

section of this clause in the Audit Act, we are asked, upon the first occasion there is a necessity to put it in practice, to treat the clause as a sham and as nugatory from first to last. Now if we agree to the proposition of the Government and pass this vote for the construction of these works without knowing what is behind it, I say we shall not only prove false to our trust, but we shall be looked upon as fools for allowing—for this occasion will always be quoted against us hereafter—our rights to be taken away. I wish to say as little as possible upon the subject, for I feel strongly upon it; but rather than allow this to become a precedent, I trust this committee will insist upon receiving the information which it is their right to demand; and that, in the event of their not obtaining it, they will demand the attendance of the Engineer-in-Chief at the bar of the House, that they might obtain from his own lips that which they have been denied by the proper authority.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): There is only a certain amount of loan money available for the construction of this work. There were no plans or details laid on the table of the House for the railways we passed, and here we have plans of the jetty and all other works prepared, and we show that they will be constructed on the plans as proposed by Sir John Coode. I beg to move that progress be reported.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: I shall oppose the motion that progress be reported. We have asked for information which we have a right to demand, and I object to shirking the question.

THE PRESIDENT: Unless progress be reported the information cannot very well be obtained.

Question—That progress be reported—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I move that the House do now adjourn.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I would really point out that the Game Bill has now been before us a very long time. It will not take long to consider this matter, and I trust there will be no further postponement of the question.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I propose to take that on Friday next.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I am perfectly satisfied with that assurance.

The Council, at ten minutes to 5 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Friday, March 11, at 3 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 9th March, 1892.

Spread of Scab—Appointments to the Legislative Council—Medical officer for Greenough—King George's Sound Garrison Discipline Bill—Appropriation Bill, 1892: in committee—Governors of High School Appointment Bill: second reading—Trial survey of railway from Minginoo to Mullewa: adjourned debate—Error in Police Bill: Message from Legislative Council—Customs Bill: Legislative Council's amendment—Additional funds required for Geraldton-Mullewa Railway: adjourned debate—Fremantle Harbor Works: Breakwater from Bous Head—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

SREAD OF SCAB IN VICTORIA DISTRICT.

MR. CANNING: I wish (without notice) to ask the Premier—who I suppose represents the Colonial Secretary in this House, the Colonial Secretary being the Minister to whom the matter I wish to allude to belongs—whether the reports that have recently come down as to the continual spread of scab in the Northern part of the colony are true, and, if so, whether the Government intend to use more energetic measures to prevent the extension of this disease. We know that during the last twelve months, since the new Scab Act was passed, this disease instead of decreasing has continued to spread in every direction. I think this is a matter that requires immediate action on the part of the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will make inquiries and inform the hon. member to-morrow. I have not myself heard any definite information as to the spread of the disease. I have heard rumors that it had spread as far as Carnamah, but that report appears to be incorrect, the Inspector reporting that it was not scab. I have also heard that the disease has broken out on some of the stations eastward of Geraldton, but I have no definite information myself.

MR. RICHARDSON: You have heard nothing officially?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have not, myself; the Colonial Secretary may have some telegrams. I will make inquiries.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THE SPEAKER: With reference to the first question on the Notice Paper, relating to the appointment of members to seats in the Legislative Council, before I call upon the hon member for the Gascoyne to put it, I would like to say a few words, because I was appealed to yesterday as to whether I thought the question should not be struck out. I have since considered the question, and looked up all the text books on the subject, and I do not think I could assume on myself the responsibility of striking out this question. Our own Standing Orders empower the Speaker to strike out any objectionable words from a question or motion, and no doubt the practice of Parliament enables the Speaker to expunge any unbecoming expressions from a notice. For instance, I should not allow any reflection upon the administration of justice, or upon the conduct of the Judges or of the Governor. The class of cases in which I could interfere are laid down in the text books; and I have come to the conclusion that I have no right myself to interfere with such a question as this. As I said yesterday, Ministers can decline to answer any question if they like and think it proper to do so; but I cannot myself interpose in this case.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Then, sir, I may state that but for the objection of the Premier—

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot argue the question.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think I can explain?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member can only state such facts as may be necessary to explain his question, if it is not clear.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Then, sir, I may state that the reason I have asked this question is that it is currently rumored that the Government have had very great difficulty in filling vacant appointments to the Upper House lately.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Ha, ha! Rumor is not at all true in that case.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That is the reason why I am asking this question, because it is rumored that the Government find great difficulty in getting anyone to accept a seat in that honorable House, bound by such conditions as this question suggests. I am very glad to hear from the Premier that such is not the case. It may be stated that we in this House have nothing to do with the appointments made—

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must not argue the point.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That was the principal reason why I wished to ask the question. Of course it is quite competent for the Government not to answer the question, and it is quite competent for me to bring the matter forward in another form. I will now ask the question standing in my name—Whether appointments to vacancies occurring in the Legislative Council are made by the Governor, on the recommendation of the Ministry. If so, whether the appointees are required to undertake to give a general support to the policy of the Government; or if any condition whatever is imposed upon them; and, if so, what? Or are the new members absolutely free to vote as they please on any question?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If I may be allowed to explain, before I formally answer the question, I may state that except in the case of Mr. Crowther—who declined a seat offered to him, because he had given up politics, and for that reason had also declined to come forward to represent his district, as he might have done—with that exception there has been no instance since the present Government has been in office in which a seat offered in the Upper House has been declined; so that the report

which the hon. member referred to is entirely without foundation. The Government have had no difficulty whatever in filling up these appointments. Except in the case I have referred to every vacant seat offered has been accepted.

MR. LOTON: Surely there is another instance of a gentleman living in Perth declining?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh, yes; Mr. Padbury. I beg your pardon; I had forgotten. That was long ago. Mr. Padbury declined on very similar grounds to Mr. Crowther. My reply to the hon. member's question is this: appointments to the Legislative Council are made by the Governor in Council, as provided by the Constitution Act. I regret I am unable to reply to the remainder of the question.

MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE GREENOUGH.

MR. TRAYLEN asked the Premier whether it was probable that an early appointment of a medical officer at the Greenough would be made?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the appointment would be made as soon as a suitable officer could be obtained.

KING GEORGE'S SOUND GARRISON DISCIPLINE BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL, 1892.

Passed through committee without comment.

GOVERNORS OF HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I rise to move the second reading of this bill, to make better provision for the appointment of governors of the High School. The bill was initiated in the other House, and when originally introduced was a very short bill, of one clause; but it was found afterwards, as there were so many vacancies occurring in connection with the governing body of the school, it was desirable to make further provision for their appointment than is provided under the principal Act, and to repeal so much of that as related to the filling up of vacancies, and the term of office of the gover-

nors. The bill simply provides that in future these vacancies shall be filled up from time to time, as they occur, by the Governor in Council, instead of the governors being elected by the Legislative Council, as they have been in the past. It is also proposed to reduce the number of governors from seven to six. This is merely in order to provide for their retirement in rotation, two and two at a time,—two one year, two the next, and two the following year. With seven governors it is rather a difficult matter to deal with their retirement in this way, and so we propose to have six. Beyond this, there is nothing new whatever in the bill, except with regard to the by-laws or regulations to be made by the governors, which are to be presented to Parliament with their annual report.

Motion—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

TRIAL SURVEY OF RAILWAY FROM MINGINOO TO MULLEWA.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the adjourned debate on Mr. Darlôt's motion—"That in view of the large amount in excess of that voted by this honorable House last session for the construction of a line of railway from Geraldton to Mullewa, it is advisable that the Government, during the recess, have a trial survey made from Minginoo to Mullewa, with a view of affording members fuller information on this important subject before coming to a decision"—having been read,

MR. A. FORREST said: In moving the adjournment of this debate, I did so for several reasons: one was that this proposal for a trial survey of a line from Minginoo to Mullewa would entail delay in the construction of the line from Geraldton of at least twelve months, or at any rate until this House meets again. Another reason was that in the event of the Midland Railway not being proceeded with, that would be a bar to any branch line being constructed at the present time. I know that many members, last session, thought it would be better to have a line from Minginoo to Mullewa than from Geraldton, but when we came to consider that the distance, as regards Geraldton, would be double, and

that the cost of conveying produce and supplies and passengers from the port of the district would consequently be largely increased, I think we must all agree that it would be better to have this line start from Geraldton. As for the carriage of fat stock—which is the only argument in favor of this other line—I do not think there will be any great hardship for those who are bringing their stock down, because the country between Minginoo and Mullewa is fairly good for travelling stock, and fairly well watered. The object of this railway when it was agreed to was not to bring down fat stock to the Perth market, but so that those who have embarked their money in the district should have facilities for bringing their wool to the port. But that object will not be attained if we build the railway from Mullewa to Minginoo. It would increase the cost of conveying everything between Geraldton and the pastoral districts, and also to the goldfields. What is wanted is direct communication with the seaport town of the district, and we know that Geraldton is the only port we have for some hundreds of miles along that coast.

MR. PHILLIPS: No.

MR. A. FORREST: Surely the hon. member does not mean to say that Dongara will ever become a port of any importance. I hope those who agreed to this railway last session are not going to stultify themselves because it is going to cost a little more than was put down for it then, and agree to this proposed deviation, which, as I have said, will mean about double the cost in the way of transport to and from the principal port of the district, both as regards the chief product of the district, wool, and also the conveyance of machinery and supplies to the goldfields, and stores for the settlers. We all remember the great point that was made because of a difference of 15 miles extra haulage which would be caused by taking the Yilgarn railway from York. The extra haulage in this other case would be quite 60 miles, not 15.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: There was no difference in the cost of construction as regards the two routes to Yilgarn.

MR. A. FORREST: We do not know yet what the difference may be between

these other two. The probability is that this Mullewa railway may not cost so much as is estimated. We know that the Bunbury line was taken considerably below the estimate of the Government, and it may be the same with this other line. Unless members want to delay this line altogether they will abstain from voting for this resolution, which has nothing to recommend it except one thing, and that is the conveyance of fat stock to these markets. That, I say, is not the reason we want this railway for. We want it to bring the pastoral districts into direct communication with the port, and also the goldfields. These goldfields were not discovered when we agreed to this railway, but now there are 300 or 400 men on the fields, and there is a large quantity of machinery to be conveyed; and, taking all things into consideration, I think the reason in favor of building this line is now tenfold stronger than it was when it was originally agreed upon. The only object of this resolution appears to me to be to cause delay.

MR. HARPER: I have listened to the arguments of those who are opposing the proposition now before us, and it appears to me they do not touch many points of considerable importance. The Premier told us the other day that we must look to the future. I think that is very necessary, and it strikes me that if we look to the future as regards this question of railway communication we shall find that whatever we may do now, we shall hereafter have to provide that line which will give the shortest and most direct communication with the capital. The experience of all countries, so far as I have read, has been this: that sooner or later they will have a line that will give them the shortest route to the capital. A very important case in point is afforded in Victoria. Originally a line of railway was constructed from the city of Melbourne to Ballarat, and after a considerable amount of fighting, the line was taken a long way round so as to serve Geelong, which was considered to be the port of that part of the colony, like Geraldton is now considered to be the port of the Murchison country. This went on for some considerable time, but it was not long before there was an agitation in favor of a more direct line

between Ballarat and Melbourne, and only last year this line had to be constructed, and at an enormous cost. People always will insist upon having the shortest possible route that will give them direct communication with the capital; and we may rely upon it that in this case, having a line of railway from Perth to Minginoo, we shall, sooner or later, have a branch from Minginoo to Mullewa, in connection with that line. If the Government should acquire this Midland line, a branch will have to be made sooner or later from Minginoo to Mullewa; and, if the Government do not acquire the Midland line, no doubt the Company will themselves construct this branch line. This is a point that should not be lost sight of in dealing with this resolution. One hon. member has told us that the cost of transit will be doubled if this line goes by way of Minginoo, because the distance will be so much greater. But I think the Commissioner of Railways can tell us something about that. It does not always follow that because there is a longer mileage on one line than on another, the cost of transport and the freight rates on the longer line must necessarily be greater, more especially when one is worked by a private company and the other by the State. I think we have seen this already in this colony. We have only to compare the freight rates on the Great Southern line between Albany and Beverley, with the rates on the Government line between Beverley and Fremantle. Somehow or other a private company always manages to run its lines at a cheaper rate than the Government, and distance does not always tell. Moreover, even supposing there should be a little excess in the rates, so far as Geraldton is concerned, who is it that will have to pay these higher rates? Is it the people of Geraldton, or those who settle the country inland. That is another point we should take into consideration. Those who will use this railway, surely should have an opportunity of expressing their views on this matter. This question should not be decided simply on the voice of the people of Geraldton. This line of railway is not always going to remain at Mullewa; it must eventually extend northward, and consequently all the

Northern districts from Roebourne to the head of the Irwin river are interested in this question, and should have a voice in deciding whether they wish to have the shortest route to the capital or the shortest route to Geraldton. An immense amount of traffic must eventually come to this line in the matter of fat stock for these markets, whereas a great deal of the wool will go to the Gascoyne, and probably some to Sharks Bay. With regard to machinery for the gold-fields, there can be no doubt that in the course of a few years the bulk of the machinery required for our gold-fields will be manufactured or repaired in and around Perth, and it is not likely that it would be shipped to Geraldton, there to be discharged again, when it could be sent direct from Perth. Furthermore, a great deal of the produce required on the fields must go from these Southern districts, if there is a direct line of communication. The flour and cereals required are just as likely to go from the Irwin—perhaps more so—than from Geraldton. So that, if we take the question of supplies, a very large proportion of these supplies will not go from Geraldton, sooner or later. Then, again, with regard to the passenger traffic. It is almost certain that in the majority of instances people who wish to go to the goldfields will prefer to go direct from Perth, and not by way of Geraldton. People must have the shortest and most direct means of communication with the capital, the principal centre of all business, banking and commercial, and the seat of Government. There is no question at all, to my mind, that sooner or later, whatever we may do now, this section between Minginoo and Mullewa will be built in connection with the Midland line, and I think it is our duty—we have been told so by the Premier—to look well to the future, and pause before we decide what route this railway should take. A great deal has been made of the fact that the Loan Act apportioning a certain sum for the construction of this line passed this House last session. It is true we did pass an item of £100,000 on that Loan Bill, to build 60 miles of railway. But what is the position now? We are now asked to sanction an expenditure of £170,000, to build 60 miles; which is not quite the same thing. Cer-

tainly this House would be quite justified, in view of the changed circumstances surrounding it, in reconsidering the whole question. Some members have alluded to the question of extra haulage having had considerable weight in deciding the route of the Yilgarn Railway; but that argument may be used just as much in favor of the motion of the hon. member for the Murchison. The question is, extra haulage from where? Extra haulage from where there is likely to be the greatest amount of traffic, or from where there is likely to be the least amount of traffic? You cannot confine the argument to the question of extra haulage from Geraldton; there is also the question of the extra haulage from the capital. To assume that every particle of the traffic will go from Geraldton is an entirely erroneous idea. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion before the House.

MR. SIMPSON: I have listened with considerable attention to the remarks that have fallen from the supporters of this motion, which seems, after all, to have very much of a latter-day inspiration about it, considering the fact that this line from Geraldton to Mullewa after the most mature consideration was agreed to by this House when it appeared on the Loan Act, and that, subsequent to that, a bill authorising the construction of this same line passed through its three readings in this same House without a dissentient voice.

MR. HARPER: Question.

MR. SIMPSON: He says "question." The only way I can answer his question is to refer him to *Hansard*. The question now resolves itself into this: whether this line, for which £100,000 was voted by this House without a division twelve months ago, and which at that time was regarded as a most necessary line, is now to be voted as unnecessary, because it may cost £165,000? There are several elements in connection with this subject that require our careful consideration. I have no doubt that this motion has been brought forward in the interests of the country by the hon. member who introduced it, and that those who are supporting it are doing so in the interests of the country. I am free to acknowledge that, and I hope that it will not be argued that because I happen to have

the honor of representing a district which is to be one of the termini of the authorised line, I am therefore unable to take an unprejudiced or unbiassed view of this question. If I thought that the line agreed upon by this House was not the line that would best serve the interests of the country, I should not support it. But when I know that as regards this particular line I hold a position which is absolutely tenable, which is established on reason, and which is supported by the stern logic of figures that cannot be assailed, I think my position is such as to justify me in distinctly opposing the present motion. What are the facts? There was a sum of £100,000 voted twelve months ago to build a railway from Geraldton to Mullewa. At that time there were various reasons why this line should be entered upon, and this House unanimously agreed that it should be built. At that time there had been no gold discovered, but now we have a goldfield as an additional inducement to proceed with this work,—a goldfield that is second in importance to none in the colony, and which, in my opinion, more than justifies the extra £65,000 which we are told this line is likely to entail. We recently voted £324,000 to build a railway which in my humble opinion does not offer the same positive inducements in the way of population and general traffic as this line leading from Geraldton to the Murchison goldfields does. I have looked carefully into this question of the relative merits of the two routes,—the direct route from Geraldton and the route which the present motion contemplates, and I think I may fairly condense the arguments as regards the latter by saying that the whole question resolves itself into a matter of a fat stock route. Now I have taken the trouble to ascertain the distance from Minginoo to Mullewa, and, make it as short as you can, you cannot make it less than 50 miles. I have also taken the trouble of ascertaining the distance from Geraldton to Mullewa by way of Minginoo, and I find it is 132 miles, while we know that the distance from Geraldton to Mullewa by the direct route is only 60 miles. I put these figures before the House so that members may understand the exact position of affairs. The proposition then

is, that for the sake of accommodating fat stock going from the Murchison to Perth, we are to take all the goods traffic from Geraldton, all the stores and supplies of the settlers, and all the machinery and supplies for the Murchison gold-fields—we are to take the whole of this traffic a distance of 132 miles instead of 60 miles, to save the interest on £65,000. That is what it comes to. I think it is a fair way of putting it. Now, with regard to this fat stock business, I have taken the trouble to ascertain the number of fat stock in the shape of sheep that pass Mullewa for this market annually. I have had an opportunity of conversing with the hon. member for the Murchison himself on this subject, and I do not think it is any breach of trust if I mention it. I asked him for his estimate, and he said he put it down at about 30,000. I am prepared to allow for double that number, and if we take it at 60,000—which must be admitted to be a liberal estimate—I find that the freight that will accrue to the railway from this fat stock traffic would amount to £1,875 per annum. Now let us look at the other side of the picture. I find that the additional cost of sending goods by railway from Geraldton to Mullewa, *via* Minginoo, according to the average rates now ruling, would entail upon the settlers and the consuming population at the Murchison no less than £6,130 per annum. That is the difference between a direct line and a line by way of Minginoo. So, that, for the sake of deriving £1,875 from the carriage of fat stock to Perth, it is actually proposed to saddle the people for whom this railway is supposed to be built with an annual charge of over £4,000.

MR. CLARKSON: Figures will show anything.

MR. SIMPSON: The hon. member says that figures will show anything. That is a platitude I heard shortly after I was weaned, and I have often heard it since; but I never met anyone yet able to demonstrate it. I say that figures can only show one thing; figures cannot lie; and the man who can make two and two make five ought to be canonised at once. I say that if this line is taken *via* Minginoo there is a distinct additional charge of over £4,000 a year imposed

upon the Murchison people, in whose interests this line is supposed to be built. These figures cannot be assailed. I am referring now to the goods and fat stock traffic. Then there is the passenger traffic. It has been hinted by one hon. member that you could not go from Perth to Mullewa by rail under £4 or £5. If so, there would be a considerable saving in going by steamer to Geraldton, and thence by this railway—that is, by the direct route. I take it there would be a saving of £1 or 30s. by steamer, besides your food (if you are not sea-sick), and your average digger is not the man to unnecessarily throw away his £1 or 30s., as some hon. members may imagine. So that there would be a distinct gain, so far as expense goes, in having this line from Geraldton. The question here, again, is: why should we mulct passengers in a heavy extra charge, by making them travel 132 instead of 60 miles to reach their destination? Taking these figures into consideration, both as regards goods and passengers, we have a heavy extra charge, and a permanent charge—an annual charge—upon the consumers of the Murchison district—both the settlers and the diggers—for every single article carried on that line, simply in order to provide a revenue of £1,875 for bringing fat stock to the Perth market. There is another point in connection with this fat stock business that ought to be taken into consideration, and that is that the country between Mullewa and Minginoo, which this alternative route would traverse, is excellent country for travelling stock—I do not think that will be contradicted in any way—and it will not occasion the owners of stock the least inconvenience. There is another fact which, I think, has not occurred to those who are supporting this motion, and that is that the additional freight on every bale of wool would be 4s., if sent to Geraldton by way of Minginoo. Then, again, as to the cost of this line. We have been told that it could be built for the £100,000 authorised to be spent, but we have no definite information on the point. It may be so, or it may not. We have no trustworthy opinion on the subject, and, until the trial survey was made, it would be impossible to say what the line would cost. Therefore I am not prepared to accept as

gospel the mere *ipse dixit* of any hon. member on a point like that. And to discard the direct route from Geraldton, with all its advantages, simply because an hon. member hazards the opinion that a line from Minginoo could be built for £100,000 would be taking a leap in the dark, which, I submit, this House would not be justified in taking. Another hon. member, in his airy way, said this line from Geraldton instead of costing £100,000 would cost £200,000. Well, we have the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief, and he puts it down at £165,000. I know that a difference of £35,000 does not appear much to some hon. members,—a mere trifle, in fact. I must say I do admire the free-and-easy way in which some members talk about a mere matter of detail like £35,000. It is extremely refreshing in these dull times. I have been told that Geraldton is particularly anxious to be one terminus of this line. No doubt it is; and I agree with the aspirations of Geraldton in that respect—not because I have the distinguished honor of representing Geraldton in this House, but because Geraldton is one of the most important towns in this colony, in every respect, both as regards its population, as regards its enterprise, and as regards the class of settlers in and around it. When we have, in support of this line, a petition or requisition signed by such men as have addressed the Government on this subject—men interested in the district, men who have borne the heat and burden of the day in connection with the settlement of that part of our colony; and, when I say that amongst them is that of a gentleman whose name is known throughout the length and breadth of the land, Mr. Wittenoom—

MR. DARLÔT: And the only one.

MR. SIMPSON: The hon. member says he is the only one. I shall have much pleasure in handing the petition to the hon. member, and he will find that Mr. Wittenoom is not the only one; there are twenty others, all leading men in the district. I like my arguments to be convincing, and I have no wish to state anything which I am not prepared to prove. It is for this House to consider whether when a growing place like Geraldton asks a reasonable consideration to be given to it, as one

of the most important ports and one of the most accomplished centres of population in the colony, its request is to be ignored, because it may be a popular thing in some quarters to sneer and scoff at the earnest endeavors of the people of the district to obtain what they consider their rights. I am quite prepared, in this connection, to take Mr. Wittenoom's opinion with regard to the usefulness of this line, so far as the pastoral interests of these districts are concerned, as against the opinion or experience of the mover of this motion or any other member of this House. Mr. Wittenoom knows as much about the people of the district and its requirements, and of its pastoral industry, as any man in this colony. I was very much surprised by a remark made on the subject of this railway, last night, by the hon. member for Toodyay—a gentleman who, by a geographical accident, represents one of the goldfields of this colony—I was not a little surprised to hear the hon. member counselling delay in the construction of this line which is intended to serve one of the most important goldfields in Australia, and which would enable the consumers on those fields, and those who embark their money in them, to obtain their supplies and their machinery at 50 per cent. less cost than if the line went by this other route. One would have thought that this hon. member, at any rate, if he was inspired in any way by the instincts which may be supposed to animate a large body of his own constituents, would have been prepared to give a helping hand to any undertaking having for its object the development of the gold-mining industry, the most important industry which this colony at the present time has to rely upon. I say the most important; for, what is the position of our other industries at the present moment? Our pastoral industry is languishing under one of the most terrible calamities that has ever visited it, and our agricultural industry is also suffering from a similar cause; and, on all sides, we hear of the necessity of doing something to revive these industries, and of doing all we can to develop our mineral discoveries. Yet, what do we find when a project designedly put forward for these objects comes before this House? What are we asked

to do? To put it off indefinitely. And why? Because it is found that it will require £65,000 on the top of what was voted last year for carrying it out, and because another line would answer as well to bring fat stock down to Perth, though it would mulct the people of our most important pastoral districts and the population of our most important gold-field in unnecessary changes to the extent of at least 100 per cent. For the sake of a revenue of £1,875 a year from fat stock, it is proposed to abandon, or at any rate seriously delay, a line that will do more than anything to assist in developing industries upon which the salvation of a whole district may be said to depend, and without which these industries must be most seriously crippled and hampered. I shall vote against the motion.

MR. RICHARDSON: It appears to me that members have not, perhaps, misunderstood, but overlooked, the intention of this motion. It is not intended to commit this House to any hard-and-fast decision in favor of this alternative line as against the Geraldton line, but simply that we should stay our hand until we get a little more information as to the probable cost of this line from Minginoo, so that we may be in a better position to judge of the relative advantages of the two routes. As to the delay, what does it amount to, after all? A few months. It is most probable we shall be in session again about August, and this, I take it, would then be one of the first measures that would be brought forward by the Government, and the House then would be in a position, which it is not in now, of intelligently deciding between the two routes. The hon. member for Geraldton said something about a leap in the dark. I maintain this is decidedly a leap in the dark, to determine against a railway route without any information as to the nature of the country and without even a trial survey. True, we have some information with regard to the other line, but it is not of an encouraging character, for we are told that it will entail an expenditure of £70,000, or 70 per cent., over and above the amount it was estimated to cost when this House gave its consent to its being undertaken. I have no wish to force the hands of the Government at all, or to capsize their

intentions. All we say is, wait a few months before we irrevocably commit ourselves to this question of route. Mistakes have been made before in this colony with regard to railway routes, mistakes which have involved the country in many thousands of pounds, and which are doing so to this day; and what we ask for now is that we may have an opportunity of considering this question by the light of further information before we irrevocably commit ourselves to any more such mistakes, through over-hastiness. Let us hasten slowly with this matter. It cannot be said that the question of commencing this line now, instead of four or five months hence, is a matter of such tremendous urgency that we should agree to it at any cost. I do not think we shall lose much in the end, if we do delay a few months. If it can then be shown that the Geraldton route is the better route, I should certainly offer no objection to it. The hon. member who represents the district has boldly challenged anybody who can to criticise his figures. It is not an easy task to criticise a lot of figures offhand, and there are a few considerations left out of his calculations which make it more difficult. We all know that mere distance or mileage is not the only consideration to be taken into account in estimating the cost of one railway as against the cost of another; there is the question of gradients and other difficulties which must be considered. We have seen enough of that in connection with our Eastern Railway. A railway 120 miles long need not necessarily cost double a railway 60 miles long. Therefore, this is a factor which must be taken into consideration, but which the hon. member entirely ignored in his figures. He simply assumes—which he has no right to do, without fuller information—that both routes present exactly the same conditions from an engineering point of view, and he allows nothing for any difference there may be in the nature of the country to be traversed. Therefore, even on this ground alone, his figures are comparatively valueless. There is another consideration which he has omitted to take into account. In a great deal of this roundabout route he talks about, the Midland Railway will be a factor, and we all know that, somehow

or other, private lines manage to underbid Government lines, and very likely the difference in freights would be reduced to less than 10s. instead of £1 or 30s. The history of the Great Southern line has unquestionably shown that a private line of 240 miles in length can successfully compete with a Government line of only 110 miles as regards freight rates. Another weak point which, I think, makes his figures still more untrustworthy, is that he assumes that a passenger from Perth to Minginoo would be charged £4 or £5. I altogether deny that. Diggers do not generally travel first class, and I should think that second class fare would be very considerably less than that, and probably we might safely reduce it one half. These considerations show that the hon. member's figures, which he so boldly challenges, are not very reliable, and that his conclusions are largely discounted by these and other considerations. Allusion has been made to the point made over the 15 miles extra haulage in connection with the route of the Yilgarn Railway, and a comparison has been made between that 15 miles and the sixty miles extra haulage on this line. But the two cases are entirely different. In the case of the Yilgarn line, as regards York and Northam, all other things were equal, and this 15 miles extra haulage, was the only thing that weighed in the balance. But here things are decidedly not equal. In the first place there is probably a difference of about £70,000 in the cost of the two lines—a difference of 70 per cent.; whereas in the case of the Yilgarn line the question of cost did not enter into calculation at all, the cost of the two routes being about the same. There is another question which it appears to me has not been touched upon—and I am rather inclined to think it has been purposely left alone—and that is the nature of the country to be opened up by these two lines respectively, the one from Geraldton and the other from Minginoo. There is a lot of very fertile country about the Minginoo neighborhood, and between that and Mullewa. It may be said that while you are opening up this part, you are deserting the country between Geraldton and Mullewa. But that country is not in the same position at all. For 25 miles out of Gerald-

ton—and beyond that you may say there is no agricultural country—the occupiers of the land are within 25 miles of a port; whereas it is very different with the country about Minginoo, which is a hopeless distance from any port so far as agriculture is concerned, unless this railway opens it up. There is another point; unless the Government open up this country with a railway, and persist in taking this line from Geraldton, there can be no question about it that the Midland Company or some other company will find some means of making that branch line, some day, in order to catch the traffic, so that all the traffic from that direction will be cut off from the Government line completely. It would not be a question of competition as regards the lowness of the freights, but a question of having no freight at all, if that branch line were established in connection with the main trunk line to the capital. I think we ought to endeavor to realise this fact before it is too late, and take care that we do not have two white elephants at Geraldton. There is one strong argument, I think, in favor of delaying our decision as to the route of this line, and that is the present doubtful position of the Midland Railway. When that work is hung up, and a possibility of its not being proceeded with, I think it would be wise to defer the settlement of this question until this House meets again. It is not a light matter, this expenditure of £170,000, before we make quite sure of our position, and I do not see that the country is going to suffer in any way by a few months delay. We may ultimately decide that Geraldton is the proper starting point, but I do not see what harm can arise by postponing the question for four or five months. I do not think it is wise policy to rush into all these public works schemes at once, and spend every penny of our loan money within the next couple or three years. It is all very fine to attract a large population and to have money flying about in all directions, while it lasts; but there will be the reaction, and I am afraid it will be a very severe one. We may not be in a position to go into the money market then for a further loan, to keep up the excitement, and we may find ourselves in a hole. It is like the boy with

the balloon. The passage up didn't hurt him a bit; it was when it stopped, when it collapsed, that the trouble began. We have the experience of other colonies to guide us in this matter. Victoria went sliding along beautifully for several years with borrowed money; it attracted a large population, business flourished in all directions, and there was a short era of general prosperity. But by-and-bye there was a change. The borrowing business received a check. There was a complete cessation of public works, with the natural consequences,—stagnation, insolvencies all round, the unemployed difficulty, and other evils staring them in the face. I think this should act as a caution to us not to rush on with all these public works at once, and not to be in too great a hurry to get rid of our loan money, but spread the expenditure wisely and prudently over a few years, until our prosperity is more assured, and we are in a position to get another loan. I think this would be wiser policy than to run the whole mass of these public works at one time, and then have a sudden and complete cessation of all public works, with the consequent reaction and stagnation.

MR. DE HAMEL: I have listened with a considerable amount of interest to the speeches in support of this motion, and also to the hon. member for Geraldton, who appeared as special pleader on behalf of his constituents, and who gave us a number of statistics, but, unfortunately, not the details or particulars on which they were based, and without which it is impossible for us to judge of their value, or to traverse them, or to come to any logical conclusion upon them. Such statistics are not worth a moment's consideration at the present stage. Apart from this we are drifting away entirely from the real question now before us. What is the question before us? Not whether this line shall run from Geraldton to Mullewa, or from Minginoo to Mullewa, but merely whether it is advisable that the Government should have a trial survey made from Minginoo to Mullewa, with the view of affording this House fuller information before coming to a decision upon this question of route at all. That is the only question before the House at present. We are not asked to decide the route of this line to-night. I

have only heard two objections to this trial survey; the first is the cost, and the second appears to be a double one—a desire on the part of the Government to avoid delay in giving the boon of this railway to the Murchison settlers, and also a desire on their part to proceed with their public works policy at once. It seems to me that the first objection is hardly worth a moment's consideration. What are we asked to avoid? The cost of what? Simply the cost of a trial survey of an alternative line. It strikes me that the cost of this survey will be a very small matter indeed compared with the extra cost of this Geraldton line, and certainly a very small matter compared with the large expenditure we are committed to on public works during the next year or two. It may be that the result of this survey may be a saving of many thousands of pounds in the construction of this railway; it may be found that the line from Minginoo may be much easier and simpler than the other line, and that the saving to the colony would be very great. Any business man must see that it would be wise and prudent to spend this small sum in a trial survey, before we decide to spend this much larger sum. As to the delay in the construction of the line, I cannot think that a short delay of a few months is a serious matter in this case. I do not think there is such a tremendous urgency in this matter of providing this railway for the Murchison squatters. The traffic is not so great as all that. What did the Treasurer tell us last year—and at that time there was no drought, and the squatters were comparatively prosperous; he said he had ascertained that 2,000 tons of goods had been despatched from Mullewa to Geraldton during the past year. That was the extent of the traffic when things were comparatively prosperous, and when the squatters had not suffered as they have since. During the coming year we cannot expect anything like that amount of produce to be sent down.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There are goldfields now.

MR. DE HAMEL: The gold can easily be brought down without a railway.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): What about supplies for the diggers and machinery?

MR. DE HAMEL: We do not know yet what number of men there are on this goldfield.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Oh, yes, we do; there are about 500 at the present time.

MR. DE HAMEL: I have heard there are only about a hundred.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): You are altogether mistaken.

MR. DE HAMEL: Then we come to the other point, as to whether it is desirable we should push on all our public works at once. The Government may say there are 400 or 500 men now thrown out of employment owing to the Midland Railway trouble, and that it is desirable to find other work for them. If this Mullewa railway was the only work the colony was embarking in, I should go with the Government in that argument; but we know it is not so. There is the Bunbury line, and there is the Yilgarn line, and there will also be harbor works at Fremantle, and also at Geraldton and Cossack. In fact we have any amount of public works to absorb these 400 or 500 men, and more, without this Mullewa line at all. I agree with the hon. member for the DeGrey that it would be unwise on our part to push on all our public works at one and the same time, more especially in view of the difficulty experienced in floating our loan. We know that the money market is very stringent. The Attorney General has told us that it was very tight some months ago, and that at the present time, as we know, it is much tighter, and that it is likely to become more so. Having regard to this statement, coming from a member of the Government so recently, I think this House cannot but consider that there will be great difficulty in our raising the remaining portion of our loan. Therefore, if only as a matter of prudence, we should be cautious in entering upon too many public works at the present time. We know the difficulty in which the Midland Company is now placed, owing to the difficulty of raising funds to enable them to proceed with their railway. Let us take warning, and not commence a lot of works which we may not be able to proceed with. I think, even on this score

alone, it would be wise to delay this line for a few months, apart from the desirability of obtaining fuller information before deciding upon the route. Two or three remarks that fell from the Premier startled me considerably, and I was surprised to hear them. He told us that if we passed this resolution we would be going back from what we had already done, and that having passed this Geraldton-Mullewa Railway Bill we have committed ourselves to that line. I was still more astonished by another remark he made, which was that it was the intention of the Government, as regards the £100,000 voted for this work, to spend it as far as it will go, irrespective of where the line will be taken to. With regard to the first of these statements, that we are going back on what we have done, I submit that we are not going back; neither have we committed ourselves in any way to a line of railway that is going to cost, not £100,000 but £170,000. We did not introduce this Mullewa Railway Bill; we did not bring this project before the House. It was the proposal of the Government, and they told us they required £100,000,—what for? I will give the words of the Premier himself when introducing the subject. He said: "It was proposed by the Government to construct a railway from the port of Geraldton in an easterly direction to a place called Mullewa, a distance of about 58 miles." Therefore when we voted that £100,000 we did so in the belief that it was sufficient to complete a railway from Geraldton to Mullewa, a distance of 58 miles. Now, the Government find they cannot do that, and they come to this House, as they are bound to do, and say they are unable to do it, and that unless we give them £60,000 or £70,000 more they cannot complete the line. We are in no way responsible for this, and we are in no way bound to provide this additional sum because we have already voted £100,000 for this work. The Government and not this House is to blame for the position we are in now. The Government—unintentionally, we know—misled us, by inducing us to believe that for £100,000 we could build this railway from Geraldton to Mullewa, and, in that belief, we voted the money. But now they tell us this will only enable them to take the line about half that distance. I

say, therefore, we are now dealing with an entirely new state of things, and with different circumstances altogether, and we are therefore entitled to have an opportunity of reconsidering our position, and reconsider whether we should agree to this line being built at this large extra expense. I submit the Premier was wrong even in hinting at such a thing as that the Government would spend this £100,000 as far as it would go, if they did not get this extra amount. What did he tell us the other night? He said it would only take the line to the margin of the sand-plain, and that this sandy gap would not be bridged at all by it,—the very portion of the road which justified the construction of this railway at all. Therefore, to say that they will spend the money as far as it will go is a wrong thing altogether to do. It would be really and truly an absolute waste of public money. This sand-plain and the bridging of it was the kernel of the whole thing, and to say that they will throw this £100,000 away in carrying a line to the edge of this sand-plain, and leave it there, appears to me an utterly unjustifiable thing to do. I hope members will vote for this motion if it is only to prevent the Government throwing this money away, and to enable us to get some fuller information as to whether it is advisable to give them this extra £70,000,—advisable in the interests of the colony. If for no other reason, I, for one, shall support the motion. If it should still be found, after fuller inquiry, that it would be more desirable to have this line start from some other point than Minginoo, then of course I should be prepared to support it.

MR. PHILLIPS: I have much pleasure in supporting this motion of the hon. member for Murchison. There has been a great deal of warmth introduced into this discussion, and I think members are to be congratulated upon having threshed out the matter so thoroughly. But I am sorry to see such a strong feeling among some members against this line going anywhere except from Geraldton. The mere mention of Dongara, and the Irwin, and Minginoo appears to act like a red rag on a bull, with some hon. members; but I think the House would do well to wait until this trial survey is made.

The motion was then put, and the House divided upon it, the numbers being:—

Ayes ...	...	...	10
Noes ...	...	...	13

Majority against ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. Burt
Mr. De Hamel	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Harper	Mr. Loton
Mr. Molloy	Mr. Marmion
Mr. Phillips	Mr. Paterson
Mr. Quinlan	Mr. Pearce
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Randell
Mr. R. F. Sholl	Mr. Simpson
Mr. H. W. Sholl	Mr. Symon
Mr. Darlôt (Teller).	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Traylen
	Sir John Forrest (Teller).

Question—put and negatived.

GERALDTON-MULLEWA RAILWAY— ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE.

IN COMMITTEE.

Adjourned debate on the Premier's motion—"That in the event of the £100,000 provided in 'The Loan Act, 1891,' for a railway from Geraldton to Mullewa, proving insufficient for the completion of the work, this House is of opinion that the Government should proceed with the work; and that provision be afterwards made for any additional funds that may be necessary and required."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): On the last occasion this motion was before the House I think I really said all I have to say upon it. The position of affairs in this: a sum of £100,000 was agreed to on the Loan Bill last year for the construction of a railway from the port of Geraldton to Mullewa, and at that time I was under the impression that the line could be built for that amount. However, we have had more experience now, and surveys have been made, and the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief for the whole line is £164,000; therefore we come to the House and tell members exactly how the matter stands, and suggest a means by which the work may be undertaken to a completion at once. If, however, the House does not agree to the proposal made by the Government, it will be our duty to carry on the work as far as the £100,000 placed at our disposal will go, and I need hardly say we will make it go as far as possible, and spend it in the most economical

way we can. But, as I pointed out a few days ago, it is a very unfortunate circumstance that the very portion of the country that mostly requires this line to cross it is a distance of some 30 miles from the starting point at Geraldton, and this £100,000 will certainly not enable us to bridge that gap, and, unless we do bridge that sand-plain, this railway will not be of that assistance to the settlers that it otherwise would. We therefore ask the House to authorise us to spend an additional sum, so that we may carry the line right through. I think this proposal of the Government is one deserving the favorable consideration of the House. It will enable the Government to call for tenders at once for the whole line, and will provide us with funds as they become requisite, either out of current revenue or out of other funds the Government may have at their disposal; and we shall come to this House afterwards, when we require the money, to get the necessary legislation. I do not know that it is a very irregular way of proceeding. I am not prepared to say that it is the most regular. Of course the most regular way would be to bring in a bill to raise the amount by loan, but I do not think that anyone would suggest that, and certainly the Government are not prepared to do it at the present moment, when we have a great deal of our present loan yet to be raised. What we now want is authority to incur this additional liability. We are not prepared to spend another £60,000 on this line without authority. We do not think there is any necessity for doing it. We ask the House to give us this authority; if it is not given, we will not spend a penny beyond what is available under the statute. It will take some time to spend this money. We will not spend £100,000 in a day or two. Tenders will have to be called, and it will take us, I should say, quite 18 months probably before we spend all this £100,000; so that it will be some time before we shall want any more. Still, we do not feel justified in incurring any additional liability without authority, and that is the reason why we have brought forward this motion.

MR. LOTON: The latter part of this motion reads: "and that provision be afterwards made for any additional

funds that may be necessary and required." That seems to me an extraordinary way of getting a vote from this House.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What other way would you do it?

MR. LOTON: I would first ask him how he proposes to raise this money. This is a work that we have undertaken to construct out of loan money. We are not in a position, I take it, to undertake it, nor complete it, out of current revenue. If the Government are in a position to show the House that they are in a position to find this £60,000 out of current revenue—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We won't want it for a year or two.

MR. LOTON: Personally, I may say that this seems to me really taking a leap in the dark. Supposing, for instance, the £100,000 already voted is all spent, and there is £60,000 or £70,000 more required to complete the line, we cannot get that out of the loan already authorised, because that has been all apportioned; and, supposing we have no surplus revenue then available, where is the money to come from?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Borrow it.

MR. LOTON: Borrow it, temporarily, I suppose. I think it is a very unsound and unsatisfactory way of proceeding, to say the least of it, to come and ask us for such a vote without showing us where the money is to come from.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We will get another loan by-and-bye.

MR. LOTON: I think it would be better if the Government waited a little longer, until they can see their way to obtain this money; and that is the course I am inclined to adopt in voting on this subject. I do not feel myself inclined to pledge the country at this juncture to an expenditure of £64,000, not seeing where it is to come from.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It does appear to me a slipshod way of doing business—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It's a very open way anyhow.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I say it does appear to me a very peculiar way of doing business, to get this House to agree to a line of railway, which we were told would only cost £100,000, and now to come here and tell us it will cost £160,000.

When they are asked where this money is to come from, they say they will find it somewhere. I think it's a great pity they did not put this £60,000 on the Estimates under the head of "Incidentals"; they then could have had the money out of current revenue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We don't want it this year.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Then what is the good of this resolution now.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): To get the necessary authority.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: And trust to Providence whether we can borrow the money or not? For all we know, it may cost double this money. The Government come down and tell us a line from A to B will cost (on paper) £100,000; now they want £70,000 more, and I must say I object to it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You object to everything.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Perhaps I do. As a rule, I admit my objections are not carried; I generally find myself in a minority. But I think that is rather my misfortune than my fault. I have a great deal of confidence in the Government, but not sufficient to give them *carte blanche* to spend what they like on this line. The proper way would be for them to discover exactly what they will require to finish the work, and then to get a vote of the House for it. I think it is contrary to Parliamentary practice and usage to ask the House to give the Government *carte blanche* to spend what they like upon a work. I think they are imposing a little too much upon our good nature.

MR. A. FORREST: I fail, myself, to see why this resolution should not be carried; but I hope, if it is not carried, the Government will not attempt to spend the £100,000 in building a railway to the middle of a sand-plain. That would be simply useless. I hope they will not dream of doing so. I hope they will not commence this work at all, if they have not sufficient money to carry it through. I do not think myself there will be much difficulty in finding this extra £60,000. Surely out of a loan of £1,336,000, there will be a saving of £60,000 on all these works that are to be undertaken out of all that money. We know that in one work alone, the first section of the Bunbury

railway, the Government have saved nearly £20,000 on their estimate, and we may take it there will be a saving on the second section, and also a saving on the Yilgarn line; so that I do not think there will be much difficulty in finding this £60,000. By the time that £1,336,000 is all spent, I take it that whoever may be at the head of affairs then will go in for another loan. It was said in the Upper House that this Mullewa railway was the only line in the colony that was going to pay, and I think that should have some weight with this House to agree to this motion. I thought last year the estimate for this work was very low, too low—60 miles of railway for £100,000. It will be a cheap line even if it costs £160,000, and I think that the importance of the districts concerned, especially with the goldfields, warrant this extra expenditure. The squatters, we know, are not in a very good position just now, and this line would give them a little more heart to face their difficulties. All I can say is, if the House refuses to pass this resolution, I think the Government are morally bound not to undertake the work and carry it only as far as the sand-plain.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I merely rise to draw attention to the fact that a red herring has been drawn across the path. Those who wish to have this Mullewa railway built at all will vote for the present resolution; or, if not, I am afraid a considerable period will elapse before that work is likely to be started. We are told by the hon. member for West Kimberley that it would be inadvisable on the part of the Government to spend any of this £100,000, unless the whole line can be completed. If that is the case, and the Government are not armed with authority to spend any more, what are we to do? We know now that £100,000 will not complete the line, and, if we are not to commence unless we can complete it, the work must simply remain undone. I know there are some members who would be delighted if this line were never started.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Who are they?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I don't think it is necessary to name them, and

I am not going to name them. If the cap fits the hon. member himself, let him wear it. I say there are some hon. members who would be pleased if this Mullewa railway were never constructed. But that is not the view taken by the great majority of members. There is a great deal to be said in favor of this railway, but I do not think it is necessary at this stage for me to do so. Which ever way the line goes, there is an enormous advantage in distance as between Geraldton and Minginoo, and Perth and Minginoo. If the line goes as the Government intend it to go the distance will be 60 miles, whereas the distance between Perth and Minginoo by the line now in course of construction is about 280 miles; so that, whatever may be said, there will always be a difference of 220 miles in favor of Geraldton. The question now before us is simply whether the Government should be authorised to incur the additional expenditure which it has been found this line will entail. Members do not seem to object so much to the additional expenditure which it has been found this line will entail. Members do not seem to object so much to the additional expenditure as they do to giving the Government what they call *carte blanche* to spend what they like; and, in order to meet that objection, I would suggest to my hon. colleague that he should alter the wording of his resolution, so as to limit the expenditure to the amount we know is likely to be required. I believe if the expenditure were limited to £150,000 it would do all that is required, and be quite sufficient to complete the line. Surely the House may trust the Government with the expenditure of this extra £50,000. I do not think there has been anything connected with tenders or contracts entered into by this Government, to show that we have been neglectful of the interests of the country. We have made a considerable saving on one line, and it may be that this line also may be carried out under the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate. It must be remembered that this line is not intended to remain for ever at Mullewa; it is only the first portion of a line which will, sooner or later, be extended to our more Northern settlements, and probably to the Murchison goldfields. I do not

think the line could be undertaken at a more opportune time than the present, when the settlers of the district require all the assistance we can give them, and when their labor would be available. Delay would be dangerous in this case. There is nothing like striking the iron while it is hot. Let us undertake this important line as soon as we can, and forge the first link in that chain that is to bring us into closer communication with our important pastoral settlements on the Murchison and the Ashburton, and eventually to extend to our more northern districts.

MR. MOLLOY: We have been told that £100,000 was voted last session on the Loan Bill for this work, and that the work was sanctioned by the House on that understanding; and we have been told that if there was a necessity for this line then, there is a still greater necessity for it now. The question that suggests itself to my mind is: if the original estimate of £100,000 was wrong, this additional estimate may also be wrong, and we do not know now any more than the House did then what this line is actually going to cost. We have had no detailed information either as to the probable cost of the line nor as to the probable traffic. We have had some figures from the hon. member representing the district (Mr. Simpson), but, as has been pointed out by another hon. member, those figures are worthless, as they do not take into consideration many points which it is absolutely necessary for us to know before we can arrive at any correct estimate. The only estimate as to the probable traffic has been a quotation from the speech of the Premier last session in introducing this proposal, and from which it appeared that the present traffic from the Murchison is about 2,000 tons annually.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): That was downward only; it did not include the outward traffic from Geraldton.

MR. MOLLOY: At any rate, it appears we have very little information on the subject, and members do not agree among themselves as to the probable traffic. It seems to me a very serious question whether we should commit the country to this heavy expenditure, unless we have some facts before us to warrant us in doing so, and to satisfy us that the

returns will be something commensurate with the outlay incurred. - I would ask the House to bear in mind that this extra £70,000 which we are told will be required to build this line is only the first cost of the work; there will be the upkeep of the line and the working expenses, all of which will have to be provided for. It is absurd to suppose that this line will from the very first pay even its working expenses. We know from our past experience with other railways, more favored than this as regards traffic, that for years to come this railway will be a considerable additional burden upon the colony. I think this should induce members to pause before committing the country too hastily to this expenditure. There is another difficulty, which has been referred to by other members, and that is—where is the money to come from? It has been suggested that it may be saved from other works included in the loan schedule. I think we should first proceed with those works, and make sure of that point. There are works on that schedule which in my opinion should take precedence of this, and we have not yet been able to raise the necessary capital for their construction.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What works?

MR. MOLLOY: There is the Yilgarn Railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We are getting on with the surveys as fast as we can.

MR. MOLLOY: Fremantle harbor works.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They are not ready.

MR. MOLLOY: The Bunbury railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have plenty of money to go on with.

MR. MOLLOY: At any rate, even if all the loan money authorised can be raised, it has all been appropriated, and, if we are to take this £60,000 out of it some other work must suffer. Are any of these other important works I have mentioned to be delayed, in order that we may find the money to complete this railway to Mullewa?

MR. CLARKSON: The Commissioner of Crown Lands remarked just now that there was nothing like striking the iron while it is hot. It strikes me that this

particular iron is not very hot. There is a strong feeling of opposition to this extra expenditure of £65,000 just at the present time. We are told by the Government that unless they get this extra vote, they will spend the £100,000 already authorised in taking this line as far as it will go, which, I understand, is to the edge of a sand-plain. In other words, it is proposed to build a line that will be absolutely useless. Considering that this important town of Geraldton already has one white elephant which the country is called upon to keep, I hardly think it would be wise to give them another. I do not see what possible harm can come out of delaying this work a few months, until we have this trial survey made, and we have some further information on the subject.

MR. HARPER: I should like to ask the Premier whether this resolution, if passed this session, would bind the House to pass the bill that will have to be brought forward hereafter to legalise this expenditure; or will it be competent for the House then to throw out the bill appropriating the money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I believe a resolution passed during one session does not bind the next session. Still, so far as we are concerned, we would consider ourselves justified in acting upon this resolution of the House, and we would do so. Tenders will be called, and the liability incurred, though the money may not be required for a considerable time yet. I may also say that under Parliamentary Government, I believe, there is generally a desire on the part of the Legislature to support its previous actions, even if the *personnel* of the Parliament itself has changed. I have informed the House exactly what we propose doing in this matter, if this resolution is passed, and I have also told members what we intend doing if it is not passed. In order, however, to meet the wishes of some hon. members, and to take away any idea that the Government wish to have *carte blanche* to spend any amount of money on this work, I shall be very glad to limit the amount, and I now move that the words "not exceeding £50,000" be added, at the end of the resolution. Even if the line, when completed, should cost the full amount estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief

(£164,000)—and these estimates are generally well within the mark—I may inform members that when you get to within 8 or 10 miles of Mullewa, you will have crossed the sand-plain, and, if the line stopped a few miles short of reaching Mullewa, it would not be in any way injurious to the interests of the settlers, as there would be no difficulty in carting these few miles. Still, I hope we may be able to take the line to Mullewa. As to the question of the hon. member for the Swan, where the money is to come from, the reason we have not brought in a Loan Bill at the present time to raise this money is, in the first place, we really do not want the money now; if we had it, we would not be able to spend it for some time to come; but our main reason was that we did not think it would be wise to bring in another Loan Bill at the present moment. I know it would be more regular, but I do not think it would be wise. There will be time enough next session, at any rate, to bring in another Loan Bill. As I have said, we do not want this money yet, nor shall we want it for the next eighteen months. Still, we want the authority of this House to call for tenders at once for the whole line. If we cannot save this amount out of other loan works and have it reappropriated for this particular work, if we are driven to extremity and cannot get it out of current revenue, then we must bring down another Loan Bill to provide the money. But that necessity has not arisen yet. Why, therefore, should we place on our statute book at this moment a bill authorising us to raise £50,000, when we shall not want it for another year and a half, probably, and possibly, may not want it all. I do not think there is much chance of our getting it out of current revenue, but we may save it out of other works in hand or authorised; but, if we cannot do so, then, as a last resource, we must come to the House with another Loan Bill.

Question put—That the words “not exceeding £50,000”—be added to the resolution.

Agreed to.

MR. RICHARDSON: What we wanted, I think, was some indication as to where this money was to come from, whether other works would suffer—the vote for the goldfields, for instance?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not at the expense of other works certainly. But there may be a saving on some of these works, as there has been on one of them already.

MR. RICHARDSON: I now understand that the intention is to bring in another Loan Bill some day, if this money cannot be saved out of other works. I should be sorry to think that any other public work was likely to suffer for the sake of this one; that's all. So long as it is understood that it will not be so, I think members will be better satisfied.

MR. HARPER: I should like to know whether the Government consider that by calling for tenders for the whole line they will get it done cheaper than if it were done in sections? I think our experience as regards the South-Western line was rather to the contrary.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): My opinion is that we shall get this line done considerably cheaper by inviting tenders for the whole line. If done in sections, we should have to wait until the first section was completed, before we could go on with the next, and that would cause delay, and we could not very well call for separate tenders at the same time. The line must start from Geraldton, and, until the first section was completed, we could not go on with the next, and I should say it would be cheaper to have one contract, in this instance, than two or three. Still, I am not prepared to say that the difference would be very great.

MR. DE HAMEL: If the idea is to provide the money for this work out of what may be saved on other works, surely that is an argument for delaying this line until we see what saving we are going to make. I take it that the contracts for at any rate two other works will soon be taken—the second section of the South-Western line and the Yilgarn line—and I think the proper course would be to wait until we have these tenders in, so that we may know if this money will be forthcoming from that source. I consider the Government are acting in an unstatesmanlike and unsatisfactory way in asking us to authorise an expenditure when we have not the remotest notion in the world whether we shall be able to get the money or not. I shall certainly oppose it, and, if the motion is

pressed, I shall feel bound to call for a division, as a protest against this very unusual and unstatesmanlike way of dealing with the public funds.

MR. CANNING: Although I am strongly in favor of the construction of this Mullewa railway, I am bound to confess that there is very considerable doubt as to whether the increased cost of constructing the line from Geraldton would justify the taking of the line that way, instead of from Minginoo. However, that is a matter I think the Government might very well ascertain between this and next session. I think the Premier himself has furnished a very good reason why this motion should not be pressed at the present time, when he said there was no hurry for the money, and that it could not be expended for some 18 months yet. In the meantime, there will be ample time for the Government to ascertain whether it would be better to take this line from Geraldton or from Minginoo.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That has been settled to-night. The House has already decided against Minginoo.

MR. CANNING: That is no reason why the Government should not examine that line, and, if it should be found very much cheaper, there is no reason why this House should not reconsider its decision. The Ministry appear in this instance very loth to take on themselves any responsibility in this matter, without first obtaining the authority of Parliament. This is a virtue which I do not think they have displayed on all occasions. They may not be a Ministry of all the Virtues, but they claim many virtues, and I believe they have before now claimed amongst their virtues the courage not to evade their responsibilities by waiting for the authority and approval of Parliament. I think they may very well take upon themselves the responsibility in this case—notwithstanding the rejection of the motion of the hon. member for the Murchison—to decide whether, in the interests of the country, they should take this line from Geraldton or from Minginoo. I think we might fairly ask the Government not to press this vote at present, but to examine the whole matter for themselves, and, if they feel justified in taking the line from Geraldton, let

them undertake it, and come here next session to ask us for a further vote. As for obtaining another loan, there are always two parties to a loan; there is the lender as well as the borrower, and it is well that we should bear that in mind.

Question put—That the resolution, as amended (by adding the words “not exceeding £50,000”) be agreed to.

The committee divided, with the following result:

Ayes ...	...	...	15
Noes ...	...	...	7

Majority for ... 8

AYES.		NOES.	
Mr. Burt		Mr. De Hamel	
Mr. Darlôt		Mr. Harper	
Mr. A. Forrest		Mr. Loton	
Mr. Marmion		Mr. Molloy	
Mr. Paterson		Mr. R. F. Sholl	
Mr. Pearse		Mr. H. W. Sholl	
Mr. Phillips		Mr. Canning	(Teller).
Mr. Quinlan			
Mr. Richardson			
Mr. Simpson			
Mr. Symon			
Mr. Throssell			
Mr. Traylen			
Mr. Venn			
Sir John Forrest (Teller).			

Question—put and passed.

FREMANTLE HARBOR WORKS.

BREAKWATER FROM ROUS' HEAD AND RIVER IMPROVEMENTS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have much pleasure in rising to move the motion standing in my name, which members will see is “That so much out of the sum available for ‘Harbor works at Fremantle, including extension of jetty and improvements to approaches,’ on the Loan Act, 1891, as may be necessary for the complete construction of the North breakwater from Rous’ Head, as shown on Plan P. W. D., 1468, estimated to cost £88,000, be expended, and the balance be expended in excavations in the river mouth, with a view of eventually completing the scheme shown on same plan.” Members will of course recollect that this is the second time this session that I have brought before this House proposals for improving the harbor at Fremantle. The first proposal that I made to the House was that we should provide harbor accommodation at Owen Anchorage; and that proposal was discussed at some considerable length, but, as members are aware, it did not meet with general acceptance in this House, nor, I think, did it meet with general

acceptance from the community at large. I can say, for myself, that I am very pleased indeed, now, at the turn events have taken. I am very glad indeed that our proposal did not meet with the concurrence of hon. members, and also did not meet with the concurrence of the people of the country. I admit most freely that I was under an erroneous impression as to the cost of the works necessary to construct a breakwater at Fremantle. I was under the impression, after reading and studying the reports of Sir John Coode, that any attempt to construct a breakwater at Fremantle for the protection of our shipping there, and which would provide accommodation for vessels drawing something under 23ft. of water, (which would mean a depth of 26ft.) a harbor which would accommodate vessels of the P. & O. and the Orient class, would have required over a million of money; and I thought neither the members of this House nor the people of the colony were prepared to spend such a large sum on harbor works, even if they could obtain the necessary accommodation at Fremantle. Therefore we had to look about us and see if we could obtain some scheme that would give us the accommodation we required for a sum that would be within the means of the colony, and also at a cost which the members of this House would be prepared to vote for the purpose. Then again as to the opening of the river, I was under the impression that it would cost an immense amount of money. £530,000 was the estimate of Sir John Coode for opening a channel capable of providing accommodation even for vessels drawing only 18ft.; and we had a plan from our own Engineer-in-Chief, which was to give us a depth of 30ft. accommodating vessels drawing 26ft., and which was estimated to cost £560,000. That was a minor scheme; the complete scheme was to cost £800,000. The Government considered the matter, and we came to the conclusion that the colony could not afford it. We knew we had not the money available, and we knew we could not go into the market just now for a fresh loan; and, beyond all that, we were under the impression that members would not look at any costly scheme like that. Whatever views the Government had, we had to accommodate them

to the circumstances of the country and to what we thought the members of this House were likely to agree to. We felt it was no use bringing forward a scheme that we thought would only end in defeat; and, therefore, as a last resource, as the only means by which we could hope to accommodate the ocean steamers, we proposed to go to Owen Anchorage, which we were assured might be made to afford this accommodation for a little over the amount we had available for harbor works at Fremantle. However, members did not agree with our proposals, and, as events have turned out, I am very pleased, indeed, that they did not, because, as I said before, it was contrary to the wish of every member of the Cabinet, and certainly contrary to my wish, to go away from Fremantle for a harbor, if we could get what we wanted on the spot, at a cost that would be within our means. As I have said on many occasions before, and I say it again now, I could not give my adherence to any scheme of harbor works at Fremantle which did not provide, if not at once, at any rate in the near future, accommodation for the largest ocean-going steamers. That is what I have always desired, and it is what the colony desires, that any harbor works undertaken at Fremantle should be such as would accommodate the large ocean steamers that trade between the old country and these colonies. I thought we had lived long enough in the out-of-the-way position we have been placed in, off the high road of ocean navigation, and seen people passing us by without having an opportunity of visiting the more central parts of the colony. I have always held that in any scheme of harbor works to be undertaken at Fremantle the one great object to be distinctly kept in view was that accommodation should be provided for the large ocean mail steamers, so that we might have these vessels calling there. I hope we are on the way now to realise this wish. I think the colony is to be congratulated that we have as our Engineer-in-Chief a gentleman of Mr. O'Connor's experience, and not only of his experience but who also—as we can see by the report of his evidence before the select committee on this subject—has the courage of his opinions, and who is prepared to stake

his reputation that the works which he proposes can be carried out for the amounts stated by him. I think that many a man, even with the experience of our Engineer-in-Chief, might have been afraid (if I may use the word) to have given the strong opinions he has given, and to take upon himself the great, the immense, responsibility that Mr. O'Connor has taken, in the face, too, of the evidence of that eminent marine engineer, who, I regret to say, died only a few days ago. I say that in the face of the evidence which had been given by this eminent man, many an engineer, of quite as much experience as Mr. O'Connor, might have hesitated to have staked his reputation and taken the grave responsibility of putting forward a scheme for constructing a harbor at Fremantle, somewhat at any rate in opposition to the views of that great authority. I can only say this, that if our Engineer-in-Chief can carry out the works which he has reported upon, and which he has suggested, for the amounts which he has given as his estimate, I think that quite a new era is opened to us in the construction of harbor works, not only at Fremantle but also in other parts of the colony. What is it the Engineer-in-Chief is prepared to do, and stake his reputation that he will carry out? That he will, in the first place, build a breakwater from Rous' Head, westward, into the ocean, for a distance of 3,600ft., or 1,200 yards (about three-quarters of a mile), into a depth of over 30ft. of water, which shall afford protection under its lee for all vessels, in the roughest weather, and at a cost of only £88,000. I must say, if I had thought that such a breakwater could have been built to withstand the seas we have at Fremantle at such a cost as that, I never would have thought of going to Owen Anchorage. There is no doubt about that. And I have no reason to doubt that it cannot be done, because we may depend upon this, that the Engineer-in-Chief is quite alive to the responsibility he has taken upon himself, and that it would be worse than professional suicide on his part if he were to put forward a scheme of this character unless he was quite certain that he can carry out the work for the amount mentioned or thereabouts. The great advantage of this mole or breakwater from Rous' Head, which the Gov-

ernment now ask this House to concur in constructing, is, first of all, that it will shelter the river entrance, and, besides sheltering the river entrance, that it will also protect the existing jetty. It will also give a greater depth of water for the ocean steamers to come under its lee in all weather than it would in any other place near Fremantle, because, if members will look at and study the chart, they will find that the 26-ft. line comes nearer to the land near the entrance of the river than it does in any other part of Fremantle south of the river mouth. The extension of this mole, as proposed on the plan referred to, will allow the ocean mail steamers, in the roughest weather, to seek shelter, and obtain it, under the lee of this breakwater. I do not mean to say that this mole alone will do all that we desire; in fact, I do not think that in very heavy weather from the West-North-West, or Westward, or South-Westward it will afford as much protection to the present jetty and the shipping as the South Mole would; and for that reason I at first suggested that instead of running this mole from Rous' Head it would be better to construct the other mole, and extend it in a South-Westerley direction. But I found that the water was not so deep in that position, and it was not favored by the Engineer-in-Chief. Another reason was that the sand-travel might accumulate there, and block up the entrance to the river. So that, altogether, although at one time I had a very strong leaning towards this South mole with an extension to the South-West, after hearing the Engineer-in-Chief's opinion, and carefully considering the matter, the Government decided that we would proceed with this North mole first. That will, besides protecting the river entrance, enclose deeper water; and, if in future there should be any failure in the opening up of the river, there will be no reason why another breakwater should not be extended from the westward end in a South-Westerly direction, which would give equally good protection to the present jetty and the shipping. I think that the construction of this North mole, which is estimated to cost £88,000, and the expenditure of some £46,000 in removing the rocky formation at the bar, and in dredging and excavation, will be

at any rate the beginning of a good and secure harbor for Fremantle. I think it also affords great hope to those who believe in opening up the river, and who desire to see it utilised as an inner harbor. I hope their desire may be realised some day, and that we may yet have large ocean steamers—though perhaps not of the very largest class—coming right up to Perth. That day is not with us yet, but it may come. However, the scheme which the Government now propose will, I believe, be found acceptable to members generally. As I have said, it coincides with the views of those who wish for an inner harbor, inside the river, and it is also the beginning of a good outer harbor, capable of being developed into something still better in the future. As I said before, my great desire is that Fremantle should be a port of call for the great ocean mail steamers, and, as soon as this breakwater is completed to its full length—which I hope will not be a very long time distant, for the Government will push on the work at once, as soon as it has the authority of Parliament; and, as soon as it is completed, I see no reason why an effort should not be made to make Fremantle a port of call for the large steamers which now trade between Great Britain and the Eastern colonies of Australia. I consider, too, that this scheme of harbor works as now proposed by the Government is very much more in the interests of the people of Fremantle than the Owen Anchorage scheme. It keeps Fremantle intact, and centres its shipping interests at the mouth of the river and the present jetty, instead of a mile and a half away. I think it is also more in the interest of the colony generally, and I am very pleased indeed that it has been recommended by the authorities who are advising the Government that a safe and secure harbor can be made so close to Fremantle itself. I can only hope, and I am sure all members will join with me in that hope, that the scheme as propounded by the Engineer-in-Chief may be entirely successful, and that before long we shall see vessels safely berthed inside the river, and the larger class of steamers lying safely outside under the shelter of this breakwater. And, before I conclude the few remarks I have to make, I feel it is only due to

those who formed the select committee who sat on this question, to publicly thank them for the manner in which they carried out the duties entrusted to them by Parliament. I am sure that all those who have read the report of the committee must have gained a great deal of information from the evidence they elicited. I do not think that in the report of any former committee whose proceedings I have studied, I ever noticed more care and more attention given to the duties entrusted to them. I think, too, I may congratulate my friend, the Commissioner of Crown Lands—although I believe he was somewhat troublesome in the numerous questions he so persistently put, all tending in one direction; but still, I think, as one who has read the evidence very carefully, that he brought out a great many points that certainly were of great interest to me and very much assisted me in forming a conclusion upon the whole work. I can only add that I hope the decision of the Government have arrived at in this matter will meet with the approval of members. I am sure we have given the greatest attention to the subject. It has been an anxious duty, because we felt that the step we were taking was one fraught with great issues, and involving a large expenditure of money. On an important and difficult question like this, which for so many years has occupied public attention and caused such divergence of opinion, of course it is not easy to make up one's mind as to the exact way in which the work should be constructed to the greatest advantage. However, I think that with the assistance of the Engineer-in-Chief, and also, I may mention, the chairman of the select committee, my hon. friend the Director of Public Works who has taken great interest in this matter and given a great deal of attention to it—I think the Government have at last made up their minds on the question. We have not done so hurriedly, but after giving the matter our most anxious consideration, and, as members will see, we have not been able to adhere altogether even to the recommendations of the select committee. But I am glad to think that those of the committee whom I have spoken to, I understand, are in accord—at any rate most of them—with the views of the Government, and are

convinced that, with the view of providing accommodation for large steamers, quickly, this is a better plan to adopt even than the one recommended by the select committee, although it really is the same work, only carried out in a somewhat different way. I can only, in conclusion, express a hope that this great undertaking of providing some suitable harbor accommodation at Fremantle is at last about to take a practical shape, and that we will all join together in trying to carry out this important work to a successful completion. Of course we must remember this, that the present scheme is only the beginning of the first instalment of the great work which is in contemplation. But what we propose to do now has this other advantage that it is an essential preliminary of the complete scheme, and that it can be carried out with the means at present at our disposal. We do not contemplate at present spending any more on this work than the amount placed on the Loan Act last year, £150,000. A portion of that, as agreed upon, is to be expended on the extension of the jetty, and the remainder, some £120,000 or £130,000, we propose to spend on this breakwater and in opening up the river mouth, in the way indicated. When this has been done, I hope we shall be in a better position to say how we will apply the next amount we can obtain, for the further prosecution of the great work we are now about to begin. I have much pleasure, sir, in moving the motion standing in my name.

MR. DE HAMEL: It is with very great pleasure that I rise to say that I thoroughly agree with this motion of the Government. It is in every way a motion which this House can thoroughly endorse. In fact, if I had had the framing of the motion myself I believe I would have framed it in the very same words. The course adopted by the Government appears to me a wise and prudent one. The scheme, moreover, has this advantage, that the £88,000 which it is estimated to cost is within our present means, and that if necessary there is more available, for I take it that when this breakwater is completed the balance will be devoted to opening up the mouth of the river. I certainly should like, before resuming my seat, to say how thoroughly I endorse the remarks of the Premier with regard to

our Engineer-in-Chief. I was always in favor of the Government appointing a good man to this position and paying him a good salary, and I think that in our present Engineer-in-Chief we have a thoroughly good officer. I am sure that the extra salary paid to him has been already saved half-a-dozen times over in connection with this harbor works question alone. I hope sincerely that his life may be spared to see this scheme carried out in its entirety to a complete success, so that it may be, when completed, as great a monument to him here as is the breakwater at Colombo to Sir John Coode.

MR. PARKER: We have been told this evening that the Ministry possess many virtues, particularly among them being the one that when smitten on the one cheek they turn to their opponents the other also. For some months past the Government had been in labor, and at last they brought forth a child in the shape of the Owen Anchorage scheme; but after some discussion they repudiated their own child and took up that of their opponents. If this is not true Christian virtue I do not know what is. I am pleased on this occasion to bear testimony of this virtue which they possess, and I do so with still greater pleasure because I recognise among the members of the Government a gentleman, the adoption by whom of this scheme—

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): He has not adopted it.

MR. PARKER: I did not name any one.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): But I know whom you mean.

MR. PARKER: I was particularly careful to name no one. The concurrence of the hon. member in this scheme, however, must have been particularly galling to his nature, and therefore he must possess in the highest degree that virtue to which I have alluded. I well remember in years past the eloquence and grandeur of language to which the senior member for Fremantle rose when discussing the question of the Fremantle Harbor Works. I well recollect year after year when this matter was brought up how we poor puny mortals, who dared to oppose the spending of money by throwing it into

the sea to the memory of Sir John Coode, were attacked in the most eloquent language by the hon. member. I remember in 1887, when certain proposals were made by the Government, that we should virtually undertake the scheme of Sir John Coode by constructing a breakwater, that I dared to oppose it by what the hon. member criticised as a direct negative, and with others to advocate in its stead the opening up of the river. I well recollect the language of the hon. member on that occasion, and I have no doubt that he also remembers it. Still it may be interesting to quote a few of the words then spoken by the hon. member. I will not quote what I said myself, but only what the hon. member said, and I will do so as exemplifying how in the highest degree he must possess the Christian virtue I have alluded to. Referring to me the hon. gentleman said:—

Had the hon. member confined himself to the abstract question of whether it was desirable that the colony at the present time should contract another loan, for the construction of harbor works, he should not have blamed the hon. member; but to find him, with the coolest audacity, disputing the opinions and the conclusions expressed by a man whose shoe-strings he was unworthy to untie, after such an exhibition of cool audacity and impertinence on the part of the hon. member, he should not be surprised at anything which the hon. member might do or say in the future.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I will remind the hon. gentleman further on of what he said.

MR. PARKER: Still referring to me, the hon. gentleman said:—

The hon. member must have been under the impression then—only three short years ago—that harbor works were a necessity at Fremantle. [MR. PARKER: Not necessarily Sir John Coode's.] Probably the hon. member would suggest that he himself should be the designer. Sir John Coode was not good enough for him. Mr. S. H. Parker was probably a better man in the hon. member's opinion. He would tell the hon. member this: he was not a better man, in the opinion of others, than the distinguished authority whose report he had been sneering at. The hon. member said that the inner harbor, as designed by Sir John Coode, would not accommodate the P. & O. steamers. Sir John Coode did not say so. What Sir John Coode said was that it might not be such a harbor as would enable these steamers to call "under all conditions of weather." But there was not the slightest doubt they could make use of the harbor. There would be a depth under the lee of the

breakwater of from 27ft. to 30ft., when dredged. This depth would be available during the summer tides; in winter there would be a greater depth of at least two feet, which would give them from 30ft. to 32ft. at the end of the Southern extension of the breakwater. It was, therefore, idle to say that vessels of the class referred to could not avail themselves of the proposed breakwater. With regard to our population, the hon. member said that the estimated cost of the work was a large sum for the present population of the colony. But was the hon. member—was this great apostle of progress and of more advanced institutions—one of those who believed that this colony was never going to increase its population? Did the hon. member think that when that form of Government, under which the hon. member hoped to be a shining light, was introduced, the colony was going to remain at a standstill, and that it would make no progress at all under the administration of the hon. member? Perhaps the hon. member was desirous of having the credit, and the honor and glory, of borrowing this money for harbor works himself. Perhaps the hon. member thought that, in the event of his being turned out by the constituency of Perth, he would come to Fremantle and seek to woo the suffrages of the electors of that constituency by offering them that bait. He promised the hon. member he would be there to meet him.

I well remember how he emphasised that. "I will be there to meet him," he said. I think, sir, it is Dickens who describes the effusions of two rival editors at a place called Eatanswill. One was named Mr. Pott—I forget the name of the other. Mr. Pott said: "We will be there to meet him," and the hon. member was going to be there to meet me. I hope and trust it will be many years before I shall have the audacity to dispute with the hon. gentleman over that constituency, especially when I recollect the virtue he possesses, and to which I have already alluded. History is always interesting, and anything said by the hon. member must therefore be of interest to this committee. Later on the hon. gentleman said:—

The hon. and learned member for Perth characterised Sir John Coode's report as regards the mouth of the river as being a negligently drawn document. Sir John Coode himself said that the practicability of improving the existing entrance to the Swan River had engaged his anxious and careful attention. With all due deference to the hon. member for Perth, he must accept Sir John Coode's own statement in preference to the *ipse dixit* of the hon. member.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Do you find any fault with that?

MR. PARKER: No. Then the hon. gentleman said:

Summing up his argument Sir John Coode said: "A reconsideration of this question, now that I have had an opportunity of personally examining the site and of studying the further data which have been provided, has tended to confirm the views expressed in my report of 1887, viz.: that the conditions are so adverse that it is quite impracticable to treat the existing entrance to the Swan, with a view to the formation and maintenance of a deep-water approach from the sea, with any degree of success."

I am sure that those hon. members who voted every year in the old Legislative Council against all the power and eloquence of the hon. member, backed up as he was by the report of Sir John Coode damning the river entrance, deserve the thanks of the community at the present time, especially when it is recognised by the Premier, who numbers in his cabinet the hon. member for Fremantle, that this is the right and proper scheme to be carried out notwithstanding the report of Sir John Coode.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have been advised in that way.

MR. PARKER: Certainly. I feel myself proud to occupy the position I do to-night, that I, with others, have assisted in obviating the great calamity that would have overtaken the country had we adopted the plan of Sir John Coode, and commenced the construction of a breakwater at Fremantle. Before I conclude, sir, let me say that I am glad to find that the Government have at last adopted what, to my mind, has always been the proper course in regard to harbor accommodation at Fremantle. I have all along been under the impression that some kind of harbor accommodation was necessary, and although this scheme will not provide for the ocean steamers, it will be sufficient for the vessels that trade with this port at the present time, and for which it is essential we should at once provide reasonable and safe anchorage. I trust that within a very short period that accommodation will be provided, by means of the scheme now approved by the Government.

MR. PEARSE: When this matter was before the House I moved that it be referred to a select committee, and this has now, I am glad to say, been productive of much good. The select committee has reported, and to-night we find the

Government coming down with a scheme on a modified scale to that recommended by the committee. In that plan I entirely concur, and I am glad to find that at last there is some prospect of harbor works for Fremantle being commenced, and I hope in a few years to see them completed. We have, I think, to thank the Engineer-in-Chief for the great assistance he gave to the committee, and I feel sure that the country has been very fortunate in obtaining the services of so valuable an officer.

MR. RICHARDSON: As one of the members of the select committee, I may, perhaps, say a few words. It may be a matter of surprise to many members of this House, and also to the public, how it is possible that what may serve as a breakwater or a protecting mole, and which is some 3,600 feet long, can be constructed for so small a sum as £88,000, in view of the estimate of Sir John Coode, although I must say his estimate was certainly for a very much larger work. The reason is a simple one; but still, perhaps, some explanation of it is necessary. In the first place the material recommended by Sir John Coode was cement blocks, which, I believe, he estimated at £2 5s. per cubic yard. The Engineer-in-Chief informed us that it would cost nearly twice as much to make these blocks here as it would elsewhere on account of the price of cement, and he recommends, in substitution of these blocks, to form the mole of limestone which will cost only about 4s. a yard. It will be seen that there is an immense disparity here, and this alone would account for a large difference in the two estimates. Then the breakwater as designed by Sir John Coode was to serve also the purpose of wharves, and consequently would have to have perpendicular sides; but the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate is simply for a protecting mole. Therefore by adopting this scheme we are not in the slightest degree reflecting upon the reputation of so eminent an authority as Sir John Coode; and the matters I have referred to also show that the Engineer-in-Chief has not put forward something which is absurd. It is well known that the New Zealand coast is one of the roughest in the world, and yet their breakwaters are constructed of material no more superior to what we

propose here. The idea of constructing the mole from Rous Head is that it should serve as a protection to the present jetty and also to protect the river mouth, and it has also been found that the farther we keep to the North, the deeper water we get into. These matters, which were ably put before us by the Engineer-in-Chief, influenced the committee in coming to the decision it did, and I feel certain that when the work is complete it will prove to be of very great service to the shipping trade of Fremantle.

MR. CLARKSON: I will only express the great satisfaction I feel in the conclusion which has been arrived at over this important matter, for I think the scheme is just what we want. This question has been a very vexed one for years, and I am now very pleased that some reasonable solution of it has been devised.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): There are, at all events, some few members sitting around me who are aware of the fact that I have been intimately mixed up with this question for a considerable number of years. Some hon. gentlemen have only been in the House a short time; but there are others who have sat here for years, and this is, therefore, not the first time they have heard me speak on this subject. On many occasions I have been attacked, but it has caused me no harm, and I only hope that it did those who thought fit to adopt this course, some good. If what I have said has been a source of instruction to others, it has also been a source of pleasure to me to enlighten them upon a subject in which I have always taken a deep interest, and which I have made a study. There are, some, however, who might sit here till Doomsday and would never be instructed. To attempt to instruct the hon. member for York, for instance, would be like trying to knock sense into a stone wall. If there is anything the hon. member is especially good at, it is flippancy and nonsense. I have known the hon. member to hinder many schemes for the benefit of the country being carried out, but scarcely have I known him, on any occasion, to deal with them with sincerity and earnestness. For many years the hon. member held the position of leader of the elected mem-

bers in the old Legislative Council, and never have I known him to deal seriously with this question. His position in regard to it has always been that of the funny man in the circus, and his duty as a legislator seemed to be to poke fun at members, who, like my poor self, tried to perform their duties seriously and with earnestness and consistency. If such a course has been of any satisfaction to him, I can assure him that I do not feel in the least annoyed. I have all along endeavored to act with earnestness and sincerity, and have endeavored to bring the true facts to light, and I believe I have been the means of doing so, and that is more than the hon. member can say. I have always given my best attention to the duties I have had to perform. My hon. friend the Premier, has been good enough to say that I had been the means, on the select committee, of bringing out evidence which had been of service to him, and I believe the members of the committee, and even those who to-night are inclined to poke fun at me, will admit that I brought out both sides of the question, which has enabled an intelligent conclusion to be come to. My hon. friend the Premier has said that perhaps I was a little troublesome; but I have found many earnest and zealous members troublesome. I have been earnest in the cause I believed in. I was earnest in expressing my opinion that I believed the colony would be on a safer foundation by adopting the advice of a man of experience—a tried man in his profession—a man who was known to be the greatest marine engineer living, than that of a host of amateur engineers, or men who called themselves marine engineers. I have before told the hon. member that I knew more about the subject than he did. I do not wish to tell him so again to-night, although I think so. The hon. gentleman has been pleased to twit me with what he calls a change in my opinions. I tell hon. members that I have not altered my opinions in any way; but am I to continue to be the butt and scorn and laughing stock of members inside this House, and of persons outside, simply because I have been earnest and consistent? I trust I have sense enough to know, when I find a majority, not only in the House, but among the people of the colony, and in

my own constituency, against the view I take, that it is not wise to persist in it. Under such circumstances as these, I trust I am not foolish enough to fight to the bitter end. I have given way to force—a force, which I may term, of a brutal majority. It is useless for me to fight against it, although I still ardently believe that it would have been better for us to stand by the advice of the eminent marine engineer who has now passed away. Still, I can only hope that the scheme now brought forward may be successful. I have my doubts about it, because it has been condemned by the great authority I have referred to. If hon. members had given the time and study that I have to the question, would they not doubt too, before committing the country to an expenditure of possibly between £800,000 and £1,000,000 of money, with such an opinion before them? The amount of £88,000 which will be voted to-night will be a mere flea-bite to what the whole scheme will cost. Still, the country has got what it wants, and what it has long been hoping for; but let me say that it has not yet been proved to be a success, and it cannot be ascertained whether it will be or not until the whole of the money is expended. I ask whether it is not a very great venture to spend this large sum against the advice and opinion of so great and able a man as the eminent authority I have referred to. In everything I have done I have been actuated by only one motive, and that is to prevent the country spending recklessly and without due regard to caution. Let other hon. members do their duty in this spirit, and if they do they will never have cause to fear the scorn or the bad jokes of the hon. member for York.

MR. PARKER: I omitted to say that there is one gentleman I think we should be particularly thankful to, and that is the late Director of Public Works, the Hon. J. A. Wright, for he, from first to last, during the time he occupied the position of Engineer-in-Chief, advocated the river scheme. The speech of the hon. member for Fremantle shows how wrong it is to try to please people. I thought the hon. gentleman would have been pleased if I read his remarks rather than my own. I remember how, year after year, he used to read his own re-

marks to us, and I thought I would supply what his modesty on this occasion might have left out. He complains that hon. members laughed; but they laughed at what I read—not at what I said. There is another virtue the hon. member is not deficient in—that of blowing his own trumpet. He says he is cautious and earnest, and he possesses every other possible virtue, and says that if hon. members will follow in his wake they need not fear the ridicule of others. I am glad to find the hon. gentleman so good at exalting himself, and I trust it is a virtue he will not cease to possess.

MR. QUINLAN: I have very few remarks to offer at this late hour. I only rise to re-echo the sentiments which have been expressed by hon. members that the Government made a mistake when they brought forward the Owen Anchorage scheme. I am pleased to say that I believe the hon. member for Fremantle has been sincere in everything he has had to do in connection with the question of harbor works. I am confident, notwithstanding it has been said that he blew his own trumpet, that the course he adopted on the select committee brought out a considerable amount of information, and I think the House and the country should be very thankful to him and the other hon. members who composed the committee, for supplying the evidence on which a wise course has been able to be adopted.

Question—put and passed.

The resolution was reported to the House, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:20 o'clock p.m.