

"tions of places in which such stalls "shall be allowed to carry on business." This was to enable the Perth council to deal with the coffee-stalls which were to be seen about the streets at night.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he had no objection to the sub-section. He would only say that these were all matters which the councils already had power to deal with if they obstructed the street traffic. They could be dealt with under the "move on" clause.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the "move on" clause did not always provide a remedy in such cases. He knew they had great difficulty in Melbourne, particularly in Swanston street, with street hawkers and their barrows. When the "move on" clause was applied, the hawkers with their barrows did move on, but in a continuous procession up one side of the street and down the other side, and they could not be touched, because they were obeying the injunction of the police to move on.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. JAMES thought some power should be given to municipal councils to deal with boats let on hire. It would be a very useful provision in towns where they had large sheets of water, such as Perth, Bunbury, Geraldton, and Albany. He thought it was just as necessary to deal with boats let on hire on the water as with vehicles in the streets.

MR. LEAKE pointed out that boats would be outside the municipal boundary before you could look round, and you could only deal with them while they were within your jurisdiction.

MR. JAMES moved that the following sub-section be added: "(32) Regulating the mode and manner of giving, and the information to be contained in the notices and plans given under section 171 hereof." This had been suggested to him by the town clerk, who considered there should be some uniformity in the information to be contained in these notices, otherwise there was likely to be confusion.

Progress was then reported, and leave given to sit again another day.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House do now adjourn.

MR. SIMPSON: Let us do some work.

MR. JAMES rose to speak to the question.

THE SPEAKER: This is a question that cannot be discussed.

A division being called for, the numbers were—

Ayes ...	...	...	11
Noes ...	...	...	8

Majority for ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burt	Mr. Connor
Sir John Forrest	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Harper	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Marmion	Mr. James
Mr. Moran	Mr. Simpson
Mr. Pearce	Mr. Traylen
Mr. Rundell	Mr. Leake (Teller).
Mr. Solomon	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Loton (Teller).	

Question thus passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6-30 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 27th August, 1894.

Message from the Governor: Land Bank Bill—Lodgment of securities by Fire and Marine Insurance Companies—Introduction of a new or amending Mining Act—Excess Bill, 1893: first reading—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): adjourned debate: second reading—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR: LAND BANK BILL.

The following Message was received from His Excellency the Governor:—"In accordance with the requirements of 'section 67 of 'The Constitution Act, 1889,' the Governor recommends that 'an appropriation be made out of the

"Consolidated Revenue Fund, for the purposes of a Bill to authorise the establishment of a Bank for the purpose of assisting the occupation, cultivation, and improvement of agricultural lands.

"Government House, Perth, August 27th, 1894."

#### LODGMET OF SECURITIES BY FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANIES.

MR. MONGER, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill making it compulsory upon all Fire, Marine, and other Insurance Companies to lodge valuable securities with the Colonial Treasurer, in accordance with a resolution passed by this House last session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government was favourable to something being done in the direction indicated, but that it might not be possible to introduce legislation this session.

#### NECESSITY FOR AN AMENDING MINING ACT.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Premier, in answering a question put the other day by the hon. member for Albany, was good enough to say that if members on this side of the House would bring in some definite motion which would raise a discussion as to the necessity of amending the present Mining Act, and would offer some practical suggestions in that direction, the Government would be prepared to consider them. With regard to the Act as it now exists, it has very many serious defects. It has been said of it, by an experienced miner of over forty years experience, that it is absolutely rotten. I am not quite prepared to endorse that statement, but I think that the amending of this Act would be such an immense undertaking that it would be almost impossible to carry it out satisfactorily. Very well; if it cannot be amended, I would suggest that it be ended. In looking at this question, as I desire for a few moments to look at it, I am reminded of an expression of Lord Byron's, who said that the experience of

the past is the best guide and the best prophecy of the future. Now, in Western Australia, we have had but a limited experience of gold-mining in the past, and the next best thing for us, having had but little experience of our own, is to look abroad and see if we cannot gather something from the experience of other places. I do not think we can do better in this respect than look to Victoria, which is pre-eminently a gold-mining colony. The sum of £230,000,000 worth of gold has been raised in that colony during the last 40 years. Last year the output amounted to £2,600,000 worth, which was an increase of £64,000 over the previous year; and, last year, there were employed on the goldfields of that colony 3,000 more men than in the preceding year. Gold, in Victoria, as most members know, was first found at the close of 1850, or the beginning of 1851; and, during the next four or five years, very great and serious difficulties and troubles arose in connection with the management of the goldfields, culminating in what was known as the Eureka riots, in which some very serious complications arose. At that time we had at the head of the miners a man who afterwards held for many years the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in that colony, and who died an honoured member of that body. In 1858 it was found necessary, in order to settle the difficulties and to meet the objections which arose under the Mining Act then in force, to appoint local Mining Boards; and under these Mining Boards the mining industry in Victoria has been carried on up to the present time. It is not my intention to enter at length into the different regulations adopted by these Boards, nor to enter into many details at this stage. I may say, however, that the colony of Victoria with its comparatively small area (judged by the huge area we have to deal with in Western Australia) is divided into seven districts, each having its local Mining Board; and that, although the Mining Act itself is a somewhat cumbersome document, the regulations under which the Act is worked in the various districts are so condensed as to be brought within the compass of one of these little pamphlets (exhibiting the same.) The regulations framed by these Boards vary materially to suit the requirements of

their respective districts. Take, for instance, the regulations for the Castle-maine and the Maryborough districts, which are only twenty-eight miles apart; yet the conditions of mining in these two districts are so varied that they demand quite different and distinct regulations. That being so in districts located so near to each other, each with its separate Mining Board and its separate by-laws and regulations, if that be found necessary in a country like Victoria, I think members will see that, if we are to have a real live Act which will meet the varied requirements of the various districts of this great colony, if we are to have an Act that will meet the requirements and the conditions of mining at Kimberley, at Pilbarra, at the Murchison, at Yilgarn, at Coolgardie, and the mines down South, we shall not only require a very comprehensive Act but also separate local Mining Boards, who shall frame their own regulations suitable for the requirements of their own districts. The conditions of mining at Kimberley, at Pilbarra, or at the Murchison, are entirely different in many respects from the conditions of mining at Coolgardie. Therefore it becomes necessary to have different regulations applicable to each district, and these can best be framed by local boards acquainted with the requirements of their respective districts. I do not want to labour this point; members will see at once what I desire to convey. These Mining Boards in Victoria consist of 10 men, elected under a liberal franchise. It is proposed under the present regulation that the members of the Boards shall be elected by the holders of a miner's right, which is to be issued in Victoria at 2s. 6d. These mining rights, however, embrace not only those who are actually engaged in mining, but also those who reside on the field. I think we can very well improve upon that provision at any rate, by having these local Boards elected only by the miners themselves. On looking at the mining laws in force in the various districts of Victoria, I think the regulations which, perhaps, would be our best guide—from the fact that the district is a large mining centre, and a large reefing centre—are those in force in the district of Bendigo. I have here a copy of the regulations which apply to that district. There are a good many points contained

in them which, whenever a new Mining Bill is brought in and discussed in this House, will afford us valuable information; and some of these points I should just like to mention in passing. Here, for instance, it is provided that where a mining lease is granted the maximum area is only five acres. I may say that leases were unknown on the goldfields of Victoria for many years after the discovery of the fields. The conditions of mining, as we have them here, did not permit of the granting of a lease as we understand it in this colony. It was only after a mining district had been so worked by miners working with ordinary appliances that the field had to be abandoned by the ordinary working miner—it was only after this state of things came to pass that leases were granted at all in Victoria. I should also like to call the attention of members to the fact that, under these regulations, a miner has a perfect right to go upon any lease and work the alluvial gold, or such gold as can be worked with ordinary appliances, even although that lease is an absolute title, inviolable, except by the Crown. We know very well that such conditions are not permissible in this colony. I have been informed that, so far from such conditions being allowed on our goldfields, one of the mines at Coolgardie at the present moment is fenced in (so to speak).

MR. MORAN: No, no.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have heard that one mine is absolutely fenced in, and that a miner who has been found searching for gold outside that fence has been stopped from doing so by the holders of the lease. If that be so, either the holders of that lease are hindering that man from exercising his rights, or such rights do not exist. I have already said that the area, under these regulations, embraced in a lease, is only five acres; and I desire to call the attention of the House to this fact, that, perhaps, the richest mine in Victoria—"Lansells, No. 180"—which has been sunk to a depth of over 2,300ft., and which employs over 300 men, is on a lease of fifteen acres. Here in this colony, before a mine is fairly worked even upon the surface, we issue leases up to 25 acres, and men are prevented from working

this land, while it may take the lessees ten, fifteen, or twenty years before the gold within that lease can be obtained. Meanwhile the ordinary miner is shut out. This is a conspicuous defect in our present Mining Act. So long as men can work the ground with the ordinary appliances, every facility should be granted to them to get the gold out of the soil. Leases covering such a large area as 25 acres, which may be cut up into smaller areas, should not be handed over to mere speculators to be floated in the London or Australian markets, and sold for just what they can be made to realise for the time being. [AN HON. MEMBER: Non-sense.] No doubt, if you happened to hit upon a Bayley's Reward, or a London-derry, or a Wealth of Nations, it was a very fine thing to have 25 acres to dispose of thus.

MR. A. FORREST: Go and find it then.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would it not be more conducive to the best interests of the colony for the ground to be left open for practical miners to go and work it? Leases of this kind were unknown in the early history of mining in Victoria.

MR. CONNOR: Are they unknown now?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They are not granted even now on such terms as are granted in this colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): They have not the same extent of territory as we have.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Never mind that. They have got the gold there, and during the last forty years they have raised £230,000,000 worth of it, and I am optimistic enough to hope and believe that within far less than forty years this colony will have surpassed the amount of gold raised in Victoria within that time. When we deal with this question of mining leases we ought to have regard for the best interests of the colony, and not the interests of individual speculators. There will be time enough to issue these large leases when the surface has been worked, and when expensive machinery will be required, after men who are able to work on the surface with ordinary appliances have had a fair chance. From 7 to 15 acres is the utmost allowed for a lease in Victoria, even after the surface ground has been worked out.

MR. A. FORREST: You can get half a dozen leases, if you like; it amounts to the same thing.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where?

MR. A. FORREST: Anywhere, by amalgamating.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member is speaking without his book. That amalgamation of which he speaks is distinctly forbidden in Victoria. You can amalgamate to the extent of 15 acres, but not beyond that.

MR. A. FORREST: You can hold shares in different leases.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Of course. These are conditions we have not arrived at here yet. It is no doubt within the knowledge of members that Bayley's mine, which yielded £235,000 worth of gold in thirteen months, was sold for £480,000. I suppose that money is gone out of the colony. If the area of that mine had been kept within reasonable limits, we should probably have had a large proportion of it here. In conclusion, I want to say a word upon the importance of the mining industry to this colony, and to show that already our goldfields may be said to cover the cost of their administration. When I ventured upon that statement in the course of the debate upon the Address-in-Reply the Premier pooh-poohed it. Since then a report has been issued by our Mines Department, and, I may say in passing, a very able report, containing some very valuable suggestions which I hope will be given effect to. I am glad to be able to say this, because I have said some hard things about our Mining Department, and I am only too pleased now to admit that it is doing far more than I expected it to do with the means and appliances at its command. From that report I notice that the whole of the salaries of all the officers connected with our goldfields, including the Wardens, and including geologists at £600 a year, and including the salary of a taxidermist—whatever he may have to do with mining it is hard to say—and including the gentleman in charge of the Museum, and also all the mining surveyors—the whole of the salaries connected with the department for the whole year do not amount to more than £7,240. No one can say that is an excessive sum. Against

that I find from this report that up to the 30th July last the department had issued 7,111 miners' rights at £1 each, equal to £7,111, which nearly covered the salaries of all the officers connected with the department, including two geologists at £600 a year, and the taxidermist. The same report also gives us this important fact that there have been 637 mining leases issued, which I estimate (as near as I can calculate) to represent an aggregate area of 10,000 acres, at £1 an acre. This gives an additional income of £10,000 to this department. Besides these mining licenses there are the fees from business licenses, registration fees, and the thousand and one small fees which are chargeable under the existing regulations, including the exemption fee of £3 3s., which you can get in Victoria for half-a-crown—and the same in proportion with reference to other fees.

MR. CONNOR: We are not living in Victoria.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Perhaps not. What I want to call attention to is this: the Premier, the other evening, in introducing the Loan Bill, said that we have expended £101,000 in developing our goldfields up to the present time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That does not include railway construction.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am aware of that. I want to point out that this £10,000 we have received for mining leases, and the £7,111 we have received from miners' rights will pay the interest, at 5 per cent. (including a sinking fund) upon £200,000, and pay the salaries of all the officers connected with the department, including the two geologists and the taxidermist, and the gentleman in charge of the museum. The Premier, as I have said, interrupted me the other evening when I said that the time had already come when, even at this early period of our history, our goldfields were more than paying the expenses of their administration; and here are the figures from the department itself, which show that the statement I made was perfectly accurate. I say our goldfields, even at this stage of their early development, are a source of revenue to the colony, apart from the revenue which they yield from the Customs duties, which must be a very considerable item.

MR. RICHARDSON: Are these miners' rights to go on for ever?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They have to be renewed every year.

MR. RICHARDSON: Are we going to receive this £10,000 every year from mining leases?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I hope so, and that it may increase to £20,000; and, if our mines continue to attract population as we trust they will, we may expect that the £7,111 derived from miners' rights will probably be increased to £15,000. What I want is such regulations as will tend to increase the number of miners, and reduce the area of the leases; and it is for this reason that I am advocating the appointment of local Mining Boards to frame regulations applicable to the varied requirements of different districts. On these Mining Boards in Victoria we have had such men as Mr. Duncan Gillies, who for many years was Premier of the colony, and who is now its Agent General; Mr. John Woods, who was a member of the Assembly for over 30 years; and Mr. McLellan, who has been a prominent member of the Legislature for the last 25 years. These are the kind of men who have formed these Mining Boards in Victoria, and there is no reason why we should not have equally good men on these Boards in this colony, who would be able to give us sensible and intelligent direction in the framing of suitable regulations. It is in view of this, and with a deep conviction that, without such assistance, neither the Ministry, nor the Mining Department, nor this House, can devise such a Mining Act as will meet the varied requirements of the several goldfields in this colony, that I move the resolution standing in my name,—

1. That in the opinion of this House a new or an amending Mining Act is urgently called for.
2. That such new or amending Act ought to provide for the establishment of local Mining Boards for each of the proclaimed goldfields, giving power to make by-laws for their several districts.

MR. MORAN: Whilst agreeing in the main with a good deal that has fallen from the hon. member for Naannine, I think the motion is unnecessary, for, I think it is well known that it is the

intention of the Government to amend the present Mining Act; in fact, I know—and no doubt he knows—that this work of amending the Act is now going on. The present Secretary of Mines, Mr. Prinsep, is writing a voluminous report upon the subject, and circulars have been sent out to every mining centre in the colony asking for practical suggestions showing in what direction the present Act requires to be amended. The first part of the resolution says "that in the opinion of this House a new or an amending Mining Act is urgently called for." That is right enough. But the second part—"That such new or amending Act ought to provide for the establishment of local Mining Boards"—is only one tittle of the amendments which are required in the present Act. I might to-morrow move another motion that it is necessary to alter the present system of leasing, and other members might move some further resolutions showing what other amendments are necessary; and we might go on for ever. I think a better course would be to move that the whole question be referred to a select committee. I believe there are many more important alterations required than the establishment of Mining Boards. I beg to move, as an amendment, that the question of amending the Mining Act be referred to a select committee; and I should propose that this committee should report to this House about a week before the end of the present session. This would give them plenty of time meanwhile to receive suggestions from the various fields, and enable them to go into the whole question in a thorough manner. I scarcely think that at the present moment there are three members in this House who understand what is really required.

MR. A. FORREST: As this is an important matter, and as a large amount of information on the subject is now on its way from the Eastern goldfields which will be of great help to the House, I beg to move that the debate be adjourned until this day week.

Motion put and passed.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

#### EXCESS BILL, 1893.

Introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.

#### LOAN BILL (£1,500,000).

##### SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. RANDELL: Mr. Speaker—Sir, in rising to speak upon this very important measure that has been brought before us so fully and eloquently by the Premier, I would beg to say at the outset that I am speaking this evening not as representing, as some may suppose, a party in this House, but simply my own views and opinions upon the question before us. I think, sir, the hon. the Premier in moving this Loan Bill stated that he had two propositions to submit in connection with it: firstly, were the proposed works necessary and urgent; and secondly, could the colony afford the loan? I should be inclined to reverse the order of these propositions, and place them exactly opposite, thus: firstly, can the colony afford the Loan; and secondly, are the proposed works necessary and urgent.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is exactly how I put the case.

MR. RANDELL: Then I am sorry to say that the newspaper report of the hon. gentleman's speech is wrong; I have not had the pleasure yet of reading the official and amended report. He also said that the general feeling of the colony was in favour of the loan. I do not suppose he intended by that to convey the meaning that all the items included in the Bill would be accepted by the country, although, later on, I think he said that the Ministry was prepared to take up their position upon the whole of these items, and were prepared to stand or fall thereby. With reference to these items as they appear on the schedule, I think he referred to the first item, the railway from Mullewa to the Murchison goldfields, for which the sum of £409,000 is set down, in somewhat hesitating terms, and that had he not himself visited the country and seen for himself the progress which these goldfields are making, and the promise of future development which they offer, he would not, perhaps, have been prepared to include this item in the Bill. I believe that both inside the House and outside it general opinion seems favourably disposed towards this undertaking, although the information we have concerning it is not so full as we might desire, and which we may elicit by-and-bye when we go into

committee on each separate item. I take it that the same remark applies very considerably to all the items, which makes it unnecessary to go into such full details at present, as we shall have to travel over the same ground again on that occasion. I think there is very little doubt whatever, from the information that has come to hand, that there are very rich goldfields at the Murchison, which, by the introduction of machinery and a more systematic effort at development, will result in a very large measure of success. It was also stated, if I remember rightly, that there was very good pastoral country in the district which this line would serve. Ever since the Premier went across the continent as an explorer—and I believe he followed the route of the Murchison River—I have been very favourably impressed with the report he gave of this part of the colony, and it struck me it was really very excellent country. That has been proved by subsequent events. I am aware it suffers from an insufficient rainfall, but we know there is a better supply of water on these goldfields at the present moment than at Coolgardie or Pilbarra. These circumstances, to some extent, justify our going into the loan market for so large a sum as this for this railway. I do not know whether the amount set down on the schedule of the Bill for rolling stock includes the necessary rolling stock for this line. Probably the equipment of the line will bring the amount up to something like half a million of money. This is a very large sum of money to raise on loan for such a purpose, and I think nothing will justify it except the clearest evidence that there is every probability of the work being a reproductive work, that the goldfields promise to be permanent, and that the pastoral country is of a character which I hope it will turn out to be, and which to some extent indeed it is. In introducing the Bill, the Premier went into the reasons very largely which influenced Ministers in arriving at a decision to include the various items included in the schedule, and, in doing so, he took occasion to refer to the revenue of the colony in 1891 as compared with the revenue in 1894. It appears that in 1891 the revenue of the colony from all sources amounted to £414,000 (in round numbers), while in 1894 it amounted to £681,000. No doubt

that is a very satisfactory increase. But we find that the expenditure has kept pretty good pace with the revenue, and I noticed that he said it should do so, and that it was not the duty of the Government to hoard up money. With that expression of opinion I agree. At the same time every care should be taken that the expenditure is not increased improperly or unduly, simply in order to keep pace with an increasing revenue. In again entering into the loan market we have to remember that we are incurring grave responsibilities as regards the future. Every man who borrows money has to look forward to certain contingencies, and to be prepared to meet them if they arise. I do not find fault with the Premier for taking a hopeful view of the future. I think we are justified in these cases to take a fairly sanguine view, at any rate, of the resources of the colony. It is also desirable that we should not overlook the fact that we shall have to meet increasing liabilities when these loan moneys are expended, and we have these railways in operation. I notice that the increase in the colony's credit balance within the last three and a half years has been over £42,000. When the Ministry took office the surplus balance was £45,000, while on the 30th June last we had a credit balance of £88,000, showing that we have apparently lived within our income. I am not prepared to say that we have not. But we have been expending large sums of money in the meantime, and it would be interesting to know whether we have not been living, to some extent at any rate, upon loan money? I am not able to express an opinion upon that point, at present at any rate; but I am a little suspicious that possibly such may be the case, and that we are laying up for ourselves by-and-bye some troubles. Indeed, looking at the history of the other colonies, we may expect, when we venture upon a large borrowing policy, that we shall reap as we have sown. Events which have taken place within the other colonies, and especially Victoria, should teach us a lesson to be very careful in this respect, and that our loan money should only be expended upon what may reasonably be expected to be reproductive works. With reference to the proposed railways to the goldfields, I do think that

the country generally is expecting that a loan will be obtained for the purpose of building these lines for the development of this important industry. Recent events on our Eastern goldfields have shown us that there is an immense amount of gold in those districts; and our own experience teaches us that railways are the only means of opening up communication with these distant goldfields. The idea of making roads to them is, I think, preposterous. I believe railways will be found as cheap as roads; and I hold the opinion that the only way this colony can be speedily developed is by large mineral resources being discovered, and by their profitable development. I think that will commend itself to all members of this House. We were also told that the population of the colony during the last three years had increased very considerably—about 64 per cent.; but I think we must bear in mind, when looking at this increase, the circumstances that occurred some twelve months ago, when the development of our goldfields received a check, and the population began to decrease, owing to faith in our Yilgarn goldfields being to a considerable extent lost. If it had not been for the opportune discoveries of gold at Coolgardie, which at that time we did not anticipate, I am afraid we should have had to face a very serious position of affairs. Remembering this, and remembering also that we do not know the full extent of the gold concealed in the heart of the earth, even at Coolgardie, we should be very careful in not over-estimating the possibilities of the future. I have said that our revenue and expenditure have about kept pace with each other, and, for my part, I should have liked to have seen a greater difference in favour of the revenue, especially when we consider our present high tariff as regards many of the necessities of life. I should have liked to have seen a larger balance left than we have, in order to meet any contingencies that may arise. I am prepared to conceive that there is a probability of our revenue continuing to increase, and that we are justified in entering upon the execution of works of public utility which are demanded on all sides of the country, and which will assist in the development of the country, and conduce to the comfort of its inhabitants. Although we have had this glow-

ing picture of the progress of the colony since the advent of the present Ministry into office, I think there is another side of the picture which may fairly receive our consideration. The Premier stated, I think, in one part of his speech, that he would defy anyone to get up and say that the colony had suffered by the loan policy of the Government in the past. The other side of that question is this: have the inhabitants of the colony generally profited thereby? Is there not some room for doubt whether, generally speaking, we are in a better position now than we were in three and a half years ago, or six years ago? I am not arguing at all against the construction of railways or other works undertaken for the development of the country, but I want to draw attention to this part of the question—whether trade is generally better or more profitable, whether the business profits of the trading community generally have increased or shrunk, whether there is not less employment available, and whether there is not a larger number of men who are living, as it were, from hand-to-mouth, and who, in many cases, are unable to find employment which they are willing to take? These are questions which I will leave to be answered by members themselves. I have my own opinion on the matter. Then we come to the consideration of the other question—Can we afford this loan? Associated with this question, and the question of how the colony is progressing, is the question of our export trade, and whether, with the exception of gold, there has not been a considerable falling off in the staple exports of the colony? It is admitted, of course, that a very large increase has taken place in the export of gold, but the Premier himself was forced to admit that this is the one feature in the history of the last three and a half years, so far as our exports are concerned, which gives cause for congratulation. We find, on going through the list of our exports, that a shrinkage has taken place to a considerable extent in almost every item. I think there are some reasons why the value of our exports should have not been so great, and some of those reasons were touched upon by the Premier. No doubt there has been a shrinkage in value all round, and especially in wool; and in that respect we are suffering in common



with the rest of the world. The fact remains that, while the value of our exports in 1890 (apart from gold) amounted to £585,000, they only amounted to £496,000 last year; and that, during the half-year ended the 30th June this year, our exports only amounted to £152,000. Members will find this matter referred to by the Collector of Customs in the very valuable report he has furnished this House and the country, and in which he has given certain reasons for this falling off in our staple exports—reasons which will be regarded as more or less satisfactory according to the point from which we approach the consideration of the question. Some of them are no doubt correct, and, possibly one of the reasons may be found in the fact that we have been ourselves absorbing, consequent upon the increase of population and their requirements, especially on the goldfields, very much more of the products of the colony than would otherwise have been the case, and which under other circumstances would have gone to swell our exports. This, I think, applies especially to the production of farm produce, and that other large article of export in the past, timber. I have no doubt that a very considerable amount of this article has been used in the country during the last two or three years. But I have reason to believe that there is some ground for complaint, even at our timber mills, on the ground of the shrinkage in the demand for our timber. We find from the report of the Collector of Customs that some other very important items of export have decreased very considerably, and it is a matter for regret that this information had to be furnished to us. I find that in pearl shells there was a reduction of £20,000 last year, as compared with the previous year, and that there was a marked falling off in our exports of ores. The value of the lead exported was *nil*; there was a reduction of £8,000 in the value of copper, and also a reduction in the value of the tin exported. Of sandalwood we exported about £10,000 less than in 1893; of skins, £13,000; and of timber, £45,000, making a total falling off in these important articles of export of no less a sum than about £90,000, which must make a very serious difference in the well-being and welfare of the colony.

I do not know that I need refer to the shrinkage in wool, because I find that this is accounted for by the reduction placed upon the estimated value per lb. of that article by the Customs authorities, as compared with the value placed upon it in former years, so that the difference in the value of this particular item of export does not bear very much upon the question now under consideration, the price put upon it being considerably below what was put upon it in previous years.

MR. A. FORREST: It is 25 per cent. too high even now; our greasy wool does not average more than 4d.

MR. RANDELL: I am sorry to hear that. I notice that there has been an increase in the price lately, which, perhaps, may bring it up. With regard to our imports, there is one item which I should like to call attention to particularly, and that is the 12½ per cent. schedule. There has been a decrease in that item, if my calculations are correct, of about £243,000, compared with the previous year. That 12½ per cent. schedule represents, to a very large extent, necessary and useful articles of household consumption, and the falling off indicates a very large decrease in the purchasing power of the community. If members will look at the tariff they will find that this schedule includes a very large number of articles used for domestic purposes, and consequently the falling off in our imports under this head is an unsatisfactory and regrettable feature in these returns. The only item of satisfaction I find in the decrease of our imports is under the head of alcoholic liquors, where there appears to have been a considerable falling off in some lines. I do not think that many of us will regret that; though certainly we must all regret the decrease in the 12½ per cent. schedule.

MR. RICHARDSON: We have the 10 per cent. schedule added, which we had not before.

MR. RANDELL: That is only a very small item,—only £4,900. I might also refer to the 5 per cent. schedule, which largely represents the raw material introduced to be worked up by our artisans and others, and which I regard as a very important item, and one which I should like to see very much larger than it is, because it gives employment to a number

of industries which are established in the colony. It will be noticed at the end of the Collector of Customs' report that we have at present established in our midst 221 manufactories, mills, works, &c. Of that number I find there are 75 established in Perth, 22 at Fremantle, 18 in the Plantagenet district, 15 in the Wellington district, and 14 in the York district. The number in other districts is very much smaller. I take it that one of the means we must look to, to enable us to bear the burden of a large loan like this, is the encouragement of these local industries in our midst. There is plenty of room for the establishment in this colony of a large number of industries which would contribute very much to the general well-being of the community, increasing our industrial population, and thereby creating a market for the produce of our farmers, and which would in this way act and react very beneficially upon the welfare and advancement of the colony. I think we ought to give every possible help we can to encourage these local industries. I am not prepared, however, to go in the direction indicated by the Ministry, so far as the farming industry is concerned. I am as anxious as they are to see the settlement and cultivation of the land encouraged, so that some of those on our goldfields may be induced to remain here by the prospect held out to them—not by the means suggested by the Ministry—but by the prospect of profitably employing themselves on the occupation and cultivation of the land. If we can do that, and encourage people to settle on the soil, and if we can establish these local industries in our midst without unduly taxing other portions of the community,—if we can do this, then I think we may face the future that is before us with considerably more fortitude than we can at the present moment. The Premier, in introducing this Bill, told us that the increase in the export of gold was the one pleasant feature of the present situation. No doubt it is increasing very rapidly, and, since the discovery of the Wealth of Nations, the gold export of the colony may be expected to double itself during the next twelve months. Let us hope it may be so. But there is another matter connected with this, which was also referred to by the Premier, and that is

the indebtedness of the colony per head of the population. The Premier went into figures very minutely, I noticed, and estimated not only what our indebtedness is per head, but also what it is in proportion to the number of breadwinners in the colony. I am afraid if we accept that as a basis, it will be to some extent misleading, and for this reason: it is well known that at the present moment we have in this colony, principally on our goldfields, a large number of single men—men, at any rate, who are here without their families, and whose object is to win as much as they can of the gold of the country, and whose purpose is not to settle here, but to return whence they came, to their families, if they have any, or to their old associations in the other colonies. To estimate these men among the breadwinners of the colony, in comparing the proportion of breadwinners here with the same class in the older established colonies whence we may expect most of them will return, is not fair to those colonies, and, so far as we are concerned, is misleading. These men, as I have said, are here for mining purposes only, and they are taking away from the colony that which would enable us to meet the demands upon us by reason of our loans. They will be taking out of the colony the gold which they find in the colony, and taking themselves with it, and they will in no way hereafter help us to bear the burden we are taking upon ourselves. They will leave it for those of us who remain here, and who intend to remain here, to bear the brunt and the burden of the day; and it is misleading to look upon these men as among the permanent breadwinners of the colony for the purpose of comparing our indebtedness per head with the number of our breadwinners. I will say no more on this point. The Premier, in referring to the amount on the schedule for rolling stock for our railways, said this was an item that would be always increasing. I perfectly agree with him in that; it must necessarily do so. I think the amount set down for rolling stock is very much below what will be actually needed. I feel quite convinced of that from the information that came under my notice as a member of the Railway Workshops Commission. All through the history of our railways in this colony they have suffered from a de-

iciency of rolling stock, and I feel sure that the sum of £174,000 set down here for this purpose will not nearly be sufficient to supply the requirements of the whole of our railways. We must always bear in mind that these railways to our goldfields must be very costly to maintain—costly for one thing, because we have to introduce the required fuel. [The PREMIER: I hope not.] So far as present indications go, we have also to face the fact that water is a very scarce commodity along these lines—certainly the line to Coolgardie—and this will add very considerably to the expense of working these railways. I only mention these things by the way (as it were) to show that there is another side to the question from that put to us by the Premier, who always looks at things from a very sanguine point of view. The hon. gentleman told us the other night that he had been always right in his predictions, and that his expectations had been realised in the past, and that fortune favours the brave. That is all very well from one point of view, but it is necessary sometimes to look at the other side of the question, and, in doing so, to prepare ourselves for the reverses that may be in store for us. The Premier, I think, indicated that having commenced to borrow we could not stop. Of course, if the colony develops, we must follow that development; but I do not know that we should always lead development, as we have done in the past. I do not know that we could find many other works at present to borrow for, that are not included in this Bill, except one, perhaps, which I am sure would receive the hearty support of at least one member, the hon. member for York. I refer to a loop line from York to connect with the Yilgarn Railway. That seems to me the only possible railway which the Ministry have not introduced into the present Loan Bill. We have now a very considerable number of miles of railways in this colony. I think the extent of our railway system is highly creditable to the small population we have here, and I was very much surprised, and I think a little angry, the other day when I saw in an influential English paper an article ridiculing what we have done in this direction. If the editor, or the writer of that article, knew the circumstances of the colony, I think he would only be too

happy to retract his words, and to say that we had done grandly in this direction, building hundreds of miles of railways all over the country, with a small population of only 70,000 souls. The Premier, in moving the second reading of the Bill, referred to some remarks which had reached him with reference to the proposed lines in the Southern districts, and he repudiated the idea of any jobbery in connection with these lines, and said he was actuated by no other feeling in the matter than to promote the welfare of the colony. I am sure that every member here will accept that statement to the fullest extent. I cannot believe for a moment that any public work introduced in this House by the present Ministry would be introduced from any other motive than a regard for the welfare of the colony. I give them credit for an honest desire to promote the development of the best interests of the colony at large, and I do not think they would introduce into this Loan Bill any work which in their opinion would not contribute to that end, or introduce any work for the particular benefit of any particular district at the cost of the colony at large. While I am willing to admit this, I hope at the same time the Ministry will be prepared for criticism, fair and honest criticism, on this side of the House, with regard to many of the items on this Bill. I think it is well that this important measure should be looked at from two different points of view, and that we should not forget the teachings and experience of other countries in connection with our public works policy. I find that the present expenditure of the colony amounts to £8 5s. per head, which I think is a very considerable item. In an article which very recently appeared in the *Melbourne Argus*, it was stated that their expenditure in that colony during the "boom" (as they call it) was not more than £5 8s. per head of the population, which the writer said was an exorbitant and extravagant sum for any community to expend.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Surely that must refer to their taxation per head; their expenditure must be more than that?

MR. RANDELL: I ought to say that was exclusive of their railway expenditure. The writer goes on to compare

their expenditure in that colony, and which has brought them into their present circumstances, with the public expenditure in four other countries,—Great Britain, Canada, the United States, and Denmark. [MR. MARMION: With a crowded population.] The expenditure per head of the population in Great Britain, he said, is £2 7s. per head of the population; in Canada it is £1 14s.; in the United States it is only £1 5s.; and in Denmark, £1 8s. These figures, I think, furnish us with serious food for reflection. The revenue of Victoria a few years back, if I remember rightly, was something over £7,000,000; it is now reduced to £4,000,000; and the writer of the article says they will have to cut their coat according to their cloth. That is exclusive of the railways, as I have said. This state of affairs has been brought about, no doubt, to some extent, through the financial troubles caused by the suspension and reconstruction of the Banks, and also through the extravagant way they have been living, largely upon the expenditure of loan money. The writer of the article says that financial people in England have thought that the circumstances of the Australian colonies were different from those of other parts of the world, but that recent events have taught them a lesson that such is not the case. Though a country may have mines, rich with abundance of gold and silver, yet, after all, it comes to the same thing in the end—if you want to avoid financial disaster you must keep your expenditure within your income; and the writer's advice to the neighbouring colony is not to be so lavish with her expenditure in the future as in the past. I am sure we should all deprecate very strongly the idea that, at the end of our borrowing policy we should find ourselves in the position that Victoria and the other colonies of the group have found themselves in. I hope the House will look carefully into this question in all its aspects, and weigh well the probabilities of the future as to our being able to find, without putting further burdens upon the people, the large amount required for interest on our loans every year, which will be a serious drain upon the resources of the colony, and as to whether we shall progress at such a rate as to justify us in taking these responsibilities upon our

shoulders. I believe we have to find about £128,000 annually to pay the interest upon our present loans and provide a sinking fund, and, when this Bill passes, that amount will be largely increased. It is estimated by the Premier that by the end of 1897, by the time this loan money is spent, we shall have in this colony—and I presume his estimate is based upon the present rate of progress—a population of 125,000, and that our expenditure per head then will only be £36. Of course that is altogether an estimate, and we may be deceived in our calculation. On the other hand, if our goldfields turn out in the future as they have done during the past few months, we may reasonably expect to have even a larger population than that. As appearances go at present, at any rate, we may reasonably anticipate that such will be the case. Still there is the possibility that our expectations may not be realised. I do not know that it is necessary for me to enter more fully into details at present in connection with this Bill, but I may just briefly express my opinion with regard to the principal items. I am certainly in favour, with some fuller information, of the first railway on the list—the line from Mullewa to the Murchison; and decidedly in favour of the second—the line from Yilgarn to Coolgardie. It appears to me absolutely necessary that this line should be constructed. I have only one little fear with regard to it—of course I am unable to speak from experience or a personal knowledge of the district—and that is just this: whether the point to which it is proposed to take the line will be the most central point, or whether we shall not immediately have to take the line Northward. With that limitation I am prepared to accept this Coolgardie line without any further reservation. With regard to the railways to Bridgetown and to the Collie coalfield, I must hesitate at the present moment to express an opinion in favour of these two lines. There has been a petition presented to the House this evening which recites some of the advantages likely to accrue from one of these lines. I always had a very high opinion of the Blackwood; the climate is excellent, undoubtedly; the rainfall also is good. But there is one unfortunate circumstance connected with this district, and that is the superabundance of heavy

timber. I am informed that the clearing of the land will, on an average, cost £15 an acre; but I have another estimate which puts it at £5 an acre, taking one class of land with the other. With reference to the Collic coalfield line, although we have some papers before us which profess to give some information as to the value of these coal measures, still, I must confess, I am not satisfied with it by a good deal. True, they are professional opinions; but the value of one of them is discounted very much, in my mind, by the reference it makes to a material which the writer refers to as being of more value than the coal itself—pipe-clay. We know that, under certain circumstances, pipe-clay is very valuable; but we need not go to the Collic for it, and, for years to come, the demand for it will be of a most limited description. We also find that the opinion expressed by these gentlemen as to the quality or character of the coal is very much discounted by the reports we have had from engineers and others who have tried it. I certainly think the experimental test has shown that the coal is very much inferior, so far as present depths go, to the Newcastle coal. I find there are also some difficulties in the winning of the coal that are not experienced elsewhere. I must also call attention to the fact that there is not much demand for coal in this colony at present, outside the Government railways; and the idea of raising coal at the Collic with the view of exporting it is, I think, preposterous in the face of the low price ruling for coal at Newcastle. Coal is being discovered in various parts of the world now, and I think the prospect of its becoming a profitable industry in this colony is very remote indeed at present. With regard to the other items, I shall wait for further information before expressing any decided opinion upon them—until we are discussing them in committee. "Additional improvements to opened railways" is, no doubt, a very necessary item, and these improvements are always needed. We see that in the deviation now being made on our Eastern railway, which I think this House must approve of, tending as it will to reduce very much the cost of working the trains, and also conducing to the safety of the travelling public. With regard to the item of lighthouses, I

hold it is desirable, if within our means, to provide these very useful structures on our coast. I think I was the first, in the old Legislative Council, to suggest that there should be a lighthouse somewhere at Cape Leeuwin or Cape Naturaliste, whichever position should be found the best. It must be borne in mind, however, that the first cost of these lighthouses will not be the only expenditure; there will always be the annual expenditure of maintaining these lights. Therefore, care should be taken that they are not placed where there is no actual need for them. "Telegraph extension" is an item which, I think, will commend itself to every member. I am not speaking now of any particular localities, but there can be no doubt that the extension of our telegraph system is a question of great importance. With regard to the item of "Schools," I should have been glad not to have seen this item in the Bill. I am extremely anxious that schools should be built wherever it is possible to build them, and I take this opportunity of again expressing a hope that the character of the buildings erected will be useful, but plain and inexpensive. But I do not like to see such an item included in a Loan Bill, and I should be glad if the Ministry could see their way to omit it, and to have our schools built out of current revenue. I think that to a certain extent this item is a blot upon the Bill. It cannot be regarded as a reproductive work in the general acceptation of the word. It is most desirable that we should have schools for the education of the young, and, sooner than see the item excluded, I must vote for it, though very reluctantly, because I hold a very strong opinion that the item should not appear on the Loan Bill, but be provided out of the public revenue. I do not know that I need say any more.

MR. RICHARDSON: What about the Fremantle harbour works?

MR. RANDELL: I think members know my opinion as to this work. I believe it is absolutely necessary that we should have a safe and commodious harbour at Fremantle, and that the construction of this work will have a most beneficial effect upon the colony at large. Not only that; having started with the work, and having already expended some £100,000 upon it, it would be the height of folly

and a standing disgrace to us to leave the work unfinished; and, whatever may be the cost, we must carry it to a completion. With regard to the way it is being carried out I have nothing now to say, except that having myself advocated the construction of a mole from Rous' Head for the past 20 years, it is a source of gratification to me to find my opinion confirmed by a gentleman whose professional skill and scientific knowledge largely influenced this House in adopting this project; and I feel sure that under his guidance the work will be carried out properly to its completion. That item is one I shall most heartily support for the reasons I have already stated. I have heard, however, that the dredge which has recently been introduced in connection with these harbour works is likely to prove a failure. I mention it now so that we may have some official information on the subject. I have heard that the vessel has been very badly constructed. There is something radically wrong somewhere, either with the construction or with the plans,—I cannot think it is with the plans. I have heard that in some portions of the outside work, between the ribs and the plating, there are pieces of what in the trade is known as "young shipwrights" put in, pieces to fill up, which argues that the person who put the vessel together did not understand his business. As this vessel plays an important part in the carrying out of this work, I thought I would call the attention of the Director of Public Works to these statements which have been made to me, and which are current outside, in Fremantle especially. I shall not say anything further, except that if this Bill is carried in its entirety, or only partially, I only hope it may fulfil the expectations of the Ministry, and result in the rapid advancement of the country in the path of progress.

MR. LEAKE: Sir, no one, I think, either inside or outside this House can deny the importance of a full consideration of the measure now before us. On the one hand we have the probable ultimate result of a large expenditure of loan money, coupled with the expediency of developing the mineral and other resources of the colony; and, on the other hand, we have the responsibility incurred in the danger of over-borrowing. It is

with the responsibilities to be incurred and the danger of over-borrowing that I propose to deal this evening. I shall not, I hope, in the course of my remarks, cavil unnecessarily at the measure itself, nor at members on the opposite side of the House. I hope, sir, I shall be able to support my views with arguments—arguments which I trust will appeal, not to the sentiments and not to the pockets of members, but to their intelligence. In criticising this measure I shall advance a proposition in favour of private railway construction. I contend it would be in the interests of this colony if our resources were developed by means of private railways, rather than by Government railways, which involve the expenditure of large sums of money and the necessity for excessive borrowing. With regard to this public works policy—and it is a public works policy—we have before us the history, and the recent history, of the other Australian colonies as an object lesson. To what do those colonies owe their present depressed condition? I do not think there is anyone present who takes any interest in politics, either in this colony or in the neighbouring colonies, who can deny that their present depressed condition has been the result of over borrowing. No one who has travelled in those colonies can fail to have been impressed with the general remark, the general warning that is always held out to us on this side,—“Be careful; take warning from us, and don't borrow recklessly.” It has been announced by the Premier that the policy of the Government is the development of the mineral resources of the colony. By all means, I say, develop those resources; but, in confirming this policy of development, do not let us be misled into a reckless public works policy, or a reckless borrowing policy. Is there only one method of developing our mineral resources? Can it only be done by this public works policy? It is true that railways are essential,—I will admit that; but it does not follow that they must be built out of public funds. There is another means of attaining the same object, and it is the means that I advocate, namely, the encouragement of private enterprise. Wherever railways exist, the country must benefit by their existence; and I say it

matters not whether their existence is brought about by private enterprise, or by the expenditure of public money. In considering that question, it is well to consider which is the best means of arriving at that particular end. If members are agreed with me in what I advocate this evening, I shall be able to show them before I sit down that there is a possibility of saving the colony from a liability of no less than £750,000, or three quarters of a million. It is true that railways are generally built by Governments in the other colonies, but why is that? I say it is because the opportunity has not offered before for getting them built by private enterprise. Railways, more or less in the history of all the other Australian colonies, have been tentative works, with the view of encouraging general enterprise. But here I say this colony stands in a position which is almost unique in the history of colonies. Never before have such opportunities offered for Governments to take advantage of such possibilities as we have before us, possibilities which private enterprise are ready and willing to grapple with, and which are now properly within the sphere of that enterprise. We need only look to countries like America and England for confirmation that the railway policy of the country is not fostered by the Government, but by private enterprise. There all the railways are in the hands of private enterprise. I admit it is not so in the Australian colonies, but is there any member in this House who can point out any colony of the group which can say that its railways have paid their working expenses and the interest on the money expended upon them?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Yes; New South Wales.

MR. LEAKE: The only two railways, I believe, that are paying in the Australian colonies is the Deniliquin to Moama railway in New South Wales, and the Silvertown or Broken Hill tramway, both of which are private railways. If they were in the hands of the Government the chances are they would not pay.

MR. A. FORREST: What about the Cossack tramway?

MR. LEAKE: There is another advantage—and I particularly urge it in

this instance—in favour of private enterprise. The Premier, in his Bunbury speech, said that the scheme of public works proposed by the Government was a scheme that was to extend over the next four years; from which I infer it is their intention to extend the expenditure contemplated by this Bill over that period, whereas, if we encouraged private enterprise, we should have the immediate wants of an increasing traffic supplied, and we should have these railways completed without any unnecessary delay.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Like the Midland?

MR. LEAKE: You will hear something about the Midland directly. We have also had it said, not only at Bunbury, but also in this House—and I ask members not to be misled by this little piece of sophistry—that the Government do not propose at present any additional taxation. Mark the saving clause. Mark the emphasis upon those words “at present.” The Premier was very careful to add these words. He did not go on to say that he would pledge himself and his Government not to introduce fresh taxation by reason of the passing of this Loan Bill. He knows full well that additional taxation will not be necessary during the present year, so he said they did not propose any fresh taxation at present. If we are going to take advantage of our present opportunities, I hope it is not to build railways out of public funds during boom time, but to reduce the taxation of the country. No better opportunity could offer to the Government than the present to come down to this House with some comprehensive measure to reduce taxation. Is there any person here who can say that we are not at present taxed as heavily as we care to be, and that the present is not a favourable opportunity for the reduction of that taxation? Yet, not only have we no attempt at reduction, but no assurance that an increase of taxation will follow upon what I call this reckless borrowing policy of the Government. With regard to the first item on this Bill, the Murchison railway, I think that of all the works included in the schedule this is one that might well be left to private enterprise; and we have had laid upon the table certain papers which disclose the

fact that there are persons willing, not only to build this railway but also to build the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie if they are permitted to do so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): To the moon, if you believe them. They will say they will.

MR. LEAKE: If the hon. gentleman will condescend to make proper inquiry into this scheme I think he will find that the colony will be more likely to benefit from this enterprise than from his policy of public works. I am justified in saying that he would find that the company that have proposed to build this railway to Cue would take over the present Mullewa line, and pay the Government a percentage upon the cost of that line. There is this further advantage about this scheme which does not obtain in regard to the Coolgardie line: assuming that the Government would allow this line to be built by private enterprise, and would let the Mullewa line to the company, there would be no interference with the existing Government lines. As I said, that argument cannot prevail in regard to the line to Coolgardie. I will take the Premier's own words with reference to this Murchison railway; he gets somewhat lukewarm when he tackles that line, and is bound to admit that the arguments in its favour are not so strong as in the case of the Coolgardie line.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I don't think I said that.

MR. LEAKE: The hon. gentleman will probably meet me with this argument: if it will pay private persons to construct this line, it will pay the Government. I shall not be going far off the track if I give a positive negative to that proposition. Is the country so satisfied with the management of the present lines by the Government that it cares to entrust them with the management of an extra 400 miles? Have they shown themselves so capable in the past to manage the existing lines that we should blindly give them *carte blanche* to double the length of the present lines? I say no; and the sooner we relieve them of that management the better it will be for the country. The absence of political influence is another argument that may be brought in favour of private railways. Only this session we have had an instance of the political influence brought to bear

upon the Government management of their railways. Did we not on that occasion have a graphic description by the hon. member for Geraldton of his interview with the Commissioner of Railways when he introduced an influential deputation from Southern Cross to the hon. gentleman? Have we not had a debate in this House, and comments in the public Press, condemning the management of the railways by the Government? Surely it would be better in their own interest, and in the interest of the general administration of our railways, if the possibility of political influence were removed. If there is anything in the argument that if it will pay private persons to build a railway it will pay the Government, why not carry it out to its logical conclusion, and let the Government compete with private enterprise in all other industries?

MR. MORAN: Run the "pubs."

MR. LEAKE: Certainly; run the "pubs" for the benefit of the hon. member if he likes. Why should they not engage in agricultural pursuits? Why should they not engage in mining? Why should they not undertake their own shipping? If they can compete with private enterprise in railway management, why not compete with private enterprise in other avenues of industry? Why should they not speculate in mining pursuits, and so pay large dividends into the Treasury? Why should they not purchase steamers and carry on their own coastal service? If you are going to kill private enterprise in one direction you ought to do so, if you are logical, in other directions. If private enterprise pays, is not that the object of private enterprise? Is any member of this House going to embark in any venture if he thinks he is going to lose by it? What would be the result if these railways were built by private enterprise? It would relieve the country from further liabilities, and at the same time assist in developing the country's resources just as much as if these lines were built by the Government. Another advantage would be this: the investment of private capital in the colony by these people would be the means of introducing further capital into the country. Capital, we know, follows capital, just as a flock of sheep will follow their bell wether. Private capital



is the fertilising element we want in this country, and, if we can get it here, let us keep it here. The principle of private railways has already been recognised by the Government, and why this newborn objection to it? Have we not the Midland, and have we not the Great Southern line? Can we deny that the Great Southern line has done great things for this colony? What is keeping Albany going? The hon. member for Geraldton may laugh. The argument is a perfectly sound one. What is keeping Albany going? To a great extent it is that railway, built by private enterprise. The Midland, too; will not that connect two great centres of population? No one can deny that these are two great works capable of doing the colony a great deal of good. Of course I know the Government do not like any reference to the Midland. But there is no land grant in connection with this Murchison railway proposal, and no Government guarantee. Yet they will say that railway proposals which offer these advantages and these possibilities ought to be laughed out of the colony, or no attention whatever paid to them. It may be said that the Government may get into difficulties with these private enterprises; but can the Government not protect itself? It can protect itself, as will be seen on reference to the terms of these proposals. The country can protect itself by right of purchase, which is not the case with the two existing lines. Here there is a right of purchase, but no land grant, and there is no guarantee. It may possibly be argued from the Government benches that all sorts of trouble may arise. Of course their apprehensions on that score are based upon their experience of their troubles in the past. But whose fault was that? Not the fault of the principle which brings these railways into existence; it is inattention to detail in the preparation of the agreement. It is the failure of those who had to enter into the negotiations to fully appreciate the delicacy of their position and their duty to the colony, that such details were overlooked, and that the Government have been landed in difficulties. But cannot the legal acumen of the learned Attorney General protect us in these matters? It is a sorry compliment to him if his colleagues on the Treasury benches have to

admit that he cannot. What I advocate is to have State control of all lines, but avoid State management. That is the key of the position.

AN HON. MEMBER: How can you do that?

MR. LEAKE: You can control them either in your contract, or you can control them by present or subsequent legislation. If you do that, you protect the country. You can fix their freight rates, you can fix their rate of travel, and the number of trains they shall run per day; and you have a still further grip over them if you retain the right of purchase. In all these respects the promoters of the suggested undertaking say they are prepared to submit to the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Which promoters are you referring to? There are a good many of them altogether.

MR. LEAKE: I am referring more particularly now to the promoters of the Murchison line, those whom you were pleased to term impecunious adventurers. What are the further advantages that will accrue? Each of these companies, like those that now exist, will have their own private workshops, which means a little nucleus of population, and that nucleus of population means a nucleus of consumers. They do this also: they drain the choate masses of population that would otherwise flow into the centres of population, and distribute them about the country. Who can deny it would not be to the advantage of the colony to have these little industrial centres of population distributed amongst the various agricultural districts? We have these advantages already down at Albany; and we shall have them at Geraldton when the Midland is completed and in working order, and still more so shall we have them if the proposal to construct this Murchison line by private enterprise is approved of. So, too, will be formed the nucleus of a small manufacturing or labour centre at the goldfields, the terminus of the line. If these railways are in the hands of the Government, what is the result? Everything comes to Perth and Fremantle; everything tends to centralisation. It is this centralisation that we want to avoid, if possible. Each private railway company will help to develop its own district. We shall

hear of no battle of the rates, no political influence, no agitation for the removal of workshops, and all those little side issues which now crop up. Everything will go on smoothly and quietly, the private companies working for their own ends, and, as I said, being outside all political influence. Again, a railway built by private enterprise must depend upon private enterprise; and here we have the principle of co-operation in force. If private railways exist, they must, in order to exist, give facilities for the enterprise of others. They must exert themselves to create their own traffic, and to encourage traffic. They know they must not crush their own enterprise by fixing exorbitant rates; so that the possibility of freight rates being kept up at exorbitant figures will not prevail in this instance. They have this further crushing advantage over the Government railways—they can economise and save in the cost of management. They will be free and unfettered by political considerations. At present, with our Government lines, if a railway servant is dismissed, whether he be an engineer or a greaser, a porter or a stationmaster, there is a howl; and, perhaps, he brings the Commissioner into Court, or petitions Parliament, or gets the representative of his particular district to air his grievances in this House. The result is this: the Government have to be careful, and be very careful, how they organise their departments, because they are so afraid of public opinion and individual attacks that they will put up with inconvenience and loss at the public expense. The Government, freed from these difficulties, will still get the indirect advantages which economists tell us should accrue from the construction of railways, and they would obtain these advantages without incurring the initial expense. Is it nothing to this country to save £750,000? Is it nothing to this country to have to pay the annual interest upon that money?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who will pay it then?

MR. LEAKE: The companies will earn their own money to pay it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): And we are earning it.

MR. LEAKE: You earning it! Put your finger upon any of your railways

and show me where it is paying interest and working expenses. You know full well you cannot accept the challenge. I say the country will incur no risk at all, and the country will reap the advantages if these lines are built by private enterprise.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They would never be built.

MR. LEAKE: Why not? It is all very well for the hon. gentleman to beg the question in that way. That has been the refrain with him all along—they cannot get the money. If the hon. gentleman will condescend to court inquiry he will soon find that the money can be got, and that it is practically promised.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not believe it.

MR. LEAKE: I challenge him to allow this inquiry to be made by a select committee of this House, and, if he will be guided by the report of that committee, he will find that the money is forthcoming, and that the *bona fides* of the promoters is established.

AN HON. MEMBER: Like the Midland.

MR. LEAKE: Whose fault is that? Let the country members bear this in mind: under existing circumstances our railways do not pay working expenses and interest; and what is the result? That the deficiency has to be made up from the general revenue. It may be asked, what has that to do with country members? It simply means this: that the revenue is crippled, and that the expenditure of public money in their own districts is curtailed. Every time a member gets up to advocate some work of local importance he is met by the Government with the argument "We cannot afford it." Why cannot they afford it? Because, as a result of their excessive borrowing, they have to scrape all the money they can to pay the calls upon them for interest, and to make up the deficiency caused by their own mismanagement. I do not know whether members have taken the trouble to read through these proposals that have been made for the construction of these lines by private enterprise. Unfortunately the papers have not yet been printed, and I dare say members have not taken the trouble to examine into the scheme.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Which scheme are you advocating?

MR. LEAKE: Take the scheme proposed by Mr. Lush on the one hand, and by Mr. Tweedie and Mr. Sylvester Browne on the other. It is this: to extend our existing railway system from the end of the present lines into our goldfields. Not to build a speculative pioneering line, but to build a proper railway to established mining centres, to submit to proper control by the State, to submit to their freight rates being regulated by the State, and in every respect to conform with the existing railway regulations. Yet these gentlemen, who, you will see, comprise men of means and sound position—merchants, bankers, and so forth—were styled by the hon. the Premier, in his address at Geraldton, as impecunious adventurers. I say, sir, that is not only an insult to capitalists but also a rebuff to capital. It is an unwarrantable thing for the Premier of the colony to attack anybody like that, and to do so without giving them an opportunity to be heard in reply. Is it right that these proposals should not be submitted to Parliament? Are they not matters of public importance? Why should we be denied in this House an opportunity of discussing the *pros* and *cons* of these proposals? We, as the representatives of the people of the colony in this House, are not actuated by personal or sordid motives; we are here to do the best we possibly can in the general interests of the community, and, if we can get our railways economically built, surely there is nothing that can more certainly result in a lasting benefit to the country. The Premier, at Bunbury, said: "Whether a railway is built by a private company or by the colony, the colony has to pay both interest and profit." Well, that is a proposition he does not go on to explain, and I am afraid I cannot assist members in arriving at an explanation. This expression "the colony" may be used in two senses: it may be used in a general sense as applying to the aggregation of individuals which comprise the colony, or it may be applied in its limited or political sense as applied to the Treasury.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I meant the people.

MR. LEAKE: If he applies it in its general sense, I am afraid it does not assist him in the slightest degree; or if he applies it in its limited sense and means

that the money must come out of the Treasury, that is not the fact at all, because it comes out of the company.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I applied it in the other sense.

MR. LEAKE: Then it does not assist your argument in the least; so that I am suited either way. Look at the schedule of this Bill; what does it consist of? It is said this is a Bill to raise £1,500,000 for reproductive public works. That has been the great argument used during the recess by the Premier himself—that this is a loan for reproductive public works. What are reproductive public works? I take it he meant railways, and possibly telegraphs. Let us take him on his own ground, and you will find that, out of this million and a half, there is practically only a million for reproductive public works. Take the first five items out of the thirteen, and they come to about a million of money. Surely you do not call "Schools," and "Miscellaneous," and "Roads and Bridges" reproductive public work, in the usual acceptance of that term?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Why not roads and bridges?

MR. LEAKE: How much do you get out of them? You do not charge any toll rate. Nothing comes back into the Treasury. Your only reproductive works on this schedule are railways and telegraphs. This £1,500,000 means a direct annual payment from the Treasury of £60,000. The Premier says we can afford to pay that very nicely if the population increases. If these works upon which we are going to spend a million and a half of money are going to pay interest on the loan, it means that our railways and other works must earn 6 per cent. before they can pay any interest on the money, and, on the top of that, we have to make them pay working expenses. I say it cannot be done.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): How would your private companies make them pay?

MR. LEAKE: They would make them pay indirectly so far as the colony is concerned; and what do we care whether they paid the companies? What do you care what risks private enterprise chooses to run, so long as the colony is protected? If the hon. gentleman saw anyone on this side of the House go bankrupt to-morrow

he would not extend his commiseration to us any more than he would to the promoters of these private railways.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The railways would stop working then.

MR. LEAKE: If they do that you can insist upon forfeiture; and that is where you protect yourselves, and you get your railways for nothing.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have had enough of it.

MR. LEAKE: I say that with regard to these proposals, evidence of the *bona fides* of the promoters was forthcoming, but you would not have it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Whose proposals?

MR. LEAKE: Mr. Lush's proposals, I am only referring to that now. You have only favoured us with the papers in the others since the House met. What did these promoters offer as evidence of their *bona fides*? They practically forwarded £5,000 to the Government with their proposals; and they were prepared to submit to the imposition of a further sum if necessary, and they are now, I understand, prepared to pay a deposit of anything you like up to £20,000 if this House will consider their proposals.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then they will go and look for the money?

MR. LEAKE: They have got the money, or are in a position to finance it at once. Give them an opportunity of proving their *bona fides*, and do not flout their offer by this unceremonious rejection of their proposals, which on the face of them are honest proposals.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Mr. Lush told me he hadn't got the money.

MR. LEAKE: Ask him now. Mr. Lush does not run about with £5,000 in his pocket any more than you do. When you go into the loan market you must have time to make your arrangements with your financial representatives in London. I know it is difficult to "draw" the Treasury benches. We have tried the Commissioner of Railways, and we have tried the Commissioner of Crown Lands; both have been attacked upon the administration of their departments, but there was not a murmur from them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): I beg your pardon. I think you heard a slight

murmur from me, and a little more than a murmur.

MR. LEAKE: So we did; but it was only a kind of a purr—nothing like what we expected after such an attack. We want some arguments. I do not know whether they are afraid to speak, or whether they are not allowed to speak, but we heard nothing from them in defence of the allegations made against them. I challenge the Commissioner of Railways to get up and reply to the observations of myself and others in the course of this debate. Coming back to the schedule, we must admit, perhaps, that these two first railways are essential; but it is a moot point whether they should be built by private enterprise or by the Government. I say if we can save expenditure to the country and the ultimate risk of having to pay working expenses, and the interest on £750,000, surely to goodness it is common sense to do so? I do not know whether members keep their eyes and their ears open, too. If they do, and hear what practical men of experience say outside the House, they will have heard that they cannot understand why such proposals as these are rejected.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who are they?

MR. LEAKE: Who are they? For one, I might name a banker in Perth, and a banker for whom you have got the greatest possible respect. To leave this subject for a moment—I know I have very nearly convinced the Treasury benches, but I will let them see they have not convinced me—I come to another item on the schedule, the railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown. I am bound to confess that this is about the only item in this schedule that I feel I can congratulate them upon. There can be no doubt that one of the strongest arguments in favour of that line is this: that at the present moment the line has stopped short of all settlement, and it would be a mistake not to extend it by the expenditure of the small sum of money proposed; for, comparatively speaking, I may say that this £80,000 set down for this work is small. If the reports as to the fertility of this district are true, or founded on fact, we must admit that it is a fine agricultural district, capable of producing a great deal. I am perfectly certain that on that point the

Commissioner of Railways will agree with me; and I am pleased to be able to give my support to this Loan Bill to the extent of £80,000, out of this million and a half. With regard to the railway to the Collie coalfield, a point has been suggested to me by the hon. member for the Gascoyne, and I was very much struck with the point: we see the Government coming down with a proposal to build a line to a coalfield, which they say exists, and at the same time entering into a contract to test the value of that coalfield. They want this House to give them leave to build a railway, and they are only just finding out what coal they may have there. Should not that have been done long ago? Surely it ought. Until this House met we did not have any authentic report whatever upon the extent or possible value of this field to warrant us in swallowing this item. I say it shows a great assumption of authority or great confidence on the part of the Ministry, to ask this House to swallow such an item *hobus hobus* like this. I admire the discretion shown in the wording of this item—a railway to the Collie coalfield. They do not say where it is to go from.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Bill will provide for all that.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, yes. You want us to give you leave to raise the money first, and then you will tell us where the line is to go from. Is it going to run from the Brunswick or from Dardanup? I don't know. Perhaps they don't know themselves; at any rate, they won't tell us. Another particularly interesting item is No. 9—"Development of agriculture, including land purchase, clearing land, draining of land, market in Perth, and cold storage." Here we have the Government competing with private enterprise and entering upon commercial pursuits. Not satisfied with building speculative railways to speculative coalfields, they are going in for speculative land purchases—as if we hadn't enough land already. It is a pity the Premier did not go more fully into detail before he asked us to agree to this item. I do not wish to pass the item of "Harbour Works, Fremantle," without one remark. I am afraid that the majority is too great for me to hope to convince them of the inadvisability of this item; but it appears

to me at any rate to be going a little too far. The Government are asking too much for these works when they put down £200,000 for them in one lump. Surely one-half or one-fourth of that amount would suffice to go on with? These are my principal objections. I do not see that there is much to be got out of the later items on the schedule.

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

MR. LEAKE: I think £25,000 is too much for lighthouses.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): One is for Eclipse Island.

MR. LEAKE: Well, I think £25,000 is too much; it cannot be all intended for Eclipse Island. I believe the people of Albany would be perfectly satisfied with a little less. We are not an unreasonable people. I do not know that I have much more to say. I hope I have convinced some members of the advisability of accepting my advocacy of the introduction of private railways. It is an important question, and I ask members to consider it seriously. It is always easy to borrow when we have a pretty full exchequer, and when our revenue is exceeding our expenditure. But we know that depression follows prosperity as sure as night follows the day; and it is to guard against that period of depression that we should devote our attention at the present moment. I cannot agree, and I think this House will not agree, with the Premier, that it is not our duty to hoard up any of the revenue of the colony, but to expend it as we get it, for the public benefit; that is, we must live up to our means, and not put away anything for a rainy day. That is not true political economy. Let the Government, above all things, reduce taxation, I say; though I do not see how they can do it if they insist upon this policy of reckless borrowing. It is easy for them, on the Treasury benches, to revel while their day lasts, in glittering visions of prosperity, as they do; but it is their duty to the country also to have some regard for those who may follow them, and to provide for the future, and not leave it to those now on this side of the House to direct the colony through those gloomy days of taxation which must inevitably follow their reckless borrowing policy.

MR. RICHARDSON moved that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday.

The House divided on the motion, with the following result—

Ayes ...	...	...	9
Noes ...	...	...	20

Majority against ... 11

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. Burt
Mr. A. Forrest	Mr. Clarkson
Mr. Harper	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Paterson	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Pearce	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Throssell	Mr. James
Mr. Traylen	Mr. Keep
Mr. Loton (Teller).	Mr. Leake
	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Randell
	Mr. R. F. Sholl
	Mr. H. W. Sholl
	Mr. Simpson
	Mr. Solomon
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Lefroy (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

MR. WOOD: It is not my intention to address the House at any great length to-night. I was not quite prepared to take up the running at this stage, preferring to leave it until a later stage of the debate, after older members than myself had addressed the House. But as I have just been asked to fill the breach, I will say a few words with reference to this important measure. I think if ever a serious matter occupied the attention of a Ministry, if ever a responsibility was thrown upon any legislative body, that occasion has now arisen in the circumstances of unusual character in which this colony is placed, by reason of the demand made upon it in providing railways and other works for the development of its goldfields and of other resources of the country. Before we commit the country to this large expenditure, I think (in the words of the Premier the other night) it is our duty to ask ourselves—are these works justified, and can we afford to undertake them? We must all recognise that the condition of Western Australia has altered very considerably during the last twelve months, and, at the present juncture, it is of the greatest consequence to the future of the colony that the demands made upon the Government for providing means for the development of the golden wealth of the country should be met with promptitude and despatch. I refer more particularly to the Coolgardie line. This

work, it must be acknowledged on all sides, is a most important and necessary work. Recent developments on this field render it imperative that it shall be connected with the centres of population. So far as the Murchison goldfield line is concerned, I do not think that district is sufficiently developed to warrant the expenditure of nearly half a million of money upon this railway. Even according to the Premier himself, the grounds for entering upon this line are open to some doubt, the mines at present being in a very crude state. The country, too, is well supplied with water, and in that respect is not suffering from the disadvantages that the Coolgardie district is suffering from. I think the Murchison people might be well satisfied if we gave them an instalment of this line at present, extending it a reasonable distance from the present terminus, and I shall be prepared to support a large expenditure for this purpose. But I think it is premature yet to construct a line to the fields. Until the mines are more fully developed, and the auriferous wealth of the district is more fully proved, I think we should be content to go on steadily, and by degrees, and not incur the expenditure of half a million of money upon this one line at the present time. With regard to the line to the Collie coalfield, I think it is our duty to do all in our power to develop the mineral resources of the country. I suppose, sir, that never in the history of nations has any country been so suddenly blessed with so many good things as this once-despised colony of Western Australia. On the one hand we have gold, and, on the other hand we have coal found at our very door; and this coal is reckoned in value by many millions sterling. I think we should leave no stone unturned to put this rich deposit of coal to some practical use. It seems to me that Providence has at last turned the tide of fortune in favour of Western Australia; and it is our duty to take that tide at its flood. We shall then, perhaps, be led on to fortune. The item of harbour works at Fremantle is one that does not require much to be said to commend it to the acceptance of the House; for, I take it, that not a single voice in this House will be raised against it. It is a most necessary and useful work, and one that will bring us into

closer communication with the outside world. In my opinion, this is one of the best works that could be undertaken by the colony, and, I trust, it will very soon be carried to a successful completion. The remaining items on the schedule, including the Bridgetown railway, additional rolling stock, development of the goldfields, development of agriculture, lighthouses, telegraphs, roads and bridges, and schools—these are all works of more or less importance and necessity. But I wish to reserve to myself the fullest right of criticism with regard to them when they come before us in committee. I give no pledge at present, either one way or the other, with regard to them, but shall use my discretion as to how far I shall support them or oppose them. I shall be quite prepared to deal with each item of this Bill on its merits. Before closing these few remarks, I desire to compliment the Government upon the manner in which they have prepared their case; I think the Premier has put it before us in as complete a form as he could, and showed us that the position of the colony now, as compared with its position when the Government brought their first Loan Bill forward, has immensely improved. If his figures are only approximately correct, I think we do not run very much risk in accepting this further responsibility. We must remember that the Government have everything to lose by what has been called a reckless policy, as pointed out by the Premier himself; and I take it that the Premier, when he said that, represented the unanimous feeling of the Ministry. I have always given the Ministry credit for honesty of purpose, and I see no reason for modifying my opinion of them. I support the second reading of the Bill because I feel there is no other course likely to promote the advancement of the colony and the development of its resources. I do so, also, because I feel I should not be carrying out the wishes of the constituency that did me the honour of placing me in this House if I did not support a measure of this character. As I said before, I reserve to myself the right of criticising any particular items in the Bill when we go into committee upon it. With that reservation I cordially support the second reading of the Bill.

(Cries of "The Attorney General.")

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Unless the discussion is going to be concluded to-night, I do not see what is to be gained by any other member of the Government addressing the House at this stage. Members have been in possession of the views of the Government for a week or more, and the policy embodied in this Bill has been before the country for a considerable period longer; and I trust we shall be able to get through the second reading this evening. It is not a matter that to my mind requires very much further consideration, after the consideration that has already been given to it. The questions that are involved in the loan policy of the Government have been before the country lately on every platform from the North to the South; and surely members have made up their minds by this time as to whether it is advisable for the colony to go into the money market for another loan for this purpose? However, it is for members themselves to say whether they have had sufficient time for considering this measure or not. I do not know that I can add anything of value to the debate. I do not suppose the House will look upon me, holding the position I do, as one from whom they are likely to receive much information on the subject of public works; but I cannot resist from saying a word or two in answer to the very amusing speech of the hon. member for Albany. I do not know that I have heard anything in opposition to the Bill from any other member, and when we find that hon. member concluding his most instructive and amusing speech by telling us that he, for one, intends to vote for the railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown, I do not think the Government will find much difficulty in persuading the House to vote for the other items. The hon. member says he is in favour of private railways. He prefers, in lieu of the colony embarking upon another loan for the purpose of making railways to the goldfields and elsewhere, that we should revert to the old system of syndicate railways. Now, for my part, I most heartily deprecate any such procedure as that; and I do so for more reasons than one. We have had some experience with regard to private railways, or railways constructed by syndicates; and I say that, as men of

common sense, that experience ought to lead us to say we shall have nothing more to do with private companies. That is the lesson which our experience has taught us. First of all, we had what was known as the Hordern contract, to construct a railway from Perth to Albany on the land grant system. Were the funds for that railway raised without trouble? Is that company without its trouble to-day? Has it ever been without a difficulty in financing its affairs? I say no. From the very start, from the very initiation of that scheme to build a line of railway by a private company, there has been difficulty in financing the concern. It may be said that the first contractor, Mr. Hordern, unfortunately died in the early days of the scheme, and that may have had some bearing upon the want of success that attended the early efforts of the company to obtain the necessary capital. They did eventually succeed in obtaining the capital to build the line, and they have built it well and admirably, no doubt; and we are all satisfied with the result, so far as we are concerned. But I know for a fact that these gentlemen experienced in the London market very great trouble indeed in obtaining the money that was necessary for their purpose, not only for building the line, but also to equip it and to maintain it, and keep it in working order as it is at the present day. I know that the manager of that railway went over a considerable portion of England, not many years ago, endeavouring to sell the company's debentures to raise funds sorely needed at the time, and I believe he returned to London without having succeeded in raising a single sixpence outside his own directorate. The market in London does not take kindly to these schemes. It is all very well for gentlemen to come forward offering to do this, that, and the other, and say they can find the money. Our experience teaches us they cannot. If they do, it is only after years of tedious waiting. Certainly they cannot obtain the money as easily as the Government can find it. Then we had the Midland contract, ushered in about ten years ago, and not carried out yet. The first contract was with Mr. Waddington; and, when that contract was accepted by this House, what was the result at once? The hon. member for Albany says that

these people don't walk about with thousands of pounds in their pocket. No; but I know what they do walk about with in their pocket, and that is the contract. Mr. Waddington walked about for a long time with that contract in his pocket.

MR. LEAKE: Limit them to time.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I will come to that in a moment. How did that scheme succeed? We all remember how this Midland railway was started amidst a great flourish of trumpets, a grand luncheon at the turning of the first sod, and other ceremonies—simply puff; nothing behind it whatever. Did not these contractors tell us at the time the same old tale, that there would be no difficulty at all about the money? That is what they told us at that luncheon. "We have the money all right"—and no doubt they believed they could get it. But what was the result? We all know they could not get it, and the thing hung fire for years and years, until the money was at last obtained at a most exorbitant rate, and attached to it was no end of plunder—about £200,000, I believe, went in one direction or another. These matters can be explained, I know; still, the general impression was that there was a lot of plunder. How far did the company go after the money was raised before there was a collapse, until this House came to the rescue; and this railway is now being constructed, I may say, out of funds provided by the Government themselves, as it might have been years ago, and completed in half the time. That has been our experience with this private railway.

MR. LEAKE: That was a job.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): That was a job; and they will all be jobs, believe me. The hon. member says, "Limit them to time." It is all very well to say "Limit them to time," if we have the time to spare. But I say, with regard to this Murchison line and the line to Coolgardie, we have no time to spare. We want these lines put in hand at once. I believe my friend the Commissioner of Railways has already commenced the necessary surveys, and everything, I believe, is in preparation, if the money is voted by this House, without wasting any time at all, to see it through. What we desire



is to have these goldfields lines completed as soon as possible, to supply the want that is at present felt for an easy and rapid means of communication with these fields. It is all very well, I say, to talk about limiting these people to time. It is no good limiting them to time. The initial stage will be the surveys. What shall we say for that? Three months? We know the Government can do it in that time, and so get the work well in hand. But what would a private company do? The promoter would go to London with the contract in his pocket, to endeavour to get the money to start with; and he would work heaven and earth to compass his object. At the end of the three months he would telegraph out here that he was just on the verge of finding the money to commence the surveys—would we kindly give him another three months? That is what was done before, and that is what would be done again. We would probably say: "We cannot disappoint this man for the sake of two or three months; Parliament is not in session;" and we would give him another three months to find the money for the surveys. That would make it six months. Then would come out another doleful telegram saying that the London market was bad for raising money just then. No doubt. The London market has been bad to raise money in ever since the Baring failure. Then we should have to extend the time for commencing the line itself after the money was raised for the surveys. We should then be in the hands of these private people, and there would be nothing for it but to extend the time; and we should have to come to this House and tell you that the company had asked for further time, and that we had been obliged to concede it, and we should find that, as a matter of fact, nothing had been done in twelve months. Say twelve months was the limit. Then we should be told by the hon. member for Albany, or somebody else, "Forfeit their deposit." That is all very well; but it is a most difficult thing to forfeit people's money in that way; it might be £5,000 or it might be £10,000. That is not what we want to do. We don't want to be forfeiting people's money; we want to get the line built. It would be no satisfaction to us to forfeit their money, and have to come to this House this time next year and ask

the House to sanction a loan for this railway. We should have lost twelve months, and perhaps gained £5,000. And how long would that £5,000 remain in the Treasury? You would soon see the promoter coming into the Treasury, pulling a long and sorrowful face, and pleading to have his £5,000 back again; and, no doubt, some hon. members of this House would accompany him, and tell us to let the poor man have his money back. He would tell us a long and sorrowful tale that the market was bad, stocks were depressed, and that he had been unable to find the money; and the end would probably be he would get back his deposit. What has become of other deposits? Given back. It does not suit the Government to keep £5,000 out of people's pockets; and, if one Government resisted it, you would find the next Government yielding. So you would have had all your time lost, and your energy wasted for nothing. Then the hon. member for Albany says, "If they don't work the line, seize it." I should like to see him at the head of a Government seizing any line of railway.

MR. LEAKE: Put me there and you will see.

MR. JAMES: He has more back-bone than your Government.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I say he would not attempt to seize it. He would be worried to death about it, and there would be appeals to Parliament, and in the end he would have to give in. We want these railways completed, and we don't want to waste time, and have all this humbug. Surely it must be apparent that if a private company can build a railway and make it pay, the Government can also do so. A private company must find the money to make it. They have not got it in their pocket. It is in the hands of the British investor, and they will have to show some very good prospect of being able to pay dividends from the profits attached to the undertaking before the British investor is likely to part with his money. The hon. member says there is no land grant asked for in connection with these proposals. Therefore, I say, these people will have nothing to pay any dividend with except from the profits. If these people can raise the money on the strength of these problematical

profits from a railway not yet built, how much easier will it be for the Government to raise it with the whole of the consolidated revenue of Western Australia for all time at their back? Surely that will fetch the British investor sooner than Mr. A. or Mr. B. is likely to be able to fetch him, hawking this contract about. I say these people would not get sixpence in the London market. They say the money is available. Don't you believe it. It is all twaddle. I saw enough of that myself when in the London Agency office some years back. Several gentlemen waited upon me in connection with the transcontinental line, when that scheme was passed by this House. There were plenty of company promoters about then hawking the concession about; and several gentlemen called upon me to know how far these people were to be credited. They all said they were ready to plank down their £30,000 deposit if they got the contract; but, when you came to ask them for it, they told a different tale. Surely if we want these railways to our goldfields, as we all agree we do, we want them built at once, and completed in the quickest manner possible, and that can only be done by the Government themselves going into the market with the security they can offer, which is infinitely better than any security that can be offered by these people. I do not blame private people for writing to the Government, as some have done, asking "Have you got any land grant schemes on now? If you have we shall be glad to have a look at them." You can't blame these people; but I say we want to have nothing more to do with them. The hon. member for Albany says if the company goes into bankruptcy we must have no compunction, but seize the line. As I said before, it is practically impossible for the Government to seize a railway of any description without paying compensation for it. I should like to know where such a thing was ever done as the Government of a country calmly seizing the property of people in England or elsewhere who had subscribed the money to build that railway? Is it conceivable that any Government could for a moment think of stepping in and seizing these deluded shareholders' property without paying any compensation whatever? I say it is impossible. I trust we

shall hear no more about this building lines of railway by private companies, especially when we find that all they ask for—as the hon. member puts it, naively, in order to induce us to listen to him—is simply the bit of land on which the line is built. I say that settles the question at once. If all that is asked for, in return for building this line, and if all that is needed to attract people to invest their capital in it, is the result of working the line, in the shape of profits, then I say the course is cleared for the Government to raise the money, and to make these profits themselves. Besides all this, I say it is inadvisable to have the railway system of the country split up here and there, by having privately owned lines in conjunction with publicly owned lines. It is complained that we flouted the proposals of these gentlemen. Well, if it is so considered, call it flouting. I say the Government took the responsibility upon themselves of saying they could not seriously entertain these proposals, and that they did not consider there was sufficient in them to take up the time of Parliament in discussing them. If that is flouting, be it so. I do not know that I need say any more. I would not have risen to take part in this debate had the hon. member not made a great point of urging the House in favour of private as against State railways. I say, let us put an end once for all to that system. This is the only colony that has tried to build railways in that way, even on the land-grant system; but here we have a proposal which does not contemplate any land grant at all, and which, in my opinion, is worse still. Let us keep to the one system—build our railways with borrowed money, and let the State own the lines from one end of the colony to the other. I will say no more.

MR. RICHARDSON: Justify the items on the schedule.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): That is an easy task. Take the first item, this railway to the Murchison; does that want justifying? Does not everyone admit that it is a necessary work? Then comes the line to Coolgardie; does that want justifying? No. These two lines alone, surely, sufficiently justify themselves—two lines running to the richest goldfields in the world (if I am allowed to say so).

These two railways alone justify the Government in introducing this Bill. Then there is the railway from Donnybrook towards Bridgetown. I say in justification of that, that the hon. member for Albany is going to vote for it. What more need be said? The hon. member who is so discriminating as to all the other items, and who has been telling us all about the evils of our system of constructing public works, when he comes to this item, he swallows it at once. Even if the State builds it, this will be a good line. It was a pleasure to listen to him describing the richness of the country to be served by this railway. If anything more were wanted, we heard to-night a petition read from the residents of the district informing us that the soil and climate are not to be equalled in any part of the colony. Then there is another item—the railway to the Collie coalfield. I am surprised at any member questioning that item. It is said that the Government are only testing this coalfield now, and we are blamed for it. If we had not taken some steps to test it, to show the extent of coal in that locality, it would have been thrown in our teeth at once. We would have been told that we had given the House no information, and that we had not put down a single bore to test the field. Yet because we are doing that, so as to bring conviction home to hon. members, by demonstrating to them the existence of this coal, we are twitted now with taking steps to ascertain whether it is likely to be a permanent coalfield or not. As to the quality of the coal, we have already used it, and are using it, and we find that coal can be raised at the pit's mouth at 9s. a ton, or even less.

MR. SIMPSON: What will you do with it when you get it?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): What do other people do with coal? Burn it, I believe. We are not going to eat it. Unfortunately the magnitude of the gold discoveries at Coolgardie have quite overshadowed our coal discovery. In my young days, I used to hear level-headed men in this country saying "Bother the gold, so long as we find coal." And here we have a coalfield; and, I cannot believe for a moment that members will object to this item. Another item is additional rolling

stock for our railways. That is an item no one can question the necessity of.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It's a standing dish.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): It always will be a standing dish. Then there is the item "additional improvements to opened railways."

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That's another standing dish.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Of course it is a standing dish. It only shows the progress and prosperity of the colony. Then we have £200,000 for the harbour works at Fremantle. Can anyone gainsay the utility of that expenditure, and the absolute necessity of it? This House is committed to an expenditure of £800,000 on these works, and we have only spent £100,000 yet, and we now ask for £200,000 more. This item will appear again and again, until the work is completed. This is not the last of it by any means. Then we come to another item: "Development of goldfields and mineral resources."

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That's another standing dish.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): And a good dish, too, when members are crying out, and justly crying out, for water for our goldfields, for postal facilities and telegraph facilities, and other works. At any rate, the money is very easily spent. Then we have No. 9, "Development of Agriculture, including land purchase, clearing land," &c. Are we not to develop agriculture at the same time that we develop mineral resources? If that is conceded, what is the objection to the item? No. 10 is "Harbour works at Geraldton, including extension of jetty," and the next item comprises harbour and river improvements in various parts of the colony, also jetties and dredging; then come "Lighthouses, £25,000." These items, 10, 11, and 12, make up £75,000; all for very necessary works, and I am sure no hon. member will vote against them. Item No. 13 is a small sum of £20,000 for telegraph extensions; then follow roads and bridges, schools, and miscellaneous. Having been invited to consider this schedule, I really do not see a single item that any hon. member can object to. If I were in opposition I should find a

difficulty in choosing any item in the schedule to oppose. The main items are, of course, the goldfields railways, which will "go without saying." The railway from Donnybrook towards Bridgetown, which the hon. member for Albany is going to carry for us, and the other items, are what we may call consequential on the making of railways to the goldfields; and I think this is a very moderate schedule for the Government to bring down at this period of our prosperity as a colony. I wish this were the last Loan Bill I could see; but I am afraid there will be a run of loans, because we must find facilities for the development of the country in order to keep pace with the times. We feel all through the Government departments the absolute need of expenditure in all directions, which the heads of departments find it is almost impossible to resist. As the population expands in the country I find, even in my small way as head of a department, that I am asked to provide courts and quarters for Resident Magistrates in various places. So also with the Commissioner of Lands and the Commissioner of Railways—they are asked to provide those facilities and conveniences which the people, and especially those who have been accustomed to such things elsewhere, expect and require here. We know there is a large demand on the Government purse in all directions; and we know that people, instead of depending on private enterprise, look too much to the Government. Gold discoveries attract men to new places on the fields, and they have to be followed up. If a new rush takes place to Siberia there is at once a demand for more Government expenditure—as I read lately in a newspaper, a miner complained that he had been three weeks at a new rush, and there was absolutely no post office and no telegraph. That is the view people are taking of the responsibilities and duties, and obligations of the Government; and if we are to perform them to some extent, we must make some move such as we have proposed in this Loan Bill. Under these circumstances the schedule of works is really a moderate one, and I think the House will not demur to the second reading of the Bill.

MR. RICHARDSON moved that the debate be adjourned until the following Wednesday.

Question put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:54 o'clock p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 28th August, 1894.*

Mount Barker Schoolhouse—Agricultural Bank Bill: first reading—Homesteads Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Expenditure upon Goldfields—Expenditure upon School Buildings—Excess Bill, 1893: second reading—Patents Bill: in Committee—Defence Forces Bill: second reading: in Committee—Municipal Institutions Bill: further considered in Committee—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### MOUNT BARKER SCHOOLHOUSE.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works—(1.) Whether the schoolhouse at Mount Barker had been completed; and, if so, when? (2.) Was the schoolhouse taken over by the Minister for Education before its completion; and, if so, was this done without the consent or against the advice of the District Board?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—(1.) The schoolhouse at Mount Barker was completed on the 20th July last. (2.) It was not taken over by the Minister of Education before its completion.

#### AGRICULTURAL BANK BILL.

Introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST, and read a first time.