed to read extracts from them. He hoped the practice would not be discontinued.

MR. R. F. SHOLL did not think this question would have cropped up at all had it not been for the publication of the Premier's speech on the Agricultural Bank Bill. That was a very important Bill, and the speech of the Premier was very ably and exhaustively criticised by the hon. member for Nannine; and it would have been very useful and very convenient if the two speeches had been printed together. [THE PREMIER: Suppose neither were printed, what then?] No one could then have complained. But now they had one side of the question only, without the excellent speech of the hon. member for Nannine in reply. He thought that was the main cause of complaint. With regard to the reports in the daily press, it was impossible for the newspapers to give verbatim reports of many long speeches, and, as a rule, the Premier got the advantage of other members in that respect too, for his speeches were generally reported very fully, much more so than the speeches of other members. If the speeches of the Premier on important measures were also to be published in this pamphlet form, it was only fair that the speeches of other members should also be published. The debates were generally adjourned over some days, and they might be published up to the adjournment of the debate.

MR. COOKWORTHY did not wish to detain the House in speaking upon what after all was a very frivolous motion. He thought the hon. member who brought

it forward was taking up the time of the House unnecessarily. The hon. member for Albany had chosen on many occasions to taunt the supporters of the Government—speaking of course in a Pickwickian or parliamentary sense—as an obsequious and “brutal majority.” [MR. LEAKE: Not I.] The hon. member at any rate described them as “voting machines.” [MR. LEAKE: That's it.] He also thought the hon. member had questioned whether they had any common sense. [MR. LEAKE: That's right.] No doubt they were not afflicted with the *cacoethes loquendi* in the same marked degree as the hon. member was, but they had sufficient common sense to distinguish between sense and nonsense; and he really thought that a “voting machine,” so long as he voted conscientiously, in support of the Government he believed in, was far better than a mere “spouting machine” who came to the House to advertise himself, and to waste the time of the House. The hon. member must surely have thought the other evening he was on the stage of St. George's Hall. The hon. member had sometimes afforded them a great deal of amusement as an amateur actor, and he certainly admired his talents in that capacity; but he must object to his converting that House into a stage for comedy, as he did the other night. He must admit the hon. member was not the first to commence it on that occasion, but he would remind him that it was not business. There was a time for all things, and a place for all things; and he hoped the hon. member would treat the House a little more seriously than he was in the habit of doing, and not seek to convert it into an amateur theatrical society. It would be better for himself and better for the country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH desired to say a few words on the subject of the resolution before the House, though the kindly references which had been made to some remarks of his own, made him somewhat diffident in dealing with it. But he should like to remark that in Queensland there was such a thing as a daily *Hansard*, and in Victoria a weekly *Hansard*, in which all speeches were placed in the hands of members within a few days after their delivery; and he should like to see some steps taken whereby our own *Hansard* would be pub-

lished within some reasonable time, so that members might have all speeches before them in this form, and not merely the Premier's speeches. [THE PREMIER: We tried it once.] If so, why did the practice break down? [MR. RANDALL: It is a question of cost.] If it was a question of cost, it was difficult to reconcile that statement with the statement made by the Premier that the printing of these speeches of his in pamphlet form cost nothing. There were 33 members in that House, and if it cost nothing to print the Premier's speeches in this way, it would only cost 33 times nothing to print the speeches of all the members; and 33 times nothing, he believed, was nought. That, however, was taking a very low estimate of this question; there was underlying it a degree of unfairness. The Premier delivered himself upon a certain subject of public importance, and forthwith his utterances were printed and placed in the hands of members; but nothing that was said on the other side of the question was published in the same way. In addition to the importance which his position as Premier conferred upon him, and the influence he possessed as leader of the Government, he had this further advantage of having his speeches revised by himself with the greatest possible care, and then published in this form; and when members quoted from memory or from the report of his speeches in the daily Press, they were immediately confronted with these revised editions of his speeches. He himself had been contradicted, on the floor of the House, when quoting from the best report available, because the Premier was quoting from a revised report. [THE PREMIER: I don't agree with you.] The Premier, in this way, had a very distinct advantage over other members. [THE PREMIER: Why shouldn't he?] If it was to be admitted that the Premier was to have all the advantage to himself; if it was to be admitted that, in consequence of his being the Premier, and holding certain convictions, he was to have the opportunity of placing those convictions before the House twice, while the convictions of other members were only placed before the House once, and that because he was Premier his utterances were to be repeated a second and a third time, in order that triplicate

force might be brought to carry his measures—if that was the case, then they could understand the position. All he could say was it was a very unfair position, and altogether contrary to his idea of parliamentary practice or fair play. Therefore he maintained that this suggestion of the hon. member for Albany was right: if these speeches were going to be printed in this form, let them all be printed, or let none be printed. He could not see why the Premier or any member of the Government should have this advantage, if the same advantage and privilege was not to be extended to other members.

Mr. SIMPSON said it appeared to him that this resolution led in the direction of a daily *Hansard*; but he did not think this colony was in the position to afford such a luxury. He presumed it was simply a question of ways and means. The resolution now before them was impracticable. As pointed out by the Premier, by the time the whole of a debate was printed, the question which formed the subject of the debate would have been decided and done with. As to the Premier's speeches, he did not think the hon. gentleman had them printed with the idea of influencing any member of the House. When the leader of the Government made an important public utterance, expounding the policy of the Government upon a particular subject, he (Mr. Simpson) as a member of the House thought it was exceedingly desirable they should have for their information an exact and precise statement of the views of the Government as announced by the Premier in his place in the House. He believed that the Press of this colony did its utmost, with the means and resources at its command, to give a fair report of the proceedings of Parliament—although, on a recent occasion, he was the unfortunate victim of a curious, though no doubt unintentional, mistake on the part of that paper that shed its light upon our dark evenings, which placed to his credit, in the debate upon the early closing of shops, some of the brilliant intellectualities the House was so frequently treated to by the hon. member for Toodyay. The peculiar thing about it was this: it made him appear in this curious light, that while his utterances pointed in one direction, his vote in the

division-list pointed in exactly the opposite direction. With regard to this resolution, he thought it was very desirable that the views of the Government upon important occasions should be placed before them in a complete, exact, and authorised form. If he wished to question the Premier's statement on any point, he liked to be able to do it from the very *ipsissima verba* of his speech as delivered. The spirit of the resolution was a good one, but it appeared to him to be impracticable to carry it out with the means and resources at their command for securing its adoption.

Mr. LEAKE said the Commissioner of Crown Lands, following his usual practice when opposing any resolution brought forward on the opposite side of the House, had supplied a good argument in favour of the resolution. The hon. gentleman told them that these pamphlets containing the Premier's speeches were not printed for the edification of the members of that House, but for circulation outside the House and outside the colony. That was the very circumstance which had influenced him in bringing forward the resolution. If pressure or influence was to be brought to bear outside, then both sides of the question should be presented; and they were not presented when the speeches of the Premier, and the Premier alone, were printed in this form. The hon. member for the Vasse accused him of attempting to throw ridicule upon subjects that came before the House, but he had treated this subject with the utmost seriousness. Should he desire to exercise his powers of ridicule, and searched for a victim, he could hardly conceive a more fitting subject for caricature than the hon. member himself. With regard to what had fallen from the Premier, he would remind the hon. gentleman that it would be as well for him to endeavour to conform with conventionalities and to observe the rules of decorum in debate, and not be always accusing those who differed from him, or who adversely criticised him, with misrepresenting him. Accusations of that kind, for which there was no foundation, formed a dangerous weapon when freely used, as it was by the Premier sometimes, and very apt to recoil upon the accuser. There had been no misrepresentation on his part. He

must ask the Premier to endeavour to deal with such questions upon their merit. It was really childish sometimes, the hon. gentleman's attacks upon members on that side of the House. Anything brought forward, in the utmost good faith, was seized upon by him as a personal and hostile attack upon himself, when nothing of the kind was intended. Of course, he (Mr. Leake) was a great deal younger than the hon. gentleman, but he hoped the Premier would take his advice in good part, and try to conduct himself in that House with a little more dignity and decorum, and not recklessly charge members with misrepresentation. With regard to this resolution, it appeared to him that those who had spoken approved of the principle; if so, he hoped they would have the courage to vote for it. He did not mean to say that he advocated a daily *Hansard*, but, if it was the wish of members that such a publication should be introduced, he, for one, would raise no objection to it.

Motion put and negatived.

SURVEY OF RAILWAY TO MARBLE BAR GOLDFIELDS.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, moved, "That in the opinion of this House the Government should undertake, at an early date, to have a trial survey made with a view to preparing approximate estimates of the cost of—

"1. A tramway—steam or horse—on the narrow gauge (say 2ft. 6in.) between Marble Bar goldfields and Port Hedland, or such other port as will best serve the interests of the goldfields.

"2. A railway of 3ft. 6in. gauge between the same points.

"3. A practicable wagon road across the marsh leading from Port Hedland."

The hon. member said his desire was to give the residents in this far-off district some assurance that the Government and the Legislature were not completely oblivious of their existence, or of their earnest and noble efforts in attempting to develop the resources of that distant and isolated portion of our territory. These people were engaged in exactly the same struggle in developing our mineral resources as the miners at Coolgardie or Southern Cross, and in adding to the national wealth of the colony, and

under peculiar difficulties and drawbacks. Though they had the advantage of a better water supply, they had the disadvantage of a climate that was hostile to manual labour, and they had the further disadvantage of being out of sight and out of mind, and consequently of not having their wants brought so prominently into notice as more favourably situated parts of the colony. It was in the nature of things that parts of the colony closer to the seat of Government should, from that very fact, be able to enforce their claims upon the authorities, and to have their grievances remedied. He was not bringing any accusation of actual neglect on the part of the Government; he believed they had the interests of the whole of the colony at heart. One had only to look at the various questions that had occupied their attention and the attention of that House, to be satisfied of this; and if there was any justification in the accusation that the Northern parts of the colony had not had their fair share of the loaves and fishes, it was not owing to any studied neglect, but rather to the force of circumstances, in their being situated so far away, and their not being able to bring a little more gentle pressure to bear upon the Government. It was in order to bring the isolated position and requirements of these distant parts of the colony more into prominence that he had brought forward this resolution, in the hope that the Government would be able to undertake this trial survey, and see whether it was within the bounds of practical politics that a cheap line of railway might be constructed to establish communication between Marble Bar and Bamboo Creek and the sea coast. This district contained very large auriferous deposits, which would have attracted more attention than they had done had it not been for the glamour of the discoveries on our Eastern goldfields. The results of the crushings had been from 1½oz. to 3ozs. or 4ozs., averaging about 2ozs.; and there was very good promise of the future richness of the fields. In addition to that, it was a tolerably rich pastoral district, and a light line of railway running into it would not be under the same disadvantage as the railways to some of our goldfields, where there was no back traffic. He did not wish to tie the hands of the Government

as to what part of the coast this railway should start from; the surveys would best determine that. If practicable to have one of these light railways constructed, he felt convinced that the results would astonish many people, and give a tremendous impulse to the enterprise of the mining communities established in these far off regions. It was very natural for these people, when they found a third Loan Bill brought in, and found very little figuring on it for their benefit—some £30,000 or £40,000 probably out of a million and a half on the present Bill, and about the same on the previous Loan Bill—it was very natural for these people to come to think that these loans were intended to benefit the South, and to ask seriously where poor Pill Garlic came in? When it came to contributing to the general taxation Pill Garlic was not overlooked, but when it came to the expenditure of public loans poor Pill Garlic was decidedly out of sight, and also out of mind. He did not think he was outside the facts of the case if he stated that the contribution to the public revenue from the North District amounted to one-fifth of the whole revenue of the colony, in the way of Customs and taxation. According to that proportion, the district ought to get a very much larger share of this loan than £30,000 or £40,000. Their share would be about £300,000. They did not ask for any such proportion, but it was only reasonable and natural they should expect a larger share than had fallen to their lot in the past. Therefore he hoped the House, in a spirit of common fairness, would give a hearty support to this resolution. After all, it meant very little in one way, though it meant a great deal in another. It meant this, at any rate: it would show these districts that we did not altogether forget them, and that we were anxious to do what we could towards developing their country, by giving them this improved means of communication. The distance would not be very great—probably 100 miles—and, putting £1,200 a mile down for the construction and equipment of a light line of railway, the total expenditure would not be more than £120,000—not quite one-tenth the amount of the present Loan Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had listened attentively to what

the hon. member had said, and he fully recognised that these Northern goldfields—so far as he had been able to gather—were promising fields, and he might say that the Government had no objection to the resolution. The main question they had to consider, before spending so much money there, was whether it would be justifiable in the interests of the colony to build this railway. What they wanted, more than this trial survey and the information it would afford them, was to be assured that these goldfields warranted the expenditure of this money in the construction of this work. He had not been to the locality himself, and therefore could not speak from personal knowledge; but he was satisfied from his general knowledge of our North-West country that there would be no serious engineering difficulties to be encountered in the construction of this railway. The difficulties that might be found would be the creeks, which were wide, and liable to floods. The only question was whether these goldfields justified this expenditure. He hoped sincerely they would. This railway would no doubt cost a considerable sum of money, being so far away. The timber for sleepers would have to be carried a long distance; the climate, too, was very hot, and the cost of labour would be high; and a railway built in this distant part of the colony would necessarily be much more expensive than the same class of railway down here. Still, he would not hesitate to undertake the work, if he could be satisfied there was a good and permanent goldfield there. It must be recollected that the population of the district, after all, was small, and he did not think they could fairly condemn the Government or the Legislature of having neglected their wants altogether. They could not, owing to their isolated position and their small number, and the drawbacks of their climate, expect to get the same amount of attention as those who lived nearer the larger centres of population. He confessed that at once. There was not so much interest taken generally in these out-of-the-way parts as in those parts that were nearer the seat of Government; but the desire of the present Government was to develop all parts of the colony, and not confine their attention to any particular part. He did not look

upon himself as the representative of any particular part of the country to the exclusion of all other parts. He considered it the duty of the Government to try to develop every part of the colony to the best of their ability and the extent of their means, and he should be very glad indeed if the circumstances of the goldfields would justify them in building this railway. He believed, from what he could gather, that the line would be justified. The difficulty, as he had said, was the distance away and being in a tropical district, which was not very comfortable, so far as the climate was concerned. [MR. RICHARDSON: It is very healthy.] It might be healthy, but it was not very comfortable. [MR. RICHARDSON: Look at me, sir.] Some people could stand anything. He could not help thinking that the hon. member's present condition was due to his having come away from that part of the colony in time to recuperate. However, he did not think the House would be going far off the track if it agreed to this resolution, because it would not cost very much to do all the hon. member required at present.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the resolution did not bind the Government to build a railway, but only to undertake a survey. He should like to point out the desirability of connecting our railways with the capitals of the districts where they were built, and he hoped the Government, in this instance, would not confine their examination to Port Hedland alone, but also ascertain whether this railway could not be taken to Roebourne. It might be found that the cost of carrying it to Roebourne itself would not be more than the country would be warranted in incurring. It would serve a good many sheep stations on its way which this Port Hedland line would not serve, and it would also serve Pilbarra and Egina. He did not think it was a good argument to make use of, that because the climate was not comfortable these people ought not to get a railway. He thought it was all the more reason they should have these little luxuries. He believed that these goldfields, from all accounts, would prove permanent, and support a large population, and the country would be largely benefited by this railway. They could not

get a more favourable locality for trying these light cheap narrow-gauge railways, of which they had heard so much lately. They would not interfere with the gauge of our railways down here, which was a very important consideration.

MR. CONNOR said that as a Northern member he felt bound to support this motion. He was glad to hear the Premier saying that he approved of this survey being undertaken, but the hon. gentleman did not seem satisfied that the railway itself was justified at present; he seemed to be in some doubt as to whether the present state of the goldfields warranted its construction. He should like to ask the hon. gentleman whether the prospects of the goldfield at Southern Cross, or the amount of gold won out of the mines in that district at the time the railway to Yilgarn was undertaken, afforded more promise than these Northern goldfields did at the present time? Yet the Premier did not hesitate about building a railway to Yilgarn. In proportion to the amount of work done, he believed that a great deal more gold had been obtained on these Northern fields than had been obtained at Southern Cross. The Premier was very fond of telling them that he had all parts of the colony at heart. That was all very fine as a matter of sentiment; but he would like him to extend a little more practical generosity in the direction of the North. He should have an opportunity, he hoped, when the Loan Bill came on, of reminding the Premier of the promise made when a previous Loan Bill was before the House—a promise that in any future Loan Bill the claims of the North would not be overlooked. He thought it was very desirable indeed that this survey should be undertaken, and—more than that—that the railway should be built. The only point, to his mind, was the best place to start from, or the best route, so as to benefit not only the mining industry but also the pastoral industry, which was a very important industry—important not only to the North, but also to this part of the colony, as affecting the price of meat to the consumer.

MR. ILLINGWORTH regretted that the hon. member for Pilbarra was not in his place that evening; he had a letter from him saying he was unfortunately absent. He knew the hon. member was

exceedingly anxious that this resolution should be carried; and he spoke rather more on behalf of the hon. member than on behalf of himself on this occasion. He was glad to find there was not likely to be any opposition to the resolution. The Premier, he thought, had made one suggestion which argued against himself—not an uncommon thing for him to do—when he referred to the unfortunate position of the residents of these Northern districts being isolated and living in an unfavourable climate, and under other adverse circumstances. Surely that was a very good reason why these people should have a railway, rather than against giving them a railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not use it as a reason why they should not have a railway; my argument was that, owing to these drawbacks, people did not go there in large numbers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought that if men went into a country like that, and continued to work there, it was one of the best guarantees we could have that there was something worth working for there. He was satisfied himself that these goldfields were worthy of consideration, and that further inquiry would elicit the fact that this railway was justified. They could not get a better opportunity for testing the value and effectiveness of light narrow gauge railways, and he would suggest that the Government should at once communicate with the Agent General and have inquiries made as to the working of these cheap lines on the Continent, and particularly in Germany. It would cost very little to make these inquiries, and to satisfy themselves on the subject; and he hoped, if the result of their inquiries satisfied them as to the effectiveness and adaptability of these light lines for portions of this colony, they would build one of them in this Pilbarra district.

Motion put and passed.

LOAN BILL (£1,500,000).

Debate continued upon "Item 4—Railway to Collie Coalfield (exclusive of Rolling Stock), £60,000."

MR. SOLOMON said that, after the assurance they had received from the Premier that this work would not be put in hand for another year, he thought members might now agree to it. To his

mind the development of the coalfields of a country was an undertaking second in importance to none,—not even the development of its goldfield resources or its agricultural resources. The working of these coalfields would provide employment for a large population, who, as consumers, would absorb a large quantity of the colony's produce, besides at the same time supplying the colony with coal. If this Collie coalfield succeeded as they all hoped it would, it must, in his opinion, prove an important factor in promoting the prosperity of the colony. The amount asked for to construct this railway was not a large one, in proportion to the loan, and he hoped no further opposition would be offered to it.

MR. COOKWORTHY thought it would have been hardly necessary to advocate this railway for the development of a valuable coalfield, but it seemed to have aroused a considerable amount of opposition. He could respect the feelings of those members who were guided solely by the reports of the scientific experts employed by the Government to report on these fields, because undoubtedly there were a great number of "ifs" in those reports. But he thought, considering that the Government had entered into a contract to have 1,000 tons of this coal raised to the surface, and that they were now testing the depth of the deposits with a diamond drill, and, further, that they had given a promise not to introduce the necessary Bill for the construction of this line until next session,—taking all these things into consideration, he thought the committee would be perfectly justified in passing this item. Should the results of the test now being conducted not prove satisfactory, or such as to justify a railway, no Government would think of introducing a Bill authorising its construction. He was sure if they did, the House would reject it. If it went abroad that the Legislature had refused to sanction the granting of £60,000 towards the making of a railway to a coalfield which was described as being almost boundless in its extent, it must have a very prejudicial effect upon this Loan when placed on the market, showing as it would that they had very little faith in the resources of their own country.

MR. LOTON was afraid he was somewhat at a disadvantage in dealing with

this item, not having had the opportunity of listening to the opinions of members during the debate that had already taken place upon the item. But he had read the speeches of one or two members, and it appeared to him that the arguments put forward—if they were arguments at all—went to show that there should be no vote for this particular item. The Government themselves told them they did not propose to bring in a Bill to authorise the construction of this line until next session. The inference was that they were not yet satisfied about this coalfield turning out satisfactorily; then, in the name of common sense, why should they come to that House asking for a vote for the work until they were satisfied? [THE PREMIER: We are satisfied.] The Premier said they were satisfied. If so, why should they enter into a contract to have the field further tested? [MR. MARMION: To satisfy you.] Why was it desirable to wait another twelve months before bringing in a Bill to authorise the construction of this line? [THE PREMIER: Because we could not undertake the work earlier.] Then why ask the House to vote them the money now? It appeared to him the Government were *not* satisfied on this question, and, not only the Government, but also a considerable number of the members of that House, and a great many of the people of the colony. The Government, apparently, had not even made up their minds where the line was to start from; they simply asked for £60,000 for a railway to the Collie coalfield, they didn't say from where. [THE PREMIER: I said it would go from the Brunswick, according to our present information.] Then why not say so in the Bill? [THE PREMIER: We have not the surveys completed yet.] Then why ask the House for the money to construct the line? It appeared to him this amount was put in the Bill simply to make up the full amount, a million and a half. The Commissioner of Railways told the House the other evening that he had a great deal of valuable information to give members upon this item. He looked carefully through the report of the hon. gentleman's speech for this valuable information, but he must say he was somewhat disappointed. The first piece of information he came across was that this coalfield contained so many million

tons of coal—that was, if they believed the reports of certain gentlemen. But it was strange that the Government should only just have entered into a contract now to ascertain to what depth the coal went. So far as he could understand the reports of these experts, the quantity of coal present was a question of "ifs." There were a great many "ifs" and "buts" about it. The next piece of information he came across was that the Commissioner estimated that the consumption of coal in this colony in 1896 would be 30,000 tons. He mentioned 1896, presumably, as the time by which this railway would be completed. The hon. gentleman further stated that the freight on 30,000 tons would give a revenue of £6,000, whilst the interest on the capital invested in the railway would only be £3,000. What did the hon. gentleman wish them to infer from these figures? [MR. VENN: If the hon. member had been present he would have known exactly what I did say.] He was simply going by the newspaper report. He did not see of what use such figures were. Where the hon. gentleman got his £6,000 revenue from, he was entirely at a loss to understand. The distance this coal would have to be carried to the Collie junction would be 25 miles. The Engineer-in-Chief put the cost of transport to Perth or Fremantle at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile; in that case the cost of transport over 25 miles would be 1s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton, and the revenue yielded annually upon 30,000 tons would be £2,343 15s., instead of £6,000. The hon. gentleman said the interest on the capital spent in construction of the line would be £3,000 a year. It was just as well to be correct in these matters. The cost of this line was put down at £60,000, and the rolling stock would increase it to £80,000; and, as we would have to provide five per cent. on that amount (after the first four years) the interest and sinking fund would come to £4,000 a year instead of £3,000. So much for the reliance to be placed upon the figures of the Minister in charge of this particular department. They had before them the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, giving the comparative cost of hauling this coal as compared with the imported coal; and he could not help saying that in his opinion this estimate was drawn up with the view of placing the cost of the local coal as low

as possible in comparison with the Newcastle coal; and he did not hesitate to say it was an unfair comparison. [THE PREMIER: We have nothing to do with that.] The information was placed before them for their guidance. [THE PREMIER: It is *bona fide* information too.] To start with, the Engineer-in-Chief put the cost of Newcastle coal, landed at Fremantle, at 22s. per ton; he (Mr. Loton) understood the Government only paid 20s. a ton for it last year. The total quantity imported during the year was 16,535, and the value (as given in the return laid on the table that evening) was put down at £15,024. [THE PREMIER: Some of it is landed at Albany, and it is cheaper there.] At any rate, it was considerably under 20s. a ton, although the Engineer-in-Chief put it down at 22s. in his comparative statement. [THE PREMIER: There are wharfage charges.] The Engineer-in-Chief made out that the cost of Newcastle coal delivered 55 miles on the Eastern Railway was 27s. 3d. per ton; while he put the price of Collie coal at the pit's mouth at 7s. 6d., and the freight from Collie to the same 55-mile distance on the Eastern Railway—a total distance of 167 miles—the Engineer-in-Chief put down at 9s. 11d. per ton. According to that tariff it appeared that the Collie coal was to be charged much less per mile for haulage on our railways than the Newcastle coal. The cost of carrying Collie coal a distance of 167 miles was only 9s. 11d. a ton, while the cost of carrying Newcastle coal just one third that distance was put down at 5s. 3d. In other words, the Collie coal was to be carried three times the distance at a little more than half the price charged for the imported coal. [THE PREMIER: That is because of the longer distance.] The fair way to show the comparative cost of the two coals was to give the cost of transporting each to Perth. What did they want to go 55 miles away for? Simply to show the unreasonable amount of the cost of carrying the imported coal in comparison with the Collie coal. Since then they had another report from the Engineer-in-Chief, in which he said that the difference between the tariff rate for 160 miles and for 200 miles was only 1s. 8d. per ton,—in other words, coal would be carried this extra distance of 40 miles

at one half-penny per ton. On the same principle, by the time they carried their coal to, say, Yilgarn, it would be carried for nothing, or they would have to pay a premium. What he wanted to know was, could they carry coal at this price and make their railways pay? For a certain distance, $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per mile; for a further distance, $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile; and so on until you reached the vanishing point, and carried your coal for nothing. If the working expenses and maintenance of our railways could be paid for at that low rate, why should our producers in the country, and merchants in town, have to pay such exorbitant rates as they were called upon to pay now for the carriage of their goods? Would the Commissioner of Railways tell the House that? How was it our railways did not pay much better than they did with the present high tariff rates, if coal could be carried at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton for a distance of 40 miles, or 1s. 8d. for the whole distance? There must be something rotten somewhere in the state of Denmark. When they went into figures it was as well not to burke the facts. He would not oppose a railway to any part, even if it did not pay at the start, so long as it gave a reasonable promise of developing the resources of the colony, and we could afford to undertake it. But he should like to be satisfied that there were resources to be developed. If he were satisfied as to the extent and commercial value of this Collie coal, even if it cost a little more than the imported coal, he thought we would be justified in building a railway; but he wanted some more definite and straightforward information before giving his vote in favour of this particular item.

MR. MONGER supposed that on no previous occasion in the history of the colony had so small a sum of money caused so large an amount of discussion as this particular item had. When he first looked at this Loan Bill he was certainly opposed to one railway included in it, and that was the Bridgetown railway, and he was sorry he was not in the House the other evening to record his vote against the passing of that item. But how any member who supported that line could get up and oppose a line that was likely to give some return for the money spent in its construction he was at

a loss to know. With all due respect for the hon. member for the Swan, and his remarks, he did not think the hon. member had given the question the consideration it deserved when he opposed this coalfield line. He had always been led to believe that a coalfield would be of more value to the colony than a goldfield; if so, he thought, now that they were told they had a coalfield, it was their duty to test the extent of that coalfield. The Government had told them they did not propose to go any further than that until next session. If they were not able to satisfy the House next session that we had a true coalfield at the Collie, he presumed it would be quite within the province of the House to decline to pass the Bill authorising the construction of this railway. They were told by the Government Geologist and other experts that there were probably about sixteen million tons of coal on this field, which, valued at 10s. per ton, would mean £800,000,000. Surely it was worth spending £80,000 to develop a field that was estimated to be worth £800,000,000?

MR. THROSSELL said the only objection there appeared to be to this item was a doubt in the minds of some members as to whether we had a true coalfield at the Collie. As the Government had consented to delay this line for a year, and in the meantime would devote themselves to solving that question, it appeared to him that the opposition to the item was removed. If the tests employed proved that there was a coalfield, the Government next year would bring in a Bill authorising the construction of the railway. On the other hand, should it be proved in the meantime that we had not a true coalfield, he presumed the idea of building this railway would be abandoned. Speaking as a business man to business men, it seemed to him that a more reasonable and prudent course could not be pursued. He believed, himself, that the success of the Bridgetown railway would depend in a great measure upon the development of this coalfield. It would place the Bunbury and the Bridgetown district in the same relation to the Collie coalfield as the Eastern districts were now to Coolgardie—in other words, it would bring to their doors a large consuming population. If the Government had endeavoured to push

this railway through this session he would have opposed it; but, under the circumstances, he heartily supported the item. All they asked was that the Government should trust them with this £60,000 to be expended, in the event of their proving to the House, before bringing in their Bill authorising the work, that there was a coalfield at the Collie. It had been stated, disparagingly, that no leases had been taken up on this field. Who would think of taking up a lease when there were twenty-five miles of haulage to bring the coal to a railway?

MR. MORAN said it was not a very pleasant duty to sound a discordant note in a debate like this, but he rose to enter his protest against what had been said by the hon. member for York. That hon. member told them that those who had supported the Bridgetown railway were bound to support this item. He failed to see it. It did not follow for a moment that because a man supported a line to a rich agricultural district at a time when the demand for agricultural products far exceeded the supply, he was going to support a proposition to construct a railway to a problematical coalfield. He wished once more to protest against the action of the Government in not allowing this money to be diverted to the development of the goldfields by dealing effectually with that most important and most pressing of all questions, the water supply on our goldfields. There had been no public outcry for this railway to the Collie, whereas at the present moment there were 10,000 men crying out on our goldfields in view of the serious water difficulty in front of us during the approaching summer. If the House and the Government were not willing to listen to this note of warning, he ventured to prophesy that both the House and the Government would bitterly regret their action before the House met again. He would not vote against the Government on this item, but would leave the room. Members laughed. He looked at it in this way, and he did not mind saying it—he wished to give the Government every reasonable support, but he could not support them in this instance, and there was too much of the “tag-rag and bob-tail” about the Opposition for him to follow them. Notwithstanding they had the dash and chivalry of a

Stuart James, combined with the wisdom of another Solomon, they were a disintegrated lot, with their captain on one side, their lieutenant on another side, and their leader running all over the field.

MR. RICHARDSON moved, as an amendment upon the item, that all the words after the word "railway" be struck out, and that the item should read as follows:—"Railway construction for future development of mineral resources, including coal, £60,000." He submitted this amendment in a friendly way; it was a moderate amendment, and he thought the Government would be acting in their own interests if they accepted it. He felt that, in its present state of development, he could not support a railway to the Collie coalfield, although, if satisfied upon conclusive evidence of the existence of a payable coalfield, no one would be more ready than himself to support a railway to it. They were told by the Commissioner of Railways the other night, and asked to reflect upon it, that we had 1,600 million tons of coal within this area, valued at £800,000,000. It appeared that our present consumption of coal was not more than 20,000 tons a year. He would double it, for the sake of argument, and increase our consumption to 40,000 tons, and he would assume also, for the sake of argument, that we used nothing but Collie coal. That being the case, it would only take us 40,000 years to avail ourselves of all this wealth, so that we must look forward to the prospect of a good long life to enjoy the full benefit of the Commissioner's calculations. He agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for the Swan that the only fair way to calculate the value of this coal, as compared with imported coal, was to find its value delivered in Perth or Fremantle. It was all very well to say we should be patriotic and encourage local industry, but he was afraid no amount of patriotism would enable them to force people to use this Collie coal unless they obtained it at a price that would suit them, and it was of a quality that would suit their purposes. If the Government could afford to carry coal on their railways at the price stated, all he could say was the public must be tremendously overcharged in regard to other goods. The object of

his amendment was this: the trials so far had not been conclusive either as to the extent or quality of this Collie coal, nor were the figures with regard to it based upon unquestionable data, and it did not appear to him politic to place an item on a Loan Bill when they had not actually proved the necessity for it. It might happen that before next session we might prefer to extend our railways in some other direction for the development of our mineral resources, including coal, and this amendment would leave it open for us to do so, and the Government would have this £60,000 available for the purpose.

MR. LEAKE rose to a point of order: Would not this amendment practically have the effect of increasing another item on the Bill—"Development of goldfields and mineral resources"—by £60,000? It seemed to him almost identical with the amendment to which objection was taken by the Premier the other evening on the same ground.

THE CHAIRMAN said that, following the ruling of His Honour the Speaker on the occasion referred to, he must uphold the hon. member's objection, and rule this amendment out of order.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) would like, before the debate closed, to make a few observations. Even if the amendment were in order, he did not see how it would have assisted them. The only coalfield they knew of at the present time was this Collie coalfield; and the Government were satisfied that in this coalfield they had a payable coalfield, and that they were justified in building a railway to it. Although some members were not satisfied, and therefore did not like to risk the responsibility, he would remind them that they had not one-tenth the responsibility that Ministers had. [MR. SIMPSON: Nor one-tenth their screw.] If a private member supported this item, his action would probably be forgotten a few years hence, whether these coalfields turned out well or not. But it was not so with the Ministry, or the head of the Government. If this undertaking, or any other undertaking, should turn out a failure, it would be remembered against him for a very long time. Therefore he said the responsibility of Ministers was much greater than that resting upon the shoulders of other

members of the House. It had been suggested that because the Government did not propose to bring in a Bill this session to authorise the construction of this railway, they were not yet themselves satisfied about this coalfield. That was not the reason at all. The reason why they proposed to wait until next session was because, in the ordinary course of events, it would be impossible for them to put this work in hand before that time, and not because they had no faith in the field, or that they did not think the work justified. They had the two goldfields railways to put in hand first, and it would be practically impossible for them to undertake this other railway within the next twelve months. He really could not understand the opposition of some members to this item. Some years ago—a good many years ago now—the Government of the day offered a reward of £5,000, he believed, for the discovery of a coalfield. [MR. RICHARDSON: At what distance from the coast?] He did not think it was a shorter distance than this coalfield was, 27 miles from a railway. If in those days—and they were the days of small things as compared with the present—if in those days the Government had the reports which we have now before us in regard to this Collie coalfield, he ventured to say that the Legislature of that day would not have hesitated to mortgage the revenues of the colony in building this railway. Personally he was convinced—and it took a good deal to convince him, but, when convinced, he generally stuck to his conviction—personally he was convinced about our having a coalfield at the Collie, and, even if we could not bring the coal to Perth at quite as low a price as the imported coal, surely we ought to risk something in developing our own resources, in finding employment for our own people, in supporting our own industries rather than the industries of other countries? As to the trustworthiness of the official reports, they were prepared upon the responsibility of the officers themselves, and without any pressure from the Government, and he thought members should be careful not to lightly impugn the veracity or trustworthiness of officers holding high positions in the service, and who were not present to defend themselves.

MR. SIMPSON was glad to find the Government in a more conciliatory frame of mind than they were in the other evening when this item was under consideration, as regards having this item thoroughly discussed. They had a return laid on the table that evening showing that the quantity of imported coal landed at Fremantle last year was 10,000 tons. If they produced this coal themselves, he presumed the next thing they might look for would be a duty on imported coal, and there would be 10,000 tons less imported, which would mean so many lumpers and others employed at Fremantle. It was amusing, if not instructive, to witness the inconsistency and change of front shown by some members with regard to this item. The Commissioner of Lands told them he would not support this item unless he was satisfied that we had coal of "exportable value." There was not a scintilla of evidence that this Collie coal was exportable coal. There was a report, which had not yet been produced. [THE PREMIER: Tell me what it is, and it will be produced at once.] The hon. member for Nannine, in his speech on the second reading of this Loan Bill, hoped that when they came to the Schedule members would have courage enough to strike out these two Southern railways. How the hon. member could justify his statement on that occasion with his subsequent action, he was unable to say. The Premier told them that when he arrived at a conviction he stuck to it. No doubt he did, when he knew he had the solid vote of the agricultural districts at his back. The presence there that evening of the hon. member for Northam was very suggestive. Those who, like himself, objected to this item did so simply because they were not quite satisfied with the reports placed before them with reference to this coalfield. The Premier said the Government were perfectly satisfied. His opinion was that the Government were over-ridden by their Engineer-in-Chief. He thought the Engineer-in-Chief and the Premier, in separate rooms, with the other Ministers left out, would be prepared to govern the whole colony. The Government virtually asked them to build a railway first, and then see if they had a coalfield, or satisfy themselves that they had a coalfield. Then they were told the Government were testing the field by

boring. As a matter of fact the machinery for this boring was not yet in the colony. They had no more right to build this railway until this test was accomplished than they had to build a railway to the moon. [THE PREMIER: You are not asked to do it.] He believed the company that arranged with the Government to sink this bore had done what on the Rialto was known as the "disappearing trick." [THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: They need not have gone out of the colony for a bore while the hon. member was here.] He asked the Government whether, if this was their own money, they would, with the information they had before them, invest it in this railway? He ventured to say they would not; nor had they any right to spend trust money in building this railway first, and testing to see whether they had coal afterwards.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the hon. member for Geraldton had taken upon himself to try to prove, by reference to a speech of his on a former occasion, that he was inconsistent. He had a pretty fair memory of what he said on that occasion, and what he did say was that if it could be proved we had a coalfield on the Collie he would be better pleased than with the discovery of two Londonderrys; and he further said that the basis of his objection to this railway rested on the suspicion, which he had at the time, that there were certain defects in the quality of the coal. He had taken the trouble since to peruse every report that had been published on this subject, and he took it for granted that those who prepared those reports were endeavouring to place before the House accurate and reliable reports, and that they knew something about what they were writing about. He had taken the trouble to compare the quality of the coal, as reported upon, with the quality of coal in other places. Members were probably aware that there was a distinct difference in the quality of different coals; but coals were not rejected because of this difference in quality. There were different qualities of coal coming from Newcastle, some being inferior to others; but their inferiority was not sufficient to cause them to be rejected. He had taken the trouble to satisfy himself that we have a good useful coal at the Collie, according to the reports placed before them. The

whole question with coal, from start to finish, in regulating the price, was the question of labour. He asked members to consider whether it was not better for us to pay even 22s. a ton, if need be, for our own coal, than 18s. for imported coal, looking at the benefits that would accrue to the colony from the development of this important industry. [MR. MORAN: What will your constituents say to that?] That was a narrow view to take of this question. On no occasion would he either speak or vote with the view of retaining his seat in that House. He advocated what he honestly believed to be best for the country. There was another point to be considered: coal was one of those things that, once used, became an absolute necessity. Supposing also we had a recurrence of what they once had in Melbourne, consequent upon a strike—the city left in total darkness! Imported coal might then rise to 50s. a ton, and we might be very glad that we had our own coalfield. There were such things, too, as wars and blockades, and it would be rather inconvenient if we had no coal for working our railways, and could not import any. But, apart from these outside questions, he believed now that we had a fair marketable coal at the Collie. It might not be so good as the Newcastle coal, but he preferred to give employment to our own people, and produce what we can within our own borders, rather than place ourselves at the mercy of any accident or contingency that might happen at Newcastle. Again, some members had treated this railway as simply a coalfield railway. He was not quite sure, even if he thought it was only a coalfield railway—and he was also satisfied it was good coal—that he would not vote for it. But we had other resources in this part of the colony. There was some magnificent timber in the district, and, he understood, some good agricultural land.

MR. MORAN was afraid that the fact of the hon. member who had last spoken having declared himself an ultra protectionist would somewhat damage him in the eyes of his constituents. He must say he never dreamt that any goldfields representative would have stood up in that House as an advocate of that bursted-up policy, protection.

Item put, and a division called for, the numbers being:—

Ayes	13
Noes	9

Majority for ... 4

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burt	Mr. Connor
Mr. Cookworthy	Mr. James
Sir John Forrest	Mr. Leake
Mr. Harper	Mr. Loton
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Randell
Mr. Marmion	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Pearce	Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Piesse	Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Solomon	Mr. Simpson (Teller).
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Wood	
Mr. Paterson (Teller).	

Item thus passed.

Progress reported, and leave-given to sit again next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 28 minutes past 11 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 18th September, 1894.

Resignation of Member—Brands Bill: first reading—
Preservation of Timber—Petition of William
Wilkinson—Small Debts Ordinance: further con-
sidered in committee—Loan Bill (£1,500,000):
further considered in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER.

MR. SPEAKER announced that he had received the resignation of Mr. Darlôt of his seat in the Legislative Assembly for the Murchison district; and, on the motion of Mr. Loton, the seat was declared vacant.

BRANDS BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

PRESERVATION OF TIMBER: CONSERVATION OF FORESTS.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the subject of forestry is becoming of increasing importance, and the time has arrived for taking efficient steps to provide for future supplies of timber for home consumption and export purposes." He said: Two years and a half ago a motion embodying the same principles that are expressed in this one was carried in this House, and, on that occasion, the Premier was good enough to promise that the subject should have his attention. I dare say we may easily excuse him, in the midst of his other multifarious duties, if he has not been able to bring the subject more prominently before us; but, since putting this motion on the Notice Paper, I have learnt that in response to the representations of the Bureau of Agriculture, the Government propose to appoint a Conservator of Forests. That, of course, lightens my duty considerably, and I need only utter what I may call common-places as to the necessity of such an appointment. But, I think, the Government might go a very long way in the direction of this motion, and be justified—justified not on account alone of that wanton destruction of our own forests that has been going on for years past, but also what is going on elsewhere. We have been so much in the habit of looking at our timber supply as being almost inexhaustible that we have never shown that careful attention to the preservation of young and immature trees that should be shown; and I am heartily pleased to hear that the Government are prepared—not to appoint a forest ranger at a few shillings a day, but some competent scientific person, some expert, I hope, who shall do for us what has already been done for us in one or two branches of agriculture by other experts already engaged by the Government. Though our own forests have suffered somewhat ruthlessly by their reckless destruction, I may mention that the forests of other lands also are being depleted at an enormous rate; and this fact should encourage us, in part at least,