

AYES.

Mr. Connor  
Mr. Daglish  
Mr. Diamond  
Mr. Doherty  
Mr. Reid  
Mr. Throssell  
Mr. Rason (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Butcher  
Mr. Ewing  
Mr. Gardiner  
Mr. George  
Mr. Gordon  
Mr. Gregory  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Hassell  
Mr. Hastie  
Mr. Hayward  
Mr. Hicks  
Mr. Holmes  
Mr. Hopkins  
Mr. Hutchinson  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. Jacoby  
Mr. James  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Kingmill  
Mr. Leake  
Mr. Monger  
Mr. Morgans  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. Nanson  
Mr. Oats  
Mr. O'Connor  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. Reside  
Mr. Smith  
Mr. Speight  
Mr. Taylor  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Yelverton  
Mr. Wallace (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question (to support the action of the Government) put, and passed on the voices.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 2.30 o'clock a.m. (Thursday) until the afternoon.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th July, 1901.

Address-in-reply, Presentation—Paper Presented—  
Question: Railway Station at South Quay, how sanctioned—Question: Caves in South-West, to protect—  
Question: Lighthouse at Cape Naturaliste, to erect—  
Question: Engines and Wagons, Purchase from Contractors—Question: Drainage Board, Canuing—  
Question: Explosives Magazine, site—Question: Railway, Owen's Anchorage to S.W. Railway, survey—Question: Military Contingents, Saddles Defective—Loan Bill, £3,500,000; first and second readings (adjourned)—Return: Indent Orders sent—Return: Indebtedness, particulars—Return: Sparks on Railways, Claims for Damage—Return: Agricultural Areas in S.W., particulars—Return: Expenditure in Departments (5)—Return: Revenue from Lands and Railways—Motion: Saw-Milling, Eight Hours, to legislate—Motion: Rabbit Incursion, to carry out recommendation (adjourned)—Motion: Prospecting Parties, to assist—Motion: Asiatics Competing in Trade, to prevent (Amendment passed)—Motion: Branding Stock, to legislate—Motion for Papers: Kurrawang Wood Syndicate—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION.

At fifteen minutes to five o'clock the SPEAKER, accompanied by honourable members, proceeded to Government House to present the Address-in-reply to the opening Speech of HIS EXCELLENCY; and, having returned, the SPEAKER reported that

HIS EXCELLENCY had been pleased to reply as follows:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—I thank you for your Address-in-reply to my opening Speech, and for the assurance of your desire to deal with all questions that come before you in such a manner as to promote the advancement and welfare of this State.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL TREASURER: London Agency, statement of operations.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION — RAILWAY STATION AT SOUTH QUAY, HOW SANCTIONED.

MR. McDONALD asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether the Railway Station on the South Quay, Swan River, Fremantle, had been erected without Parliamentary sanction; and, if so, by what authority the work was executed. 2, Out of what funds the

payment for the work had been made. 3, When was the work completed. 4, How many passengers per month had booked at this station since its completion. 5, Whether any officers or railway employees are engaged at this station; and, if so, what rate of pay did they receive.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: 1, It has not been customary to obtain Parliamentary authority for extra stations, when funds have been provided for additions and improvements to open lines. In this case the work was considered urgent by the late Government, and they anticipated Parliamentary authority in regard to the excess of the Loan Vote caused by this and other works. 2, From an advance made by the Treasury in anticipation of fresh Loan Bill. 3, The work was completed on the 22nd June. 4, The number of passengers booked at this station is shown on the attached list. 5, The Fremantle passenger staff are utilised to perform the necessary duties at the South Quay Station.

Month.	Number of Passengers.
1900.	
November ... ..	679
December ... ..	441
1901.	
January ... ..	502
February ... ..	518
March ... ..	352
April ... ..	674
May ... ..	256
June ... ..	358

#### QUESTION—CAVES IN SOUTH-WEST, TO PROTECT.

MR. WILSON, on behalf of Mr. Yelverton, asked the Premier: Whether anything was being done to open up, protect, aid their natural attractions, and render accessible to the public the famous caves between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin; and if so, what?

THE PREMIER replied: Yes; two caretakers have been appointed. The caves have been placed under the management of a board, and tracks are being cut to the principal caves, the entrances to which have been closed, and the underground passes are being opened up.

#### QUESTION—LIGHTHOUSE AT CAPE NATURALISTE, TO ERECT.

MR. WILSON, on behalf of Mr. Yelverton, asked the Premier: Whether it was the intention of this Government to urge upon the Federal Government, in view of the disasters to shipping that occasionally occurred on our seaboard, and especially so in the neighbourhood of the Murray Reefs, to, at an early date, erect a first-class light upon Cape Naturaliste, and generally attend to the better lighting of the coast of Western Australia.

THE PREMIER replied: An indent was sent to England at the beginning of the year, and the class of light is still under the consideration of the Admiralty. Representations will be made to the Federal Government urging the necessity of completing the work.

#### QUESTION—ENGINES AND WAGONS, PURCHASE FROM CONTRACTORS.

MR. WILSON, on behalf of Mr. YELVERTON, asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1. Whether it was correct that two Class "A" locomotives and about 25 Class "J" wagons were bought by the Government from the contractors for the Mullewa-Cue railway. If so, at what price. 2. Whether these two engines and the wagons, or a portion of them, were afterwards sold. If so, to whom, by whose authority, and at what price. 3. Whether they, or a portion of them, were afterwards thoroughly repaired in the Government Locomotive Workshops, and what was paid for these repairs. 4. Whether these engines and wagons, or a portion of them, were now being hired by the Government; if so, from whom; where they were now being used, and at what rate of hire.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: 1, The Government took over from the contractors for the Mullewa-Cue railway two locomotives and 28 vehicles of various descriptions, including 20 wagons, the price paid being £1,860. 2, The two engines, 18 wagons, two old brake vans, and one ballast plough were sold to Mr. W. N. Hedges on the authority of the late Government, on the recommendation of the Chief Mechanical Engineer and the General Manager—the engines at £1,100 for the two, and the wagons, etc., for £420. 3, The engines

were repaired sufficiently to permit of their use on bush lines, this being one of the conditions on which the sale was effected. A few small alterations were made to the wagons, etc., to render them safe for running over the Government lines from point to point, but these were carried out at Mr. Hedges' expense. 4, One of the engines and 17 of the wagons are now being hired from the Goldfields Sawmill Firewood Company for use for construction purposes on the Menzies-Leonora railway line, the rate paid for such hire being £3 per day for the engine, and 3s. per day for each wagon.

#### QUESTION—DRAINAGE BOARD, CANNING.

MR. RASON, on behalf of Mr. Gordon, asked the Premier: 1, Whether the Canning Drainage Board was properly formed and constituted under "The Drainage Act, 1900." 2, Whether the said Board had applied for assistance under that Act. 3, Whether there was any official record of the sum of £500 having been promised this Board.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Yes, and the approval of the Governor in Executive Council of the expenditure has been obtained.

#### QUESTION—EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE SITE.

MR. McDONALD asked the Minister for Works: What steps were being taken to provide a new, safe, and convenient site for the explosives magazine now at Owen's Anchorage.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Considerable difficulty has been experienced in selecting a suitable site for these magazines. Various localities have been suggested, but, on consideration, found to be unsuitable. The Perth and Fremantle Chambers of Commerce have been asked to express their opinions on the question of a new site, and as soon as replies are received, the matter will be farther considered by the Government.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAY, OWEN'S ANCHORAGE TO S.W. RAILWAY, SURVEY.

MR. McDONALD asked the Commissioner for Railways: 1, Whether the trial surveys for the extension of the railway

at Owen's Anchorage to connect the same with the South-Western railway were yet complete. 2, If so, whether the reports would be laid on the table of this House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes; 2, Yes, in the course of a few days.

#### QUESTION—MILITARY CONTINGENTS, SADDLES DEFECTIVE.

MR. NANSON asked the Premier: 1, Whether the Government is aware that the saddles supplied to the fifth and sixth contingents sent from this State to South Africa were condemned by Lord Kitchener, and portions of them burnt by his orders. 2, Who were the officers supplying the specifications on which these condemned saddles were built, and what was the price paid for these saddles. 3, Whether the Government will obtain a report from the officer responsible for the proper manufacture of the saddles, as to how the design and workmanship were such as to compel the destruction of the saddles in South Africa. 4, What is the total loss to the State through the condemnation of these saddles.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, The saddles were condemned by Lord Kitchener, but no report has been received that they were burnt. 2, The specifications were supplied by the Military Department, but could not be executed to pattern, owing to want of necessary materials. The price paid was £8 per saddle. 3, Yes; a report will be obtained. 4, The cost was borne by the Imperial Government.

#### LOAN BILL, £3,500,000.

##### STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

##### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS (MOVED).

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): In rising to move the suspension of the Standing Orders, for the purpose of introducing the Loan Bill in accordance with His Excellency's Message, I just wish to say that I have no desire to hurry the House in connection with this matter. But I do want to get, at any rate, as far as the second-reading stage, so that the matter may be placed fairly before the House. I trust there will be no opposition to the motion. I move the suspension of the Standing Orders for the purpose of

allowing the Loan Bill to be carried through all its stages in one evening.

Question put and passed, and the Standing Orders suspended accordingly.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER farther moved that His Excellency's Message be agreed to.

Put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Bill introduced by the COLONIAL TREASURER, and read a first time.

#### SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I desire to move that the Bill be read a second time, and in doing so I wish it to be distinctly understood that, although I have asked for the suspension of the Standing Orders to get to this stage of the Bill, I have no desire to push the matter unduly. There are, however, certain considerations which I would commend to the attention of hon. members. Our financial advisers inform us that it is desirable, if we are to approach the London market, that we should do so as early as possible, at any rate before the 20th of the present month. This arises from the fact, which perhaps hon. members well know, that a very large sum of interest is paid during this month on a sum estimated at £320,000,000 to £350,000,000, and this interest falls or a large proportion of it falls due in January and July. As a consequence these months are the most favourable for making financial arrangements. I am pleased to say that the Bank of England rate has fallen to 3 per cent., and we are advised that probably it will fall to 2½ per cent. at an early date, so that the time we propose to approach the London market I hope will be favourable for our purpose. In the Press and elsewhere there has been a considerable amount of controversy as to what the exact figures of our loan authorisations and indebtedness really are. I have taken a considerable amount of trouble to get these figures in a popular form, and in order to assist hon. members I have had the figures I propose to deal with to-night printed on a slip which is now being handed around, and I hope this will be of assistance to members

while we are dealing with this important question. First of all I want to deal with the existing authorisations and to show our position at the present time. I may say these figures are accurate; they are taken from our own books and documents, and are to be thoroughly relied upon. Going back to the history of our loan policy we find that prior to the passing of the Consolidation Act of 1896 we had loans authorised to the amount of £4,766,000. Before this Consolidation Act was passed, loans were strictly made for the specific works to which they belonged, and if any works required special votes for any excess, special appropriations were required. Under the Loan Act of 1896 these funds were consolidated and the Treasurer was enabled to deal with loans as a whole; hence there is a distinct line between the loans raised before the passing of the Consolidation Act and since. I say that before the passing of this Act we had authorisations to borrow £4,766,000. Since that Act was passed this House has passed authorisations and votes to the amount of £8,570,000, making a total of £13,336,000. We had certain bonds out at 6 per cent., which, by arrangement, were exchanged for 4 per cent. inscribed stock; and that exchange involved the issue of some other bonds covering the advances which were arranged, and amounted to £4,929 11s. 3d., so that the whole authorisations up to the 30th June, 1901, total £13,340,929 11s. 3d. Now the next item I desire to call the attention of hon. members to is the gross public debt on the 30th June, 1901, and in order to arrive at that we take the debentures that were in circulation on that date amounting to £324,800. Then we take the inscribed stock that has been raised in London, and the properly raised moneys on inscribed stock, having long currency and covered with a sinking fund, which at the end of 43 years is expected to repay the loan; inscribed stock raised in London, £10,331,929 11s. 3d.; but we have a local Inscribed Stock Act by which the Government may issue to municipalities and local bodies certain bonds for the purpose of securing their trust funds and other funds of that character. And in connection with this and the Savings Bank funds, there has been issued a sum of £1,052,700. I

want hon. members clearly to understand that these are trust moneys. As it is almost impossible in this State at any rate to issue the whole of the funds, or a proper proportion of the trust funds on which we have to pay interest in the Savings Bank, it has been found inconvenient, indeed impossible to lend the whole of this sum of money on fixed mortgages. The Government have instituted a system, whether right or wrong is for members to say, of issuing inscribed stock to the Savings Bank, practically absorbing the funds of the Savings Bank as far as it has been safe to do so, and to pay the Savings Bank  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for the money, while we had to pay  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in some cases and 3 per cent. in other cases to the depositors. If the money were invested, the Government would have to pay the interest to the depositors all the same. Then we have Treasury bills which fall due this year in December, 1901, amounting to one million sterling; so that the present gross debt on the 30th June is £12,709,429 11s. 3d. If to this we add the unraised balance of authorisations, £537,300, and debentures which have been redeemed, old debentures to the amount of £94,200, which total £631,500, we get the gross amount of £13,340,929 11s. 3d. I think members will see that by putting the figures in this form they are absolutely reliable; they absolutely balance, and they are the figures on which we base our calculations and base the Bill which we ask members to consider to-night. To obtain the net debt on the 30th June, 1901, we must deduct from the gross debt of £12,709,429 11s. 3d. the accrued sinking fund on June 30th, 1901, which amounts to £429,226 14s. 7d.; so deducting this amount gives a net debt on the 30th June, 1901, of £12,280,202 16s. 8d. It must be remembered the sinking fund is not available except for the redemption of loans; hence we have to pay interest and the sinking fund on the gross debt. Hon. members have been accustomed to hear these figures of the sinking fund deducted from the debt of the State; and while that is true as an absolute balance, it is not a fair deduction when we come to deal with the liabilities of the State. We have no control of the money; it is passed into the hands of trustees for a specific pur-

pose, and so we have to pay the interest on it just as if we owed it; so that for particular purposes we have to deal with the gross debt and not the net debt. I have given the figures which show the net debt to 30th June. The interest paid for the last financial year was £415,984 0s. 5d., the sinking fund £70,815 18s. 5d.; so that the liability last year for interest and sinking fund amounted to £486,799 18s. 10d. Now I desire just at this point to call the special attention of the House to a most important matter that affects the finances of the country, and will affect them for some years to come. The sinking fund on the Coolgardie Water Scheme is arranged in the Bill at 3 per cent. repayable on the whole amount in four years from the day of the first issue of the loans in connection with that scheme. The effect of this is that on the 15th January of next year—that comes into this financial year—the revenue will have to provide the sum of £75,000 per annum for sinking fund. In addition to the £75,000 per annum, the probable annual interest on the money raised will be £100,000. Hence we have to provide out of revenue, in addition to this £486,000 for interest and general sinking fund, the £75,000 for the water scheme sinking fund, and farther interest on loans in connection with that scheme. The charge on the revenue for the Coolgardie Water Scheme will be £175,000 per annum, or thereabout. Hon. members have heard much about this Coolgardie Water Scheme, about the benefits it is to give to the State; and all the time a fixed price has, in the public mind, been arranged. It has been published from platforms, in the speeches of the Treasurer, and in the Press, that the fixed price for the water shall be 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons when delivered to the people on the fields. Now I wish particularly to call the attention of hon. members of this House to an extract from a report—Parliamentary paper No. 10—of 1896. This is a report from the Engineer-in-Chief, dated July 17th, 1896. Paragraph 43 reads:—

The estimated price at which the water can be delivered, viz. 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, is simply an arithmetical resultant from the total estimated working expenses per annum, on the basis that five million gallons (on the average) will be sold, daily, during 365 days in each year.

Now I want hon. members to grasp that. Before the scheme will pay expenses at 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons, five million gallons of water must be sold uniformly, every day, for 365 days in the year. (A MEMBER: And that is absolutely impossible.) Hon. members will at once see that if our total supply be only five million gallons a day, it is an utter and absolute impossibility to sell, uniformly, an average of five million gallons a day for every day in the year. Then the same paragraph of this report continues:

It is only right to say, that this result would not accrue if the five million gallons per diem failed to be sold for several days running.

I want hon. members to grasp the position, because I do not know anything more important to this House at the present moment, and more important in dealing with the Loan Bill, than this question. In this estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief which was laid before the Government, it is definitely stated that there must be sold five million gallons per day; and if that quantity failed to be sold for several days running, the whole scheme would fail to cover its cost and expenses. The report continues:

As the estimate only provides for a storage reservoir at Mt. Burges capable of holding two or three days' supply.

I want hon. members to grasp the importance and the seriousness of that statement. The present scheme provides for a storage capacity at Coolgardie of only two or three days' supply; so that, supposing we could sell 15 million gallons on one day, or perhaps for a few days together, we should be unable to supply our customers at the rate of 15 million or even 10 million gallons a day. We could not possibly do so, because the greatest storage capacity we can have will be 20 million gallons. In paragraph 44, the Engineer-in-Chief says:

It is, however, proposed to keep all the reservoirs along the pipe line continuously full, by aid of the pumping main; and this would, to some extent, restore the balance, if the quantity available failed to be sold for more than two or three days at a stretch; as the working railways, for instance, could then use the water out of the reservoirs along the line, instead of taking it from the pumping main.

Hon. members will see that would be a very small portion of the quantity involved; and the main thing I wish to impress on the House is that this scheme proposes to

take the water to Coolgardie only, and the Engineer-in-Chief informs us it will cost 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons, provided we sell this five million gallons every day for 365 days in the year. Inferentially, hon. members will see that the mere carrying of the water from Mundaring to Coolgardie —

MR. HOPKINS: To what point in Coolgardie?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Mount Burges was mentioned in the original scheme, but the scheme has been altered, though the principle involved in my present address is not at all affected. The issue is the same, with some slight modification. What is involved in this: the country has been led to understand that the goldfields people are to get water at 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons. That has been dinned into the people from one end of the country to the other. Over and over again I and other members have called attention to the fact that there is no provision for reticulation. But the serious point is that, provided the scheme be successful—and last night the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) threw some very grave doubts upon the success of the scheme—assuming the scheme be successful, in two years' time we shall be in this position: we shall have water at Coolgardie which will have cost us 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons to get there, and the scheme as put before the country in 1896 by the Engineer-in-Chief assumed that the municipality would take this water in bulk from the Water Supply Department at 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons, or at some price to be fixed. I want to disabuse the minds of the people of this country of the idea that under this scheme they are to get water at Coolgardie for 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons. (A MEMBER: Hear, hear.) It cannot be done; and the sooner it is known and clearly understood, the better for this scheme and for this State. It is impossible to convey the water under these conditions as here mentioned; it is impossible to sell five million gallons a day for 365 days in the year, when your conveying capacity is only five million gallons a day. Another consideration of which I want hon. members to take particular notice is that there is no arrangement at all for reticulation. And in consultation with the

Engineer-in-Chief, he has informed me his idea was that some of the municipalities would form a trust, and take over the water from the Government at a price to be arranged. The cost would be 3s. 6d. a thousand, supposing the whole quantity were taken as fast as we could convey it. That would be the actual cost without any contingencies; and it was proposed that the municipalities, or some trust, should be formed to arrange for the reticulation, for receiving this water and delivering it to the people. Now such a body, be it a municipality, a trust, or the Government itself, must involve considerable cost to the consumer before the water can be delivered from Mt. Burges, or from any other place in which we locate it. And I say the people have been misled, because they were led to understand they were to get the water at 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons at their doors; and the people of this State must clearly understand that this price cannot possibly be adhered to. Then the next question which presents itself, from the Treasury standpoint, and which faces us to-night when we deal with this matter, is: we have to pay immediately £75,000 a year for sinking fund. The time is rapidly approaching when the greater bulk of the money will have been raised and expended upon this scheme; and it is hoped that the work, when carried to the point originally proposed by the Engineer-in-Chief, will be constructed for the two and a-half millions, or perhaps another £100,000 may be required. But, two years hence, this water is at Coolgardie; and what are we to do with it? We have to pay £175,000 a year, and we can get nothing back as a return from that scheme until we, by some reticulation scheme, can convey the water to the people who want it. That, to me, is a serious point. No provision of any kind has been made—there has not even been an estimate made—as to what is to be the cost of this reticulation. And more than that, there is not even yet a scheme propounded as to whether the reticulation is to be a Government undertaking, or to be undertaken by a board, or a trust, or whether we are to depend on the municipalities. Now I say, if we are to depend on the municipalities, we are to depend on a broken reed; and even provided the

municipalities took the responsibility, the Government would have to be behind them and be responsible for the money: consequently we must look at this Coolgardie Water Scheme as involving a considerable amount of farther expense. I have formed a very rough estimate: it may be near or far; but it is the nearest I can get from the figures of which I have been able to avail myself. It will take £350,000 for a reticulation scheme for Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and Boulder. It will take £150,000 more if this scheme is to be extended to the upper fields, as far as Menzies; and I think the country will not be satisfied with the scheme unless it go at any rate as far as that. So here we stand faced with another half-million of money. And mark this: that half a million of money must be borrowed upon the same conditions as previous loans; and supposing we can get it at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. at par—which is a question yet to be proved—and we have to pay 3 per cent. sinking fund on that money, we are again involved in  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or at any rate in 6 per cent. of further charge, in addition to this £175,000 a year. Hon. members will see that here is a very serious question. Our total revenue is large—over three millions of money; our railway proportion of that is over  $1\frac{1}{4}$  millions; and I think hon. members will see that as things stand to-day we are not likely to have a large railway surplus after paying interest and sinking fund in respect of that department. So that we stand with a revenue of £1,750,000, and out of that, after taking our present £486,000 for interest and general sinking fund, we have to take a farther £75,000 for the water-scheme sinking fund, and then these additional items of which I have spoken. We shall necessarily as time goes on have to deal with this question. We shall have to decide as soon as possible how this water is to be delivered, and I think members will agree with me when I say there is no possible hope, even with the reticulation scheme, of selling 5,000,000 gallons per day by this scheme, unless we increase the carrying capacity to Coolgardie. What the price will be to the actual consumer is more than I can forecast, and I hope this House grasps the situation, that it cannot be 3s. 6d. a thousand gallons. Proceeding with the

liabilities of this State at the present moment, members will notice that on the sheet circulated there is an item, "contingent liabilities." There has been a good deal of remark from time to time—indeed, I have remarked on the subject myself—that this sum of money was not clearly stated to the House. I find we have under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, bonds issued to the Savings Bank £52,788 3s. 2d., and under the Agricultural Bank Act, mortgage bonds issued to Savings Bank £94,000. This I call a contingent liability of £146,788 3s. 2d. I call it contingent because, as this liability is covered (by lands) and neither interest nor principal is (at present) a charge upon the general revenue, the liability is merely contingent. If, when all the transactions are closed and all lands sold and paid for, there should be a loss, the State will be liable, but not before. But as it is confidently believed that there will be a profit, which will come into the general revenue, this sum cannot be treated as a debt. That is the way I look at it. In order to get another grip and perhaps view of this important matter, I have had prepared a cash statement, which shows that the proceeds of loan authorisations (before 1896 Act), £4,766,000, realised £4,730,480 10s. 6d. The expenditure under these loans was £3,975,985 15s. 11d., leaving a balance which formed a nucleus of general loan fund of £754,494 14s. 7d. To this add the proceeds of loans and temporary flotations since 1896 Act, which amount to £7,820,543 6s. 3d., and we have a total of £8,575,038 0s. 10d.; but we must deduct what we have expended, and the expenditure up to 31st May, 1901, was £7,808,851 19s. 10d. And here I desire to call the attention of members to this point, that it has not been possible to get the expenditure on the loan accounts later than 31st May, so the actual cash in hand has probably been expended: it, in fact, has been expended during June, the balance of which I shall speak presently. As I say, the amount expended of our loan money borrowed up to the 31st May was £7,808,851 19s. 10d., so that the unexpended balance on the loan account on the 31st May—and I want members to grip the situation—was £766,186 1s. That is all the money we had, and that has since gone. To this add estimated

proceeds of unraised loan authorisations, £2,507,320, deduct temporary flotations, that is Treasury bills £1,000,000 (to which I have previously referred), and locally inscribed stock of £1,052,700, and we have a balance of £454,620. Practically this is the whole sum that the Government have at the present time power to raise without this Bill. I repeat I wish hon. members to grasp that situation. The total as from 31st May was £1,220,806 1s. This represents the total sum available under existing authorisations as on the 31st May, 1901. The total works on unauthorised loan schedules is £13,100,480 10s. 6d., of which there were paid for on 31st May, 1901, £11,784,837 15s. 9d., leaving a total to be yet paid for of £1,315,642 14s. 9d., but the cash available from all sources is only £1,220,806 1s., leaving an actual balance of £94,836 13s. 9d. as a deficit on the loan fund. Just to sum this up: The gross public debt on the 30th June was £12,709,429 11s. 3d.; the face value of unraised loans £2,590,000; the face value of loan required to cover above deficit £100,000; making a total of £15,399,429 11s. 3d. Deduct temporary raisings (to be redeemed from proceeds of unraised loans) £2,052,700; and the gross debt when scheduled moneys are expended will amount to £13,346,729 11s. 3d. The question has been asked in this country and in a good many quarters when the country would know what was the real position of the finances, and the Government entered office with a clear understanding that their first duty was to tell the people how we stood, and our next duty was to put these finances into proper financial order. Members will see that there is £2,052,000 not in proper financial order. In the first place, we find £1,000,000 in regard to Treasury bills due this year, and members can see that this is not in proper financial order, because when I speak of financial order I understand that the money is raised on inscribed stock for a long period, covered with sinking fund, which will extinguish the debt at the end of the time. That is what I understand by putting our finances in proper order. Then we have £1,052,000 of trust funds under locally inscribed stock. That money, although not immediately required, might be required, if money happened to be



needed in the Savings Bank in larger quantities than we expect. It might be required, but not necessarily immediately required.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You have alluded to that twice as trust funds. That is not all trust funds, I take it.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Every shilling.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It is not all trust funds. I know private individuals who invested in inscribed stock.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I am glad the hon. member interrupted me. There is an amount of £52,000 which is not trust funds, but £1,000,000 is trust money, and that £1,000,000 will require to be supplanted with inscribed stock at some date. There is no immediate pressure, but the finances will not be on a proper sound basis until that money is raised. I have deemed it necessary at this important time in our history—and I hope members will not think me tedious—to table figures that should be final, that should be looked upon with certainty, and as data upon which we may rely, at any rate as far as the position of this country is concerned. If members will turn to the schedule of the Loan Bill they will see what the Government propose to do with this three and a-half millions of money. During the debate on the Address-in-reply which we have just passed through we constantly heard that this work and the other work ought to be attended to. I want to call the attention of hon. members particularly to that schedule, and for practical purposes, speaking generally, I may say it contains no new works whatever. It simply is the completion and extension of works that are already in hand. I do not want to cast any reflections upon anybody. This country has grown, and the schemes which were looked upon as sufficient years ago have necessarily been extended and more money is required; but they are existing schemes which the present Government did not initiate, for which they do not desire to get any credit, but which it is their duty to provide for. The first item is the Boulder-Brownhill loop line.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Kalgoorlie.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: That is the way we have it from the Engineer-in-Chief. The sum that is

actually required for this work is £16,000. Members will see that the schedule shows £17,000, and this opens up a question which requires explanation, and in regard to which I hope I shall have the support of hon. members in the course I have decided to take. Hitherto it has been customary to put upon the schedule the amount required to do the work without any regard to the question of how much discount or how much expense was involved in raising the money; and so at the present moment we have between £200,000 and £300,000 as a floating debt or liability in connection with our loan policy that had no allocation to anything. It is paying no interest and it was not allocated to any work. The first thing I did on taking office was to instruct the Under-Treasurer to allocate the money (in proportion to the actual cost of raising the loan) to the specific works for which the money was raised. It seemed to me it was a mistake to leave that floating about in this way, and then come in for a special loan, for a special sum of money, to cover the discount in relation to times past.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS: You should not charge that to the Coolgardie Water Scheme.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The Coolgardie Water Scheme can bear its own burdens, or at least it will have to bear them. So that all down this list, as hon. members will see, the amounts vary from the actual sums required. The Engineer-in-Chief and myself in conference have arrived at the conclusion that it will take something like six per cent. on the whole to cover the cost of raising the money and general expenses in connection with the loans. At any rate we have come to the conclusion that we must make that provision. It will take about 5 per cent. perhaps; and this extra expense, of course, is represented by the extra amounts allowed in each case. So that the sums allotted here, these extra amounts all through the loan schedule, cover the cost of raising. Therefore we shall not henceforth be raising money to pay interest—a custom that we have disapproved of in the past. The Boulder-Brownhill loop line will cost, say, £16,000 to complete. I believe in the figures in the schedule hon. members will find that provision is made for raising

the money. The second item is the Menzies-Leonora railway, second instalment for construction. This, it is estimated, will complete the work. I ought to have said at the outset that the expenditure covers three years. Hon. members will see at once that it is not proposed to raise three and a half millions this year. That is not the idea. But I think hon. members will agree with me—I think I am correct in this—that it is necessary for us to make provision in the Loan Bill for the completion of works in hand. The “progressive” system of giving so much money to do so much work, to build a railway a certain distance, with the full knowledge that we must complete it, without making any provision for the future, and with the knowledge that it is no use until completed, is not a system that I am prepared to recommend this House to adopt. I say we must make provision for the completion of our works, and I have impressed on the Engineer-in-Chief the necessity for giving me estimates that will cover the cost of the work when completed.

A MEMBER: You are pretty liberal.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I wish also to say at this moment, for the information of the leader of the Opposition, that if he can see anything in this list that can be dispensed with it will be a very great pleasure to the Government to strike that out. If the House sees its way to dispense with any of these items—I may say that I have taken out a number of items that I thought we could perhaps wait for—I shall be very glad. All the works mentioned here are Government works which are in hand, and which we must complete, or mark ourselves as failures. Now, the policy of the Government is to complete works begun by the preceding Government. The task we have set before ourselves is to go on and complete these works. Some hon. member said during the debate on the Address-in-reply that the policy of the Government was a retrogressive policy. I consider it a very progressive policy, since we propose to go on with works which will take two or three years to complete, and which will require an expenditure of perhaps four millions of money before they are completed, in addition to our own expenditure from revenue, amounting to perhaps three

millions a year. I do not propose to dwell at any length on these items. There is the Menzies-Leonora Railway, £83,700; there is the Cue-Nannine Railway construction, £60,400; additions and improvements to opened lines, £318,000. The last may seem a somewhat large sum. £300,000 is the amount, and £18,000 represents the expense of raising the money. My friend the Minister for Public Works says the amount is very small, and I think if hon. members will look up back history and see what kind of votes we had to deal with in this connection in times past, they will say, too, that it is small. I have no desire to make this Loan Bill for more than is absolutely necessary for the works; but I am desirous of putting on the Loan Bill sufficient to complete the works: that has been my object. Then there is for rails and fastenings, £265,000; for rolling-stock, £742,000. I am told that the last amount is too small and that it ought to be £1,000,000. However £742,000 is the estimate. Then there is for the removal of the railway workshops to Midland Junction, £424,000; surveys for new lines, £10,600. Hon. members will see that last item under the heading of railways. That is a matter about which there can be very little discussion, I think, the completion of our existing railway projects and surveys for railways. It is necessary to have surveys for railways that happen to be in the future; it has been considered wisest and best to have these prepared. These amounts you will notice come to close on two millions of money—£1,920,700—required for the railways. The next item is harbour works; and I just want to make the remark that the original estimate for Fremantle harbour works was £800,000. Had we remained the people we were at the time the estimate was made, no doubt that sum of money would have built for us a harbour sufficient for our requirements; but we have been a growing people, with vastly increasing resources and greatly extending commerce, and consequently the scheme, that was to measure 800ft. at the outside, has been extended and widened to a breadth of 1,400ft. And it is not too wide, hon. members will say, even at that. Consequently, the scheme which was to cost £800,000—which sum of

money has been expended or nearly all expended—requires a considerable amount still for its completion. We require for the works themselves £250,000, or £265,000 with interest. The Fremantle dock and slip represent £265,000 more. Now, here is an amount which the hon. members for Fremantle may like to have struck out. If so, of course we shall know where we are; but I think this House and the country will demand that the work shall be done, and I consider it is the duty of this Government to face the situation and make provision to build the work which the people desire. Carnarvon harbour works, £8,500: now the member representing that district will perhaps say whether this sum is required or not. If he is prepared to stand up and move that it be struck out, he will make the Treasurer happy to that extent. Then there are the Albany harbour works. Hon. members may know, probably they do know, that these works are in progress. The weekly expenditure on them is close on £300; and it is proposed to continue the work until the desired end has been attained, namely allowing ships of deep draught to come into the harbour. To cover this expense, which will probably extend over three years altogether, we require the sum of £47,700. Then there are harbours and rivers—charges for various improvements to small harbours and opening up of rivers. There is an item here of £21,200 for lighthouses. Of course hon. members may say that item belongs to the Federal Parliament. That is true, and we hope to get this sum recouped; but at the present time we are liable for it, because we have in hand indents for the lights. We are liable in consequence; in fact we shall have to pay the money in London before very long. We may get the money recouped when the Federal Parliament takes up its obligations and relieves us of the care of the lighthouses; but in the meantime we have to make the necessary provision. Now, we come back to the Coolgardie Water Scheme. I have made the remarks I desire to make on that scheme already; but I do wish to impress with all my power on this House and the country that there is no possibility whatever of selling water to the people at Coolgardie for anything like 3s. 6d. a

thousand gallons. I want the people's minds to be disabused on that point. I also want to impress on the House that there must be some scheme of continuation. Either the municipalities must enter on the work, or some trust must be formed for reticulation, or, failing these, the Government will have to make the necessary provision. The Government have not yet considered the question; but it will be my duty to call their special attention to it with a view to deciding what must be done. We come, under the heading "Development of Goldfields," to an expenditure which always appears on our Estimates or in Loan Bills. I confess at once that I would like to put the whole of the £165,400 appearing under this heading on the Estimates and pay the amounts out of revenue, if it were at all possible. I promise the House, too, with the consent of my worthy friend who sits on my left (the Premier), that if, when I make up the Estimates, I have a surplus of £160,000 after providing for necessary works, I will ask the permission of the House to take this amount out of the Loan Bill and put it on the Estimates.

**THE PREMIER:** You are quite safe in promising that.

**THE COLONIAL TREASURER:** However, the amount represents work that we must do. It represents the opening up of tracks and the providing of water supplies on those tracks for the eastern goldfields, the Murchison goldfields, the Pilbarra goldfields, and other fields not enumerated. Then there is development. I hope my friend the Minister for Mines will allow out of "development" something towards supplying people with some diamond drills, for which they are crying out. I do not know what his estimate really is, but he will give the information. Then there is a sum here for a work which has been both successful and unsuccessful in this country—the erection of public batteries. Where there have been care and good management the batteries have been a success. Where we have hit on bad managers, the batteries have been practically a failure. Now, as a matter of administration, we want to get the same kind of managers and the same kind of management on the batteries that are not successful as we have on

the batteries that are successful; and I know that it is the intention of the Minister for Mines to endeavour to supply this want. However, we feel that we must make some provision for this work; and I do not think we provide for it out of revenue. I hope we may be able to, but in the meantime we make provision for it here. Now, the total amount for development on the goldfields involved in all these items of roads and water supply and various other things associated with development, make up a sum of £165,400. Then we have a vote here for development of agriculture, including drainage schemes. I am sorry that we have not been able to make this amount larger. I think we might expend a considerable amount in this particular direction; but I want to call the attention of members opposite to the fact that we have prepared a Drainage Bill, under which moneys may be borrowed from the Savings Bank or other sources for the purpose of supplying the requirements of the Drainage Boards which are to be created.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: No use.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: At any rate there is a section in the Bill empowering the boards to borrow money, and the Government will be prepared to assist these boards in every way to raise money for the purpose of drainage. However, we propose to provide £21,200 for this purpose. Under the heading of immigration, in which direction we do not intend to expend very much, there is an amount of £10,600. And then we come to an item which is inevitable in connection with these works, which cannot be altered unless we alter the schedule of works themselves—that is the departmental vote, which represents something like five per cent. of the total. That vote is to cover the salaries of the Engineer-in-Chief and his officers and the cost of all that pertains to the oversight of these public works. Then we come to an item, "Miscellaneous," and under this heading we have the whole of the arrears of discounts which belong to previous loans. We have made provision in our own estimate to cover this charge in what we deem to be a proper way; but there is an arrear. The last Loan Bill provided £200,000 for this matter; and here we have £106,000 more. This sum is necessary to make up the cost of discounts on

loans which have been raised, so that the amount may be at our disposal for allocation to the various works which should bear the cost of paying interest thereon. I have as briefly as possible, in as much haste as possible, and in as few words as I could possibly use for the purpose, put before the House the proposals of the Government in reference to this loan. I may say it is not intended to raise the money all at once. I am of opinion that in the present state of the money market, perhaps a million and a half is as much as we can raise annually; but if the conditions alter in our favour, I shall be only too pleased to find it so. I do not think it is safe for us to approach the London market for a larger sum than one million and a half in any financial year. I hope we shall succeed in getting a fair price for our loans. I do not suppose hon. members expect the Government to raise a loan in the present state of the London market at 3 per cent.; but we shall do our best, and see what the result is. I want just to call the attention of the House to two omissions in this Bill, items which I have taken out of the original proposals of the Engineer-in-Chief. Provision has been made in times past for water supply for Perth and Fremantle, and a deep drainage system. This deep drainage system is getting to be a little bit difficult. Our friends in Fremantle, rather contrary to their usual practice, have not drawn on this fund their particular half of the expenditure up to date, and they may as well consider the question as to what they are going to do, because Perth is spending its half pretty freely; and it is my intention to stop the vote as far as Perth is concerned when Perth has got half-way, in order that Fremantle may get its proper allocation. I consider it is absolutely necessary that there should be a water supply for Perth and Fremantle: this will cost not less than £400,000, possibly half a million. It seems to me we may constitute some trust: the Government have not had time to consider the question in form, but I say we may be able to constitute a trust, and make some arrangements for a board such as there is in Melbourne—a united board which will take charge of works in Fremantle and Perth and suburbs, and under a separate Bill powers could be

given to borrow so that the work can be constructed and handed over as a scheme; consequently I have not included the money for the work in the Loan Bill. I think members will see it is an item that should be taken into consideration when we talk of borrowing. Then there is the sewerage system. I do not know what the feeling of the House is, but for years past a great deal has been said on this question, and if a scheme is to be carried out this will involve a sum of £400,000, or perhaps £300,000.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It will cost more than that.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The late Director of Public Works, who should know, says that it will cost more; consequently my figures are within the mark. What shall we say? £600,000?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Five hundred thousand pounds.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Well then £500,000 for that work. Now the reticulation scheme, whichever way we take it, must cost £500,000 to get the water distributed to Menzies.

MR. WILSON: Is it intended to carry it there?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Well it was never intended to spend more than £800,000 on the Fremantle harbour works, but we are going to spend £1,400,000. There is no use in hiding our position: members do not expect me to do so. Members want to know how we stand, and unless it is said that the works in the loan schedule are not required or that the amounts can be reduced, we require three millions and a half to complete the works in hand, and there is no new work, no new proposal in the Bill. The only new proposal would have been the Fremantle and Perth water supply. We have to raise three and a half millions to carry out the works, and we must raise one million to redeem the Treasury bills: that will amount to four and a half millions. We need this money inside three years to complete our works, or else we shall have to suspend operations or slow down. We ought to put our finances in order to return the stock taken out of the trust Savings Bank fund.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The hon. member has referred twice before to that matter. It is not all trust moneys: there is only £400,000 of the Savings Bank funds.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. member is correct, so far. There is a sum of £200,000 belonging to the general public, but there is a sum of £380,000 for the Perth water supply.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: No; there is £580,000 on local inscribed stock sold to the people, not to the trust funds.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I think the hon. member is not correct, and these figures will show it. I have balanced them twice over on the cash account, and also on the authorisations, therefore I shall be pleased to find that we are in a better position. Assuming for the moment that I am correct—if I am incorrect so much the better—we have to redeem this one million of inscribed stock, and that brings me down to this, that we shall require to borrow, to put our finances in order, five and a half millions, not immediately, but within a reasonable time. Then there is the amount of £500,000 for water supply; £500,000 for sewerage if we carry the work out, that is another million; and we must get £500,000 somewhere to do the reticulation for the Coolgardie Water Scheme. That is imperative because you cannot get a pound out of the Coolgardie Water Scheme—we might sell a little water at Northam—but we cannot get a shilling out of the Coolgardie Water Scheme until we get a reticulation scheme behind it; consequently we shall have to raise that money. How do we stand? Three and a half millions; one million Treasury bills; one million redemption of inscribed stock; £500,000 water supply; £500,000 sewerage, and £500,000 for reticulation, which make a total of seven millions of money. Members of this House have stood up and asked the Government to do other works; they have complained that the Government have not proposed new works. I am prepared to lay before the House, and within a very little time, projects that ought to be carried out in this country, projects that would help and pay too, that would amount to another five or ten millions of money. Now, would it be wise? Is it within our power to do this thing? Is it not enough for the present Government, whose life may be a month, or a few weeks, or a few days for all we know—is it not quite sufficient for the Government to undertake to find money to complete the works

of former Governments and not propose new works? I have tried not to weary the House, but to give my facts as shortly as possible and to give them openly. I shall be glad to give any farther information I can which hon. members may desire, in Committee. I am not as closely associated with the figures as those gentlemen who were in the previous Government. The former Treasurer had been here for ten years; he had seen matters grow, and he had everything to his hand and in his memory. For myself I am not in that position. Hon. members say that this Government are not progressive. The Treasurer who occupied the position I hold has stated for two years running that the limit of the country's borrowing should be one million pounds a year. Government now come forward and say that it should not be less than one million and a half. Where is the stagnation? Here is a progressive Ministry which proposes to do the work that must be done, the country being committed to it. As to the wisdom of the scheme, we are not committed to that. I spoke for three hours on the first occasion against the Coolgardie Water Scheme, but I come now to the House and say that the work must be completed speedily, and reticulation provided so that the country can get a return for the great outlay. But I want the people to understand that they must give us more than 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons for the water.

MR. HOPKINS: They will not object to do that.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, they will have to pay it. Without detaining the House farther, I have pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. F. H. PIESSE, debate adjourned.

#### RETURN—INDENT ORDERS SENT.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams) moved:

That a return be laid upon the table of the House: 1, Giving the particulars and value of all indents sent by the Throssell Government. 2, Also of those sent by the present Government.

It was hardly necessary to state particulars in regard to this matter, as he had already brought the subject under the

notice of the Treasurer, and a promise had been given to the House as to furnishing the information. Probably, the Government would offer no objection to the motion. If all the information he required was not supplied, he could ask the Treasurer for a farther return.

MR. RASON (Guildford) seconded the motion.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): The Government had no objection to furnish the return as far as they possibly could; but it was absolutely impossible to give the information from the 13th February, because the Government could not balance their books in the middle of a month. Perhaps it would be best to make the date the 28th February. He would, if necessary, move an amendment to that effect.

Question put and passed.

#### RETURN—INDEBTEDNESS, PARTICULARS.

HON. F. H. PIESSE moved:

That a Return be laid upon the Table of the House,—1, Showing on 31st January last the actual indebtedness of the State, exclusive of loans advanced to Agricultural Bank and under Land Purchase Act. Also, showing balance Loan money in hand, and Sinking Fund accrued to that date. 2, Amount of Inscribed Stock. 3, Amount of Local Inscribed Stock. 4, Amount of Treasury Bills current. 5, Balance of Loan Authorisation not then placed on market. 6, Credit Balance Consolidated Revenue 31st January last. 7, Total value of indents which had been sent out of the State on that date and not paid for. 8, Amount legally available to meet the indents. 9, Also return giving similar information on 30th June next, as embodied in paragraphs 1 to 4, and 6 and 7.

Put and passed.

#### RETURN—SPARKS ON RAILWAYS, CLAIMS FOR DAMAGE.

MR. RASON moved:

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing,—1, The number of claims made upon the Government for damage by fires said to have been caused by sparks from passing railway locomotives. 2, The names of the claimants. 3, The amounts claimed. 4, The amounts paid (if any). 5, The names of persons to whom payment has been made. 6, The dates of such payment.

Put and passed.

# RETURN—AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN SOUTH-WEST.

MR. NANSON moved :

That a return be laid upon the Table of this House showing,—1, The acreage and locality of each agricultural area in the South-West land division. 2, The acreage selected in each area. 3, The date of the declaration of each area.

Put and passed.

# RETURN—EXPENDITURE IN DEPARTMENTS (5).

MR. QUINLAN moved :

That a return be laid upon the table of the House showing the average monthly expenditure in each of the civil service departments under the following heads, viz. :—Lands Department, Agricultural Department, Works Department, Railways Department, Medical Department.

Put and passed.

# RETURN—REVENUE, LANDS AND RAILWAYS.

MR. QUINLAN moved :

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the average monthly revenue derived from the Lands Department, and also from the Railway Department, respectively.

Put and passed.

# MOTION—SAW-MILLING, EIGHT HOURS, TO LEGISLATE.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH (Welling-ton) moved :

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a Bill be introduced during this session to legalise an eight-hours working day in connection with the saw-milling industry of this State.

No doubt this motion would meet with the approval of members on both sides. Some three, four, or six weeks ago, a petition had been presented to him from the employees of his company, asking for an eight-hours day. As this was the only industry in the State in which an eight-hours day was not recognised, he felt inclined to agree to the request; but there was some difficulty in reference to the other mills with which his company competed in the open market, therefore the men's request could not be granted until the other companies fell into line, in view of the depression in the timber market. If the concession asked for were to be a matter of great moment, he, being the manager of a timber company, would not

ask the House to pass the motion; and even with the men it was more a matter of sentiment than of gain, because they at present worked only 52 hours in the week, instead of the 54 which would represent a nine-hours day. But in order to overcome friction and meet the men on the question, he moved that the Government bring in a Bill to legalise a day of eight hours.

MR. J. EWING (South-West Mining District) seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

At 6.25, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

# MOTION—RABBIT INCURSION.

TO CARRY OUT RECOMMENDATION.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley) moved :

That the Government be authorised to carry out the recommendation of the Commission appointed to report upon the best means of stopping the incursion of rabbits.

He said : The motion I propose is one asking this House to sanction the Government giving effect to the recommendation of the Royal Commission appointed by the last Parliament, whose report is on the table of the House. There is a considerable amount of evidence attached to this report dealing with incursions of rabbits, and the effect of such incursions in other countries, also the progress of the rabbits in this; and the ground upon which this report has been framed has been amply supported by the evidence. The question is a very difficult and intricate one in some respects, but everyone seems to realise that something must be done. The matter has been delayed for many years by the late Government, and perhaps also to some extent by this House. Although several motions have at different times been passed in regard to it, yet nothing whatever was done until last year the approach of rabbits was so rapid and the rabbits had become so much more numerous, it was recognised something should be done. A chart hangs up on the wall of the House, and hon. members can see at a glance what is proposed. I wish to refer to a few paragraphs in the evidence, but I would like first of all to call attention to a clerical error appa-

rently in the second line of paragraph 2 of the report. The paragraph begins :

Your Commissioners are convinced that a properly constructed and well-maintained fence of wire netting, 42 inches wide, with a mesh of not less than 1½ inches—

The word "more" should have appeared instead of the word "less." At present the statement is nonsense, and the word I refer to is evidently a clerical error. I desire to call attention to it, so that no mistake may be made. Some people may object to the fence being erected so far to the west. There is a considerable amount of pastoral country more or less valuable to the east of that line, but from the evidence as to the position of the rabbits, and also the evidence of the inspector, it appeared to the Commission it would be unwise to recommend the erection of a fence any farther east than that. Mr. White, the inspector, when under examination was asked, (692) whether he found that many people on the goldfields would like to have the rabbits? His reply was, "Undoubtedly. That has been my trouble all through." The next question (693) put to him was, "With regard to the goldfields people generally, you do not expect to get much assistance from them?" He said, "None, whatever. I do not rely upon getting any information from them, and I do not rely on any information given by them unless it is a man I have known for perhaps two or three years." Farther on (705) he said, "Diggers have told me the same thing; that if that fence were put up, they would put the rabbits over. I have pointed out that by getting rabbits they will perhaps get cheaper meat for a short time, but that ultimately it will end in getting dearer." Again, in answer to question 710, "Taken as a whole, the goldfields community are opposed to the rabbits being kept out of the goldfields district?" he said, "They are opposed to their being kept out of the State at all." On that evidence and from much other which came to the knowledge of the members of the Commission, the Commission thought it would be running a considerable risk of great waste in work and money, if the fence were recommended to be put up anywhere touching the existing goldfields. Therefore, it was considered better, in order to prevent that risk and also the increased cost of

upkeep and of boundary riders, that the fence should be put in the position recommended in the report. I only desire to ask the House to accept this motion, whereupon, I understand, the Government will be prepared to anticipate a vote later on. No time should be lost in making a start at this work, otherwise it may be found that the rabbits have encroached so much farther that the fence, to be effectual, will have to be brought still more to the west. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I second the motion.

MR. W. B. GORDON (South Perth): I am rather taken by surprise to-night in reference to this matter, and am hardly prepared even now with an amendment to the motion. The previous motions on the paper relating to Midland Junction, etcetra, created lengthy discussion; and the suggestion I intended to bring before this House—

THE SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with Midland Junction.

MR. GORDON: I am explaining that the memo. I have been writing out is hardly finished. I will, however, take it from the map, and write out the amendment afterwards. I purpose moving as an amendment that the fence be constructed from Point Ann to Tallering, thence east to Point Gregory. In bringing my amendment before the House, I do not intend to cast any reflection whatever on the services which the Commission have rendered the country in bringing forward the information they have. But the appearance of the question has altered considerably since the Commission made their recommendation. The rabbits are much nearer now than they were at the time that this evidence was given. The line of fence suggested by the Commission traverses a portion of the country that is practically overrun by prospectors; and I fail to see how, even at a big cost for maintenance, the fence can be kept in such repair as is requisite in order to guarantee us against rabbits getting through it, or over it, or under it, or past it in any way. Any member of the House possessing experience of the fields knows that a man making in a certain direction and striking a fence when evening comes on, will not go four or five



miles to find a gate: he will certainly take the fence down in some way. Very probably if he knows the fence is there he will always carry with him a file, weighing perhaps an ounce. Therefore the fence is very likely to be injured. Have the Commission provided for the maintenance and the proper boundary-riding of this fence? I take it that any recommendation of the Commission ought to be on a sound basis. (An interjection.) Well, of course they might recommend anything; they might recommend supervision from a balloon. The fence proposed by the Commission extends some 1,100 miles. This, at £60 per mile—which estimate I believe to be a long, long way under the cost at which the work can be done—amounts to £66,000. I would like hon. members just for one moment to follow me, so that I may show what cost the country will be committed to if the fence proposed by the Commission is erected. The construction will cost £66,000 for a start. The interest on that amount of £66,000 at 4 per cent. yearly is £2,640. Now, taking the life of the fence at 20 years—which it cannot but be admitted is a fair thing—you must write off £3,300 yearly. As regards an allowance for the boundary-riding of this fence, I calculate one man for every 20 miles. If a man does 20 miles a day, he does a good day's work. I doubt whether he can do it. At the same time I assume that he will do 20 miles.

A MEMBER: On a bicycle?

MR. GORDON: On his head, if you like. This man's wages I estimate at £3 per week. He must have a horse, and he must keep that horse. In some parts of the country water is hard to get, and feed is dear. Anyway, he must have corn for his horse to do the 20 miles a day. I estimate boundary-riding of the fence would require 55 men, and at £3 per week this is equal to £8,580 per annum. Thus we have the total annual cost of this fence to the country of £14,520. And even with that expenditure, I maintain we have not got the rabbits out. In the course of a year or two, when the rabbits come up to this fence, if they do arrive there—and I do not think there is the slightest doubt they will—they will break up the fence. Moreover, a fire might any day burn miles of

it—the boundary riders cannot guard against that; and if such a contingency should occur the whole of the money will be as thrown away. There is the farther consideration that the total revenue paid in respect of pastoral leases held in the country, to fence which we should be paying £14,520 annually, amounts to only £31,671 a year. Thus we should be paying away more than half of the total rent derived from the country, for the erection and maintenance of the fence. And then we shall not have fenced in some of the most important pastoral country that Western Australia holds: I refer to Kimberley. And I will ask hon. members to consider that the revenue to be derived from that country to be fenced in, might perhaps not amount to more than half the cost of erecting and maintaining the fence. Therefore, I contend that we might just as well write the whole thing off, and give the rent back to the squatters themselves to fence their property for a number of years and to see that the fence is kept in proper repair. In proposing my amendment, I maintain that the proper thing is to fence off the rabbits from the land which has a regular rainfall and which is settled by farmers. The fence which I will suggest to the House is on the line of the rainfall. However, while placing my amendment before the House, I perhaps do not recommend it. I intend it only as a sort of a stay. I maintain that the experience of the whole of the Australian colonies, after years of study of the question, amounts to this. If you want to protect your country against the rabbit, every man must fence the portion he wants protected. That is the essence of the whole thing. Thousands of pounds expedients have been tried in every shape and form; thousands and thousands of pounds have been spent in experiments on this subject by the other States; and the conclusion that has been universally arrived at is, I believe, that if you want to keep out the rabbits you must fence your own land and keep them out of that. Unfortunately, in the other States they had to first fence them in and then get them out. We, by fencing, could at least keep them from our agricultural areas, which are not too large; and thus give those residing inside the districts with a certain rainfall a few

years in which to protect themselves by fencing. If the farmers do not take warning, I maintain they deserve to suffer, though, unfortunately, the country will suffer with them. However, from the experience that has been gained, I believe that the farmers in the country with a good rainfall may escape the rabbit pest if they will take advantage of the opportunity I propose the Government should give them to fence in their own country. Now, the scheme which figures in my amendment—I must say this in fairness to the Commission and in fairness to the mover of the motion—is based on similar calculations to those which I made in respect of the scheme proposed by the Commission. The fence which I propose should be erected extends for 500 miles. I place the cost of erecting it at £50 per mile, equal to £25,000. I have reduced the cost by £10 per mile. The interest on £25,000 at 4 per cent. is £1,000 annually. Depreciation during the period of twenty years would amount to £1,250 annually. Upkeep and boundary riders at £3 per week would amount to £3,900. So that the fence I propose would cost the country £6,150 yearly for twenty years. And then after all that expenditure, remember, we have no asset. So that really on the one hand it occurs to me to ask, is it advisable to erect any fence whatever? On the other hand, in fairness to our agricultural areas it would be advisable to erect a fence such as I have suggested. I have estimated its cost at £6,150 yearly because it goes through an agricultural area—or a large part of it does—and most of the fence will be looked after, or at least ought to be looked after, by the men owning the adjoining properties. I may say in justice to myself, and in justice to hon. members, that I am sorry I have not obtained the assistance which I might have got in this matter. In point of fact it is through negligence that I have not obtained it. But I do earnestly wish to bring before members this amendment, and I will ask them to study the matter thoroughly, and go into it carefully, before they decide to commit the country to the expenditure proposed by this Commission. I trust that before authorising the expenditure they will make themselves perfectly satisfied that in doing so they are not, as a matter of fact, giving

away the whole of the revenue derived from the leases.

**THE SPEAKER:** If the hon. member has an amendment, will he kindly bring it up?

**MR. GORDON:** I have brought it up.

**THE SPEAKER:** You must read it out. Amendment not seconded.

**MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna):** I would certainly prefer to second the amendment rather than see the motion passed; but I suggest to the House that the motion be postponed. I do not wish to appear as one who would prevent expenditure in the interests of any part of the country; but we did not expect this motion would be discussed to-night, and many of us would like to have had more information on the subject than is available this evening. We must remember what the motion asks us to do—to begin a rabbit-proof fence and to carry it over 1,100 miles of country. Most of us here are new to parliamentary ways, and we do not quite understand the means of obtaining parliamentary information. Therefore it is scarcely fair to rush the matter before us now, especially as many of us agree with the last speaker that hitherto any attempt to fence off a large section of country in Australia has resulted in failure. Everywhere we are told these fences are not of much use, for various reasons. I cannot understand why the commissioners appointed to inquire into the rabbit pest, who appear to be acquainted with the subject, recommend us to go on the old lines. I appeal to the hon. gentleman who introduced the motion to consider whether he should not postpone the matter until, say, next Tuesday, or better still until the beginning of August. So far as I understand the position of the Government it is this. The Government seem to take it for granted that it is their duty to carry out the recommendations of any Commission; yet so far I have not been able to make sure that any member of the Government believes that the line of fencing will in any way be effective. But every one of us has promised to stop expenditure that will not be for the good of the country, and as I personally am not convinced this fence will be of any good, and as many members of the House are in the same position, I ask the hon. member to agree to a postponement of the motion.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) : The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) seems to treat this matter very lightly, and, from what I can gather from his speech, he is very much inclined to follow the steps of the late Government and postpone this question. It is a subject we are not in a position to postpone: we have had the rabbits gradually encroaching on us for a number of years. The whole community have been well aware of the advance of the rodents, and as a people we have been shutting our eyes to the fact that the rabbits are approaching us and are going to do an enormous amount of damage. This is a matter that should be dealt with at the present time, and I sincerely hope members of the House will consider it is a case of very great urgency. If the matter is postponed until next August, two or three months may elapse, and probably the motion may then be farther postponed for the fad of another member, and so things will go on until it is too late to erect the fence. It is pretty conclusively shown that the rabbits travel at a great rate, but it is not necessary for me to remind hon. members of the pace with which they do travel, because, since they have left South Australia, they have travelled at such a pace that if the erection of the fence is put off until next session, a fence or any other means will be of no use in checking the invasion; therefore I sincerely hope the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) will not withdraw his motion or postpone it. This question has been before the country for a considerable time, and I cannot allow the remarks of the member for Kanowna to go uncontradicted. He says that we have not had time to consider the question. Why it has been before the House and the country quite long enough for members to consider it, and I think we have considered the subject long ago. I speak from an interested point of view, being a pastoralist, and my industry is not very fully represented in the House or the question would be handled in a very different spirit. The member who moved the amendment just now said a fence was practically of no use. If a fence were built and not looked after, people would cut the fence down and rabbits would get through. I quite agree that if the heavens were to fall we should

catch larks, and if a fence be built and never looked after or supported, accidents will happen and rabbits will get through; but if the fence be built and sufficiently supervised or watched, there is no reason to think that the rabbits will get through. I have the evidence taken by the Royal Commission, which conclusively proves that fencing is the only effective means of checking the advance of the rabbits in small or large paddocks; but if in many cases it is not found to be a success, that is due to negligence after the fence has been built. I maintain that if the fence is built and properly supervised and watched, it will effectually check the rabbits until some one feels disposed to pick up a rabbit and put it over—and that is done I admit, but that is not the fault of the fence. The member who moved the amendment said that the interest on the money for erecting the fence would not be covered by the total revenue raised from pastoral leases. Are the rents the only revenue the Government receive from the pastoral districts? I say “no,” and, farther, I do not want the House to think that I advocate that a large sum of money should be expended in the interests of the pastoralists and agriculturists, and that we are not to be taxed. I should be perfectly willing to submit to direct taxation to cover the expenditure, or so much towards the interest. I accept and am prepared to submit to that, and I think it is fair and just that we should be taxed in the shape of a stock tax.

MR. DOHERTY : So much per head ?

MR. BUTCHER : Certainly ; we used to be taxed when there was scab, and I will submit to taxation now. I am very sorry to find that rabbits have become so intelligent as Mr. Gordon points out. We shall soon find that the rabbits are carrying files in their pockets to cut the fences with. I do not think there is any occasion to speak at length on the subject; but I sincerely hope that members of the House will see the urgent necessity for dealing with the matter at once, and allow the Government to put the work in hand without delay.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton) : I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

## MOTION—PROSPECTING PARTIES, TO ASSIST.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government, where they consider necessary, should assist intending prospecting parties by providing them with necessary camels and other equipments.

He said: In moving the motion standing in my name, my object is to assist prospecting syndicates on the goldfields. There is at present much talk in Kalgoorlie and the surrounding districts of prospecting parties going out. Money has been subscribed by the public for this purpose, and in my opinion the Government should assist them to the extent of providing camels and equipment, so as to open up new country on the goldfields.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I desire to express my strong approval of this motion, and thoroughly to indorse the hon. member's remarks. Looking at the enormous areas unexplored on the goldfields, there is undoubtedly in this country more opportunity for prospecting than in any other British colony. We know quite well that only a small portion indeed of the goldfields of this State has hitherto been explored. At present, Kalgoorlie and the North Coolgardie goldfields down as far as Dundas, are the only portions of this enormous State which have yet had any serious attention paid them in the way of prospecting. But there is, no doubt, on the fields, as the last speaker says, a strong inclination on the part of a large number of able and intelligent men to go out still farther into the desert for the purpose of exploration; and if it be in the power of the Government to assist, I think it is their duty so to do. Many proposals have been made in this House for the purpose of assisting prospectors; and in view of the importance of this motion, the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) should take into his immediate consideration the question of complying with the request made that the prospectors be assisted with camels, which are absolutely necessary for this particular work. I sincerely hope, not only that the motion be passed unanimously, but that the Minister will bear it in mind, and place the money on the forthcoming Estimates for the purpose of giving it immediate effect.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I have much pleasure in supporting this motion. I think it necessary that the great industry which is carrying on this country at the present time, and on which our financial success to so large an extent depends, should be helped in every possible way; and one of the best possible ways in which the prospector can be helped to develop new country and make new finds is by providing the means of locomotion required to penetrate the back country. Camels are particularly mentioned in the motion; but I say camels, horses, and every other means of locomotion should be furnished; and I have no hesitation in stating that the man who, more than any other, deserves encouragement, is the prospector. He goes out into new country, and finds and develops wealth now lying dormant; and the best and most practical way of helping him is by carrying out the proposal embodied in this motion.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I have the greatest possible pleasure in supporting this motion. The matter has for a long time been debated in the public Press and on the goldfields, and I think the time has now arrived when this step should be taken in what is certainly the right direction. The difficulties, expenses, and hardships connected with prospecting are such that the Government of this country, which depends so much on its mineral wealth, should, in every reasonable and proper way, encourage prospectors to go out and farther develop wealth which, as the last speaker says, is lying dormant, no doubt in enormous quantities.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I may inform the House the Mines Department are at present in possession of some four or five camels. It has been the habit of the department to lend these camels to prospectors, care being always taken to lend them to men who, having been for many years engaged at prospecting in this State, had met with no success, and whom there was a reasonable possibility of assisting to obtain some reward for their past labours. I think, however, we need to be very careful in adopting a general principle, for it may involve a large expenditure; and I think this motion is brought forward because a prospecting party has lately

been formed at Kalgoorlie. Its members have not much money, but they intend to try to develop the country from Kalgoorlie towards the eastern boundary of the State. From the efforts of this party I really think some good work will result. The men seem determined to give every assistance to the department; at all events, any new discovery they may make will at once be reported to us; and I think they are deserving of some consideration, and that the Government should purchase camels, lend them to those people, and lend them afterwards to the class of persons whom I first indicated. But as these camels would cost some £300, and as their purchase was an innovation, I declined to accept the responsibility of doing this, or even to ask the Cabinet to agree to do it, unless I felt satisfied that Parliament would approve of some such scheme. After the expression of hon. members' opinion to-night, I feel sure the Cabinet will now grant this assistance, and will endeavour to give more assistance in the future to prospectors than has been given in the past. Of course, I think a better way of giving assistance is by a good system of prospecting-areas and reward-leases. [MR. DIAMOND: Hear, hear.] New regulations will shortly be framed dealing with the whole question, and I think the gold-fields members will then be satisfied that the prospectors on the fields will be leniently treated. I do not think we can do anything to equip these parties. If we keep a few camels to lend them, I say we go quite far enough. There ought to be no farther assistance, except rewards for any new finds they make. Then the State can give them a 24-acre lease for so many years, according to the distance of the discovery from the nearest known gold-field. In that way, we can do some good.

MR. CONNOR: Give them the freehold.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I object to giving the freehold. I do not think that would be a good method. I have known many instances on the fields where men have done much prospecting, and, after making some new discovery, have been unable to pay the heavy fees necessary to take up a 24-acre lease. There will be provision for men to take up prospecting areas, to hold them for six months, simply upon the payment of a registration fee of 10s., and to extend

that term for a farther period; and that will be a great inducement to development by working men. If they make original discoveries, the Government will then assist them by granting them reward leases; and if these leases be sold, or a transfer desired, when we think the amount received will be an adequate consideration we reserve to ourselves the right to compel these persons to pay us lease rent and survey fees. When these new regulations are submitted to the House, I think they will meet with general approval. I can now promise help in this matter, after the expression of opinion I have heard; and I will ask the Cabinet to provide me with some funds to purchase camels with a view of assisting prospectors.

MR. G. THROSSELL (Northam): I am altogether in accord with the motion, and think I am right in saying that in one of the last speeches the late Minister for Mines (Mr. Moran) delivered in Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie, he announced he had a scheme in hand for the encouragement of prospecting, by the loan of camels under safe conditions; and I shall be glad if the Government will look favourably on that proposal, and if prospectors in other districts also can be similarly encouraged. Of course, loans of camels apply in the main to the dry districts round Kalgoorlie; but with regard to other districts, there is, rightly or wrongly, a feeling abroad that in some parts of the State payable reefs exist; there is an inclination to subscribe liberally for the purpose of prospecting; and it is held that the Government should assist. There is a difficulty in assisting with money; and we have to be very careful. However, if some such plan as this were adopted, that the Government find pound for pound up to a certain amount, have the funds lodged with the resident magistrate of the district, who would duly bank them, see that they are expended absolutely for prospecting, and that every draw from the amount was properly vouched for, I think the scheme would be successful. At the present moment, in the district of Northam there is an idea abroad that payable gold exists. Certain stuff has been analysed, and returns, I am told, over one ounce to the ton. For the information of members, I may say there is nothing at

all novel in that; for in the old days, visitors from the Eastern States, notably that man to whom we gave a thousand pounds many years ago, prospected at Northam; and I had the pleasure of going down a shaft about six miles from Northam and seeing gold with the naked eye; and at the present moment, there is a prospecting syndicate being formed and liberally subscribed to. I would commend this to the Minister for Mines, who, I am sure, takes a deep interest in the matter, and would suggest that where the people of a district proved their *bona fides* by subscribing a certain sum, a similar amount be found by the Government, on the conditions to which I have referred. It is the unexpected which turns up, after all; and there are districts in this State where the idea of finding gold has been laughed to scorn, in which, nevertheless, it has been ultimately discovered. We all remember reading the work of the great Anthony Trollope, who passed through the State many years ago, and wrote a book upon Australia, notably upon Western Australia; and those who have read his work will remember that he says the people of Western Australia are waiting, Micawber-like, for something to turn up, and they fill their minds with visions of the discovery of gold and coal. "But I fear," says he, "that if Western Australia never advances until gold or coal be discovered there, they will have to wait a very long time *in statu quo*." If Anthony Trollope were present to-night, he would know that instead of no gold being here, Western Australia is the richest State in that respect in the Australian group, and bids fair to become also the richest in regard to coal. I most heartily commend the motion to the consideration of my friend the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory), and assure him with regard to towns interested that money is being subscribed at the present time. I have full faith in the *bona fides* of those who take an interest in the subject, and believe that we have proved the existence of sufficient gold to, at any rate, make prospecting justifiable. If the unexpected were to happen and gold were found, what a grand gain it would be to the State. People laughed at the idea of gold being found at Donnybrook; but if the Minister were to go there, he would very soon have ocular demonstration.

On one occasion I took a dish of dump and washed it, with the result that I brought away a nice specimen of gold. What occurred at Donnybrook may occur in other districts. The amount expended may be small, and a couple of hundred pounds spent in a district may encourage people to put their hands into their own pockets. Cash devoted to this object will be well spent, when we think of hundreds wasted in other directions. Even if nothing is discovered, the venture is worthy of a trial. It is a policy which the former Minister (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) approved of most heartily, and one of the last speeches I listened to at Coolgardie was in favour of assisting prospectors in dry districts.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Kingsmill): While I am prepared to support the motion before the House, I hope the Government will think very carefully, and think twice before they go farther in this direction. I am altogether opposed to the idea of financially assisting prospecting parties; and I speak from an experience of some years in this direction. I have seen several of these financially assisted parties, but never have I witnessed any good results therefrom. It is open to the Government to take action by a wise amendment of the Mines Act and the regulations, which would far more materially assist the prospecting element in this country—an element, I regret to say, apparently becoming scarcer day by day—than would the policy proposed. I remember speaking on this subject last session, when the late Premier, the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest, asked that assistance should be given to prospectors; and I told the right hon. gentleman that if he were to make the rents quarterly or half-yearly, and do away with the survey fees at present obtaining on gold-mining leases, more would be done to encourage prospecting than would be accomplished by any idea of financial assistance or bonuses. I hope the Minister for Mines and the Government as a whole will think carefully before going any farther whatever in the direction proposed.

MR. F. WILSON (Perth): This motion appears to be very innocent at the first glance, but I venture to say it is an interference with a principle, and I for one see a great danger in the motion. I

am unable to understand how we can place authority of this sort in the hands of any Minister to enable him, at his own sweet will, indiscriminately to provide camels and equipments (I think it is) for prospecting parties. Where is the system going to end? It appears to me the Minister would be rushed for camels. Every party that wanted to go out prospecting would immediately come to the Government to be supplied, not only with camels, but equipments, and they might go a step farther and want the Government to find machinery to work the mines also. Are members of this House to have the first claim to these camels? or who are the members of this syndicate mentioned by the Minister to-night? I should like to know that.

**A MEMBER:** Leading men in Kalgoorlie.

**MR. WILSON:** Then I say emphatically that the House would do wrong if it passed the motion. Let leading men in Kalgoorlie find their own camels to go out prospecting. If I made an application to the Minister, do you think he would accede to my request for camels to go out prospecting? He knows his position would be insecure, if he did so, for he would be open to all sorts of charges of bribery and corruption. I assert it would be a dangerous principle to establish for any one Minister to have the right to lend out the State's plant free for any purpose. If the Minister has camels which he is not working, and he can make an arrangement to hire out those camels to any person, that is another question altogether, and I venture to say he can do that without a resolution of this House. But to sanction the expenditure of State money in providing camels for a syndicate composed of the principal men in Kalgoorlie—that is what I understand it is—would be monstrous. It would be a dangerous thing indeed, and I hope the House will not pass the motion. The mining managers in Kalgoorlie are quite capable of equipping their own prospecting parties, as we all have done during the last seven or eight years. I know I have been in several prospecting schemes, and they have never panned out well. A scheme for prospecting the back country, for whose benefit?

**A MEMBER:** The country's.

**MR. WILSON:** Certainly for the country's benefit, and everything we do in the way of industrial enterprise is for the country's benefit, but for our own first. These men are not philanthropists who are sending out prospectors, and they are not opening up country specially for the country's benefit. The revenue is not likely to derive any special value in the event of gold being discovered. The principal advantage will go to the London market, and the mines would be worked for the benefit of the party sending out the prospectors. The share which the State ought to have of the gain resulting from those discoveries ought to be defined, if we are going to contribute to the cost of providing camels and equipment, and in my opinion it should be at least a half. I do not wish my remarks to be construed into anything in the way of want of sympathy with general prospectors. I believe in granting them as liberal terms as we possibly can, and in amending the regulations so that they shall have time to prove their properties before they pay their fees; also that they shall have perfect freedom in regard to the labour conditions to prove any new fields they may discover; and farther, that they shall be duly granted reward claims, as the Minister has suggested. That is a proper course to adopt. If you are going to put a power like that proposed into the hands of the Minister, his position will be unbearable, because he will have applications of every description under the portion of this motion relating to equipments. And I could go farther. What about the discovery of pastoral country? Why should not parties be equipped at the expense of the Government to find good pastoral country for those who wish to settle in the back country? Every industry, I do not care what it is, would be entitled to the same privilege. You might just as well ask for assistance in opening up coal mines, as I think the member for Northam (Mr. G. Throssell) mentioned, and also ask for assistance in finding other mineral country, such as tin or copper country.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Diamonds.

**MR. WILSON:** Certainly, diamonds. You can see at once the ill effects of this motion. The Minister says that on the expression of the opinion of the House, he will be perfectly justified in going to the Cabinet and asking for some money.

He has five camels now and he is going to buy a few more. My honourable and venerable friend, the member for Northam (Mr. G. Throssell), gets up and says "I have a syndicate at Northam, and we will have some of those camels, and I commend this syndicate to the attention of the Minister." The thing is absurd, and it is not a question that should be considered by the House for one moment. Moreover, I venture to say the men who comprise this syndicate will agree with me in that expression of opinion. If they are prepared to find the expenses apart from camels, they are quite prepared to pay for the camels as well. This is apparently a demand of a syndicate to have this prospecting party absolutely equipped at the expense of the State, and the State getting no return for it. I would draw the attention of members to the fact that we very strongly attacked the Forrest Ministry some four years ago on this very question. I think there was a grant of £100 or something—

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: This is a special thing.

MR. WILSON: Where is the special thing?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I leave it to the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. W. D. Johnson) to point it out.

MR. WILSON: I do not see that it is a special thing. The Premier of those days assisted a prospecting party by a grant of £100 out of public funds.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It was refunded.

MR. WILSON: I know, but I think he had authority, and he was quite within his right. That party went out, and it was headed by the celebrated John Dunn—I think that was his name—who discovered the "Wealth of Nations" and other properties, in which Ministers themselves were interested. Eventually the money was refunded to the Treasury; but how are you going to refund camels? If this syndicate obtains what is asked for, the next thing we shall find will be that some other member of the House will be interested, and honestly so, in that syndicate, and then what is to be the position? Members will get up and say we are using the funds of the State for the purpose of advancing our own private interests. This would be a very dangerous motion, and I hope the House will think twice before passing it. If you

wish to be liberal, let it be in relation to measures which will be universally in the interests of the people of the State; but do not pass motions to assist this man or the other man, this syndicate or the other syndicate. I and several members have been branded as syndicators, but I would not think of coming to the House and asking members to pass a motion of this sort, so that a syndicate in which I happened to be interested might come to the Minister and request the use of camels or anything else. I trust members will look at the matter seriously and weigh it well. We are here as a national assembly to legislate for the nation, and I hope a motion of this sort will not be passed.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mount Magnet): I am sorry that the member for Perth (Mr. Wilson) should take such a black view—[MR. WILSON: Principle, sir]—of the motion brought forward by the member for Kalgoorlie; but perhaps the mover is somewhat to blame for not having thoroughly explained the matter to the House. I should certainly disapprove of the indiscriminate giving of assistance by the State to intending prospectors; but we are protected against any risk of that by four words of the motion, which reads:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government, where they consider necessary, should assist intending prospecting parties.

"Where they consider necessary." Surely we have sufficient confidence in our Minister for Mines and the Cabinet to know that they will not supply camels indiscriminately to every man who wants to go out prospecting.

MR. WILSON: How can they refuse?

MR. WALLACE: I take it that the object of the assistance suggested by the member for Kalgoorlie is in the interests of the State in this way. There is probably a certain portion of the country lying far back, inaccessible to horsemen and most certainly inaccessible to swagmen; and it would be well to assist in the exploration of this region by assisting suitable prospectors with the loan of camels. The member for Kalgoorlie, I take it, has it in his mind's eye some old, reliable prospectors. For of course when he spoke of "the leading men of Kalgoorlie" he meant—and I am sure the member for Perth must have understood



him—not the leading mine managers of Kalgoorlie, or the leading business men of Kalgoorlie, but the leading prospectors or pioneers.

MR. WILSON: It does not matter whether he meant leading mining men, or leading business men, or any other class of leading men.

MR. WALLACE: I hold to a great extent with the member for Perth; but I want to be just in putting my views before the House. I do not want to mislead people to the extent of raising alarm. I may say here that I think the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) on seeing such a motion on the Notice Paper might have spoken to the member for Kalgoorlie beforehand, and seen that the member gave the House a farther explanation. I take it that the Minister for Mines should have made himself acquainted with the facts in connection with this motion, especially before he rose here to consent to it. However, the Minister has evidently not had experience of these matters before. In Queensland especially, I know that the Government did equip prospecting parties, not only for the purpose of assisting men to get on to gold in their own interests, but in the interests of the State generally. Perhaps I should rather say that they equipped exploring parties. The Government assisted prospectors by providing pack horses, pack saddles, food, and so on. The men went out, and not only sought after gold, but took notes and inspected the country from a pastoralist's point of view as well as from a miner's point of view; and though the State did not, at any time that I can remember in the north-west of Queensland, reap any great benefit directly from mineral resources developed through aid given to these prospectors or explorers, yet the country did in many ways derive advantages. By means of these parties it was proved that certain districts supposed to be auriferous, did not contain gold sufficiently payable to induce large bodies of men to go there, imperilling, as is often the case, their lives in doing so. Prospectors are principally swagmen; and I take it that if the Government relieved the men of any such idea as that a certain locality away in the interior, and hard to reach, was sufficiently good to warrant their going out so far and running the great

risks involved in prospecting it, when in fact it was not, I take it that we would be doing some good. I do not for one minute, of course, say that the Minister for Mines is going to call tenders for the supply of a large number of camels, as the member for Perth seems to think. As I understand the matter, the Government have four or five camels, and a really good prospector has been recommended to them—a man willing to go out and prospect, but not possessed of sufficient means to purchase camels. Every member of the House knows that camels are not to be bought at the same cost as horses. Where a man might be able to buy two horses for the usual bush turn-out, he could not probably afford two camels. Consequently, if the Mines Department have four or five camels, and the Minister concerned will safeguard the interests of the State by not buying camels in large numbers at fabulous prices, as has been done in other cases in this State, then I think we can trust the Minister to deal with the matter, and let the prospector have the camels. The member for Perth (Mr. Wilson) said that, in the absence of details, we did not know but that in embarking on this scheme we might possibly be opening the door to great abuses; and that this scheme imposed on the Minister a very great responsibility, which, however, I take it he is prepared to bear. I have had experience of this sort of Government aid to prospectors, and I certainly do not think it will do any great harm. I have been told that the country lying to the eastward of Lake Way and Leonora is worthy of the State contributing a little towards the cost of exploring it, and I would not give my vote in opposition to the motion if I believed that was the object in view. But I distinctly want to record my vote against any continuance of this scheme, because as some one has suggested—I think it was the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), and he has had experience of these things—these prospecting parties are generally picnic parties. The prospector in view here, however, is, I take it, one of the best and most genuine prospectors in the country. Therefore, the Government have not much to fear.

MR. WILSON: This is in aid of the business men of Kalgoorlie.

MR. WALLACE: The member for Perth seems very keen in his endeavour to mislead the House. I am taking the words of the mover of the motion, the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson). He said "leading men." I take it that referred to prospectors or pioneers, and not to those who are considered to be the leading men of this State. When the member for Kalgoorlie used the expression, I instantly concluded that he meant some of the leading pioneers or prospectors. I hope the Minister will not be influenced by the member for Perth; but that he will take very great precautions with respect to any moneys which may be expended as a result of the passing of this motion.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I rise to give an explanation.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot make an explanation now. Explanations must be given at the time.

MR. F. CONNOR: The member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson), in making the motion, has put a very different complexion on the matter before the House, and I should like to remark that he tells us now that this motion has reference to a specific party.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak a second time.

MR. R. D. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton): If the member for Kalgoorlie had sought to show, in connection with his motion, that it was necessary for this House to authorise the Minister for Mines to fit out and equip prospecting parties, hon. members would, I think, have been willing to a man to support him.

MR. F. CONNOR: That is the position: that is right.

MR. HUTCHINSON: But I say, with the member for Perth, that if we pass the motion as it appears here, we are opening the door to very great abuses. [Mr. F. CONNOR: Hear, hear.] By passing this motion we should place the Minister in a position which we, as members, should not place him in. We should cause him to be pestered, and bothered, and abused, and scandalised from every corner of the country by persons applying to him for aid, and of course not all getting what they asked for. Suppose the Minister had 20 camels, and 21 or 22 people applied for the use of them, he could not accommodate the whole lot; and then

those who did not succeed in getting what they wanted would turn round promptly and abuse him, and say that he was showing favour, and that the House behind him was showing favour, to those who had got what they asked for. I am a firm believer in doing everything we possibly can to assist the mining industry of this State; I believe that we should, as a Parliament, do everything we possibly can to encourage prospecting by parties such as I mentioned just now, and by bores and other methods. But I certainly consider that we would be failing in our duty if we passed the motion now before us. I am very pleased indeed to see that the member for Perth stated the objection to this motion which, I think, must have occurred to every member in the House. I intend to vote against the motion; and I take it the member for Kalgoorlie, if his motion be defeated, will at some later period be able to carry out his intention in a manner that will meet with the approval of the House, and at the same time serve the end he has in view better than the motion proposed can possibly do it.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): I desire to remove an impression existing in the minds of some members with regard to the motion by the member for Kalgoorlie. I have received a letter from one of the organisers of the prospecting syndicate referred to; and in supporting the motion I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not support it in the interests of that one particular syndicate. If another prospector, or another body of prospectors, should come along and the Minister has camels, surely it is in the interests of the country that these camels should be made available. The question of terms could well be left to the Minister. I think it is a good thing to assist prospectors. As I have said, I received a letter on this subject. It is from Mr. Neale, who is one of the organisers of this party; and he suggested a £ for £ subsidy. I wrote a letter to the Minister for Mines, enclosing that application, and I think I remarked in that letter—it is about three weeks since I sent it—that I did not feel justified in making any overtures so far as the application for a subsidy was concerned; but if the Government had camels, surely they could not be turned

to better account than being utilised to assist in prospecting this country. From what I know of the people connected with that syndicate, I certainly do not understand it to consist of leading mine managers of Kalgoorlie or leading business men of Kalgoorlie. I know Mr. Neale, who is connected with it, as one of the most enterprising prospectors of the eastern goldfields. In consequence of this knowledge, I felt I was justified in giving his application a reasonable measure of support—an amount of support which I felt was not prompted so much by regard for the interests of his syndicate as by a regard for those of Western Australia. I have pleasure, therefore, in now supporting the motion, and I leave it to the good judgment of the Minister for Mines to see that the privileges given him by this House are not abused.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan) : I intend to vote against this motion—[MR. WILSON : Hear, hear]—and I only rise to explain that I do not vote against it because I am unsympathetic in its object. I oppose it because I think that the motion itself is much too indefinite. I believe that the Minister for Mines has a definite scheme—he has hinted at it in several of his speeches—for helping the prospector; and I think it would be well that we should have that scheme before the House and should know exactly what we are doing in connection with the matter. No sum is mentioned, and therefore to pass the motion may mean that we shall be authorising the expenditure of thousands of pounds. There is no limit stated. I think it would be much better if the Government were to bring down to this House a definite proposal, allotting a definite sum for this particular purpose. If the Minister for Mines does so, I shall sympathetically consider anything he likes to lay before the House. I certainly approve of the suggestion he has already made in his speech at Kalgoorlie, that it would be better to encourage prospecting by making sure that the prospector will have the full benefit of his discovery, when he makes a discovery, by giving him the full advantage of it. I think, perhaps, by that means we should most effectively encourage prospectors, and leave less opportunity for deception being practised

on the Minister than there is likely to be if we pass this motion.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) : I am sorry this motion has been submitted to the House in its present form; for the question has narrowed itself down as if it were only intended for one syndicate to be furnished with camels by the State. It is unfair that this State should assist any particular syndicate at Kalgoorlie or anywhere else. I am in sympathy with the proposal to aid prospectors, but I wish to see the aid awarded in a suitable way so that the Minister for Mines will be safeguarded and not scandalised from one end of the State to the other. There are many ways of aiding prospectors other than by assisting them to go out into the back country. Having travelled over a lot of the back country of the State where the prospectors have been, I think there is very little country that has not been travelled over, and the best way to aid prospectors is not to assist them to go out into this country, but to help them to bore or sink on old alluvial finds where large deposits have been won from the ground. There may be other places, perhaps not so rich as Kanowna and Kalgoorlie; but I am satisfied that there are plenty of old workings which have not been tried sufficiently to be pronounced “duffers.” If the Government aid prospectors in that direction it will be better for the country. There would be no harm in aiding men by giving them camels. The argument has been used that men should be assisted by free grants of land or reward claims, but that really is no assistance. A man requires assistance from the State when he is going out to prospect, not after he has made a find. Prospectors as a rule are naturally independent, and it is only when they are “broke” that they look for aid from outside sources or from the Government to help them to penetrate the country. There is no objection to assist prospectors with camels, but we must safeguard the proposal against abuses. You invariably find, to use an old prospector’s term, that when the Government are supplying aid they generally give it to “broken-down toffs,” men who are incapable of doing any good at all. I am frightened this will be one of the abuses that will crop up, and the House should not open the

gates to things of that kind. I certainly favour aid being given to prospectors, but this motion will not provide for it. I intend, during this session, to bring in a Bill to aid prospecting, and I hope it will meet with the approval of the House. The main object will be to prevent corruption, or members of the House taking part in equipping a syndicate so that they can receive portion of the profits. There is a case pending in the Supreme Court at the present time on this point. I am given to understand that the Government aided certain prospectors with camels: this was done through the assistance of a person in another place, and a lawsuit is pending in consequence. Such a thing is a disgrace to the State, and I think we should profit by the lessons of the past. I strongly support aid being given to prospectors in a legitimate form, so that every man will have a "show" of getting some assistance.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (in reply): When I moved this motion I did not specify any particular syndicate. The matter was brought under my notice in a way similar to that in which it was brought under the notice of the member for Boulder by the Kalgoorlie syndicate. I did not move the motion only to aid this Kalgoorlie syndicate. I wished to make it general. I am not interested in any particular syndicate, although I think the men referred to deserve some little assistance from the Government, as the syndicate is composed to a large extent of old prospectors who have gone out into the country prospecting and are now short of capital. These men have banded together and put up a little capital, but their funds are not sufficient to buy camels and equip the party to go out into the country and open it up. The syndicate referred to intend to go out in the track of the survey party, or to follow up the survey party sent out in connection with the transcontinental railway line. They desire to go out 200 miles beyond the country which has been prospected up to date. The argument of the member for Perth (Mr. Wilson) was all right provided that the party going out discovered gold-bearing country; but it is a different thing when men go out and discover nothing, and that is the case with those men belonging to the syndicate which has been referred to. They

have gone out, found nothing: now they are not in a position to take up this large order. I would not support this syndicate with a grant of £ for £, but I think the Government would be justified in providing them with camels. I do not desire that the motion should apply simply to that syndicate, but it should be left to the discretion of the Minister for Mines if the motion be carried. If the syndicate referred to deserve assistance they should have it.

Question put, and negatived on the voices.

#### MOTION—ASIATICS COMPETING IN TRADE, TO PREVENT.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is advisable that the Government should introduce a Bill this session which will have the effect of preventing any Asiatics from competing in trade with merchants and traders within this State.

In moving this motion I have in view one object only, and it is an object which every legislator who has gone from this State to the Federal Parliament is endeavouring to bring about—a white Australia. My object is only to deal with that one point, and I solicit the assistance of all members of the House in doing so. I have been given to understand this is not a matter that this Parliament can deal with, but I do not say that we should not assist. At any rate there is no reason why the motion should not be discussed. In this State, and almost in every town, there are a very large number of Asiatics competing with our tradespeople. That is not what I object to. There is a class of Asiatics who are likely to contaminate our race. It is not the low Chinese labourer we need be afraid of, but the higher class of Chinese and Asiatics that we need to be afraid of. I may mention that in some towns there are great complaints of depression in trade, all which is due to the keen competition of the Asiatics. The town I wish particularly to refer to is that of Geraldton, and the whole trade of that place, with two exceptions, is in the hands of Asiatics. A short time ago when the Ministry visited Geraldton, some members spoke about the depressed state of the place. Members have spoken about

the late Government having spent large sums of money in putting up large public buildings in that town which were not warranted; but when the Government erected those buildings the trade of the town did warrant them. Since that time trade has fallen off very considerably, and almost the whole of the depression is due to the trade going into the hands of Asiatics. It is well known that no firm of Europeans can conduct a business on the same lines as the Asiatics, and the same thing applies to the labourer. Working men say it is utterly impossible to compete with the Asiatics and the Chinese; they cannot sell their labour at the same price, because they do not live in a similar way to these inferior labourers. It is our duty to do our best to prevent Asiatics from competing with other sections of the community as well as labourers. I feel perfectly certain that this is one of the first steps to take to bring about a white Australia. I have no doubt other members of the House will speak on this question, and probably state the case better. I may say it is not my intention to continue longer, but to ask members present to do their best to lay the case before the House, with the object of inducing the Government to bring in a Bill dealing with this matter.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I second the motion.

HON. W. H. JAMES (Minister): It has to be borne in mind when we deal with these subjects that by virtue of the Commonwealth Act, Section 117, it is not competent for us now to place disabilities or to discriminate on British subjects, and the Commonwealth Act recognises no distinction of colour, but recognises the British subject whatever may be the colour of his skin; therefore, as to any legislation we think desirable for the purpose of restricting unfair competition, that legislation must be applied to all individuals whether Asiatics or British subjects, and those who are aliens. We all must realise that we meet with a difficulty in dealing with legislation of this nature. Even if this legislation struck at Asiatic aliens, there are a large number of Asiatic British subjects, and we should not be removing the difficulty of the position which the hon. member wishes to remove. We can take it, therefore, that if we pass

legislation aimed at Asiatic aliens, we are not removing the difficulty, because we are still leaving open those doors which we think ought to be closed, to enable an influx to take place of Asiatics who are British subjects. And I am quite sure the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) will agree with me when I say, if we are to have legislation of this nature, it should be aimed at Asiatics whether they be British subjects or aliens, the competition being equally injurious whether it comes from Asiatic aliens or from British subjects.

MR. DIAMOND: The motion does not mention aliens.

HON. W. H. JAMES: No; quite right. We strike at Asiatics. But so far as the Asiatic British subject is concerned, it appears, by Section 117 of the Commonwealth Act, we cannot place upon him any disability. Therefore, if we are to deal with him, we must place him on the same basis as the white British subject. Hon. members doubtless know that the Immigration Restriction Act of Natal prevents the influx of a large number of Indian traders, the difficulty being not so much the difficulty we have in Australia of the influx of Chinese, but the influx of the Indian trader who is a British subject; and after certain discussion and a great number of efforts, the Bill, which is the model of the legislation we have adopted in this State, and which has been adopted in the sister States and is now represented by our Immigration Restriction Act, was passed. Our Act, as hon. members know, is not based upon the principle of colour or of nationality, but upon a test which is applied equally to all immigrants, whether they be or be not Asiatics or British subjects. When the Home authorities assented to that Bill, the understanding was that, if legislation of this nature were brought in for the purpose of excluding Asiatics who were British subjects, the terms of exclusion must be such as, on the face of them, applied to all British subjects and to all other persons. And so to-day, if we turn to the legislation which deals with immigration, namely our Immigration Restriction Act, we shall find the restrictions imposed by that Act apply, not only to Asiatics, not only to aliens, but also to all persons, whatever be their race and

whatever their colour. Now if it is intended to pass legislation of this nature, it is certainly most desirable that the Government, before the House agrees to this motion, should have indicated to them more distinctly what it is we desire to do by legislation of the nature proposed. The hon. member introduces a motion which is couched in somewhat wide and general terms; and I venture to think this is one of those subjects to which we should not commit ourselves by a resolution, nor should we, by legislation, commit ourselves to any measure unless we have its lines clearly drawn, so as to know exactly what we are doing and what we have to face. I hope the hon. member knows me well enough to be assured that there is no man in this House who is more opposed to Asiatics than I, or who has more vigorously protested against the freedom with which, in the past, they were allowed to come to our shores, and insisted that, as far as we possibly could, we should give all our employment to people of our own race, and certainly to people of our own colour. But I do venture to think, with the utmost respect to hon. members, that if we are to pass legislation of this nature, if the House think we might make an effort to go as far as we can in this direction—we need not consider how far we can go, now that we are discussing the general principle—such legislation should not be restricted simply to persons engaged as merchants or as traders. I do not think they are the only class of persons who, in this State, require protection from those evils the existence of which, the hon. member thinks, warrants this motion; and if we are to be consistent, we must enlarge this motion, so as to make it prevent the influx not only of persons who are Asiatics—I do not stop now to discuss how far we can carry that out: whether we can draw a discriminating line between the alien and the British subject—but if we are to adopt the principle of this motion as far as possible, it certainly must not be limited in the manner which its wording would indicate; because if we want to protect the merchant and the trader from this unfair competition, the competition is equally unfair when applied to the worker. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] If members of this House think we ought

to pass such legislation, well and good. We have legislation now which, to a certain extent, strikes at these undesirable immigrants, and prevents them from landing on our shores. We have legislation now which deals with them when they are once here. One of the first Bills I had the pleasure of introducing to this House, when I was first elected, was for the purpose of providing that Chinese—and that particular class happened to be the most serious trouble we had at that time—should be entitled to follow certain vocations only. And I remember distinctly, when introducing that Bill, pointing out to a very hostile House, and particularly to those members who represented Northern constituencies, that if they adopted the Bill, the chances were they would remove the strong agitation growing up in the settled districts against the introduction of alien labour, and they would have a chance of retaining that labour for a longer period for the benefit of the North, where the white inhabitants considered it ought to be employed. But the House was unsympathetic; the Bill was rejected; with the result that this feeling grew up in the larger centres of population, and ultimately forced upon Parliament that Bill which we now know as the Immigration Restriction Act. And we stand to-day in this position: whilst we do, as far as possible, prevent the introduction of the Asiatic, when he is here he is perfectly free to do as he pleases. Now I am quite certain I shall appeal with success to the sense of fair-play of the hon. member (Mr. Butcher) when I say, if legislation of this nature be desirable in the interests of merchants and traders, it is equally desirable in the interests of the workers; and what does it come to more than this? We have to say to all those persons that they must clear out of the State.

A MEMBER: That is what we want to say.

HON. W. H. JAMES: We may want to do that; but I want the House to realise what underlies this motion, and if I may say so with the utmost respect, I want them to deal with this question in a practical, common-sense manner, and when they pass this motion, to indicate to us what we are to do with those people who have come here under our existing laws, if by an act of legislation we take

from the aliens in our midst all means of livelihood. These are practical difficulties with which I think the House should deal. I am prepared at all possible times to do whatever I can to prevent the unfair competition of the Asiatic. I have thought in the past that the great bulk of the unfairness of that competition fell upon the worker. I said years ago in this House that we should never have proper legislation on this question until the pinch began to be felt by the traders and merchants; and I think that prediction was justified, for it was not until that pinch began to be felt by a body of people supposed to be socially superior to the workers that we had the legislation we now enjoy. But I want to appeal to members to bear in mind what underlies this motion—a principle that has not yet been enforced, so far as I know, in any State in the world outside Russia. We have not yet reached that stage anywhere in Australia—

MR. BUTCHER: We have in Queensland.

HON. W. H. JAMES: We have not yet reached that stage where we say to men: "You have come here under existing laws, bad laws of which we disapprove, and which we endeavoured to have amended; and now, you having come here under those laws, we are going to take from you all means of occupation and leave you destitute."

MR. TAYLOR: Send them home.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The member for Mt. Margaret, by his interjection, correctly defines the position. We shall have to send them out of the State. [A MEMBER: Do so.] Therefore, the position is: If you pass this legislation, to make it consistent you must see that these Asiatics do not come into competition with any trader or any worker in the State. By passing this motion you call on the Government to exclude them from all means of livelihood; and we shall be driven to adopt the alternative suggested by the member for Mt. Margaret: we shall have to export those men. Now, I venture to say, there again we are in a difficulty. By reason of section 117 of the Commonwealth Act, I think we should find it somewhat difficult to pass legislation by which we could send away from a part of the British Empire men who are British subjects. But we

should find infinitely greater difficulty in obtaining the consent of the Home authorities to such a Bill; and I appeal to hon. members on this ground: if the principle which underlies this motion is to be applied, as it ought to be applied, to protect the merchant, the trader, and the worker, from this unfair competition, then the logical result is to produce a position of affairs which has not been produced in any of the sister States, even in New Zealand, which is as democratic as we are, and just as anxious to keep all possible avenues of employment open to people of our own race and our own colour. So I would point out to what extremes this motion leads, and would ask hon. members, before committing themselves to it, to bear in mind what is its conclusion, and also to assure them that my personal opinion—I go no farther than that—is that there would be no possibility, by reason of section 117 of the Commonwealth Act, and of the position taken up in the past by the Home authorities in dealing with this class of legislation, of passing and obtaining the royal assent to legislation that would carry the principle embodied in this motion to its logical conclusion.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): The same objection which the last speaker has just raised struck me previously; and I think I am only doing right in asking the mover to withdraw his motion, for the simple reason that it is altogether too general from beginning to end. I think the principal and the most important question of all is that a Bill of this sort, if brought in and passed by this House, would never receive the assent of the Home Government. That, I think, is patent at the very commencement; and it would be absolutely lost time on the part of the House to go into the matter.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mount Magnet): I am sorry the operation of section 117 of the Commonwealth Act prevents this motion from being carried out, as is desired by everybody in this State and the other States also. That there is some necessity for action being taken is clear to any member who will even peruse the report of the Inspector of Fisheries, in which he gives some little details in connection with the pearling industry at Broome, on the North-West coast. I believe it is not many years ago that the

Government, realising the danger attendant on Asiatics getting a footing in the pearling industry, had, at great expense, to buy those men's boats, in order to get those people out. And now the people who raised an outcry against those Asiatics are the very people who allow themselves to be made a catspaw of by giving support to Asiatics in business. We find reference is made to a terrible evil existing at present and which promises to spread to a great extent among the old aborigines; that is, in relation to opium smoking. When one reads those paragraphs he sees sufficient to realise it is necessary for this Parliament to use any powers it may have in recommending that some provision should be made whereby it should control these undesirable people, whether Asiatics or others. I did think some two years ago there was a means of checking this unfair competition which the member for Gascoyne referred to, and which I, as a trader, have always objected to. But I have never made it a personal matter, though I spoke to members in relation to the repeal, or rather I should say the repeal of the repeal, of the Hawkers Act—that is, to bring into effect again the Hawkers and Pedlars Act, and along with that to issue licenses to hawkers and to provide that no licenses should be issued to those Asiatic hawkers. From what an hon. member has said in regard to the powers contained in the Commonwealth Act, I believe we could not discriminate to that extent; consequently the idea I hold in regard to the re-establishment of the Hawkers and Pedlars Act would not carry weight. Whilst on this question of coloured races I would like to say a few words which I hope will catch the ears of the members representing the Labour party in this House. Allusion was made to-day in a vague way by the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) that we cannot by law hunt those people out of this State; but I believe he recognises we can disturb them to such a degree that they will be glad to leave our shores, and I ask the workers through their representatives in this House to join with the people who are now fighting solidly and as white men against those Asiatic aliens on the Murchison. I ask members representing labour in this House to use their influence with their friends to work with us and

not to support those undesirable people. The very persons even in this city who ask that those people should be turned out of the State support Chinese, and it is almost impossible to some to buy at a Chinese store on Saturday nights, because of the large number of people who are there doing business. As a representative of the goldfields, I am always being asked what steps are being taken in relation to this Asiatic trouble. I took upon myself the task of forming a carrying company on the Murchison for the purpose of protecting the white teamsters from the Afghans. They require protection in more ways than one. There was an important instance in which violence was used by the white men towards the Afghans. Many instances have occurred on the Murchison which go to show that those Afghans are getting such a footing in this State that they are beginning to realise that the white man is an intruder. A suggestion was made to me by a worker belonging to one of the workers' associations that the best way to stir up feeling amongst the workers would be for the Governor to issue miners' rights to Asiatics, and then we should have an outcry, and united action would be taken. But human nature is such that, if our interests are not directly touched, we do not take action; and I regret that the people who are continually crying out for the ousting of these undesirable persons are the very people who give these Asiatics support. I do not know whether the Government intend to take some steps in connection with the Hawkers and Pedlars Act, and perhaps it would be unwise of them to introduce a Bill, seeing that by this section of the Commonwealth Act we cannot make a distinction between white men and Asiatics. [A MEMBER: You can.] I am not quite clear on the point. I asked the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), and I understood him to say we could not. I must express my gratification on finding that we have at last in this House a member representing the squatting industry who has raised an outcry against Asiatic labour. It is somewhat strange to find a representative of the squatting industry taking such steps. For the last four years we have been pestered by demands made by pastoralist members to squeeze in legis-



lation which would allow them to employ these people. It has been said here people could not carry on the work on the stations unless they had coloured labour. If the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. W. J. Butcher) were to express himself, he would say he has not made it a hobby or a practice to employ these aborigines, and it is refreshing to know that one pastoralist in the North of this country can carry on his industry—and I believe to a very successful stage—without the assistance of coloured labour. I am sorry more pastoralist representatives are not present to hear the few words I have said, and to learn from the member for the Gascoyne that the pastoralist industry in this State can be carried on without the aid of coloured labour. I hope the day is not far off when they will join with the goldfields members, the metropolitan members, and other members in this State who are anxious to get rid of those Asiatics, and will try as far as they can to oust them. It will be futile to ask this House to adopt such a motion as that moved, but the motion is entirely in the hands of the hon. member, and, if he puts it to the House, I will support it.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I wish to express my appreciation of the fact that this question has been introduced, even though it may be impossible to pass any definite motion in the form in which this has been brought forward. I think the hon. member for the Gascoyne (Mr. W. J. Butcher) deserves the thanks of the House and the thanks of that democratic section of the community which we represent, for drawing attention to this matter. I should like, in speaking of this subject generally, to draw attention to the fact that we are not entirely satisfied the Immigration Restriction Act is very thoroughly carried into effect.

MR. DIAMOND: It is not.

MR. DAGLISH: We are not satisfied that many of those aliens who legally should be kept out, are not admitted into our midst. If this Act were rigidly enforced, a large amount of good would be done, and I trust that the discussion initiated by the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. W. J. Butcher) to-night will draw the attention of the Government to the matter, and that we shall have an assurance a little later on that the pro-

visions are being very strictly enforced. I think one step which might be taken, and could be taken, would have a large effect in diminishing the evil complained of, and that is in relation to the legal introduction of aliens in the North-Western districts of the State. I contend that the time has arrived when that should be stopped, and I am quite satisfied the Government are not in a position to show us there are no Asiatic aliens who make their way down to the South from the Northern latitudes to which they are legally admitted. In other words, I am satisfied that many of those Asiatics who got here legally under contract, stay here illegally after their contract has expired. I should like to hear that this motion has been the means of drawing attention to the matter, so that we may get some investigation by the Government on this subject, and see whether the law may not be thoroughly enforced so long as it remains on the statute book, and afterwards whether it would not be possible to get this House to abolish that law. I understand that the whole matter is passing into the hands of the Federal Parliament, and I would like, before the Federal Parliament takes over control, to give it a clean statute book and not give it a precedent for the continuance of an Act which, in my opinion, is not satisfactory and is not altogether creditable to us. With regard to the references made to workers patronising the aliens, I think it is hardly fair that any particular section of the community should be referred to in a matter like this. [A MEMBER: They all do it.] So far as my experience goes, alien labour and aliens themselves are most distinctly supported in aristocratic establishments. A few days ago, I had the pleasure of going into the Fremantle Club, and there I noticed that a full-blooded Chinaman was an accredited waiter. Whilst that sort of thing exists in the Fremantle Club—and that is not the only matter which exists—it is hardly fair that reference should be made to the workers. The working classes in this community are in this position, that very often from the amount of the remuneration they receive, and the lack of employment at times, they are bound to make a penny go as far as possible. The system of competition in the labour market prevents them from always

choosing where they shall buy their stores of all sorts. They have to make their penny do the service of twopence very often; and under these circumstances it is not surprising that if they can get a little more for their money they should occasionally seek to do so. Many of them are driven to it by absolute, grinding necessity. I am quite satisfied that the attention of the workers has been called to this matter time after time, and I am glad to say a great number of them—a great majority of them—do not give the aliens any support whatever. The support which the aliens get is derived from such districts as St. George's Terrace rather than from the quarters round about West Perth railway station. I trust that this motion will receive the assent of the House, and that its proposition will have the good effect of educating the House a little on the subject. I trust also that the clubs will get a hint. If only we can educate our superior clubs to the level now reached by the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) and the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Wallace), I am quite satisfied that the time of the House will not have been wasted.

**MR. BUTCHER** (the mover): I beg to move that the word "worker" be added to the motion. It will then read:—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is advisable that the Government should introduce a Bill this session which will have the effect of preventing any Asiatics from competing in trade with merchants, traders, and workers in this State.

**MR. JACOBY**: What about vegetable growers?

**MR. DAGLISH**: Protect those too. Why not add vegetable growers?

**A LABOUR MEMBER**: And laundrymen.

**THE SPEAKER**: Did anyone second that amendment?

**MR. J. M. HOPKINS** (Boulder): I will second it. I will not detain the House at this late hour by speaking.

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended put, and passed on the voices.

**MOTION—BRANDING STOCK, TO LEGISLATE.**

**MR. W. J. BUTCHER** (Gascoyne): In moving the motion standing in my

name, I wish to say this is a matter which affects only the stock-breeders, or in other words the squatters, of this State—those much-abused squatters. It is well known that the squatters of this country have repeatedly endeavoured to induce the late Government to bring in some kind of Brands Bill which would be workable, and would protect the squatter against what is commonly known as "duffing." I have been informed that the Chief Inspector of Stock in this State has endeavoured many times to induce the late Premier, Sir John Forrest, to bring in this necessary legislation; but the late Premier always refused to do so—for what reason I fail to see. The time has arrived when it is absolutely necessary that a workable Bill should be brought in. I have suggested that one should be brought in on lines similar to those of the Queensland Act, which is recognised as being the most complete Brands Act at present in force in the whole of the Commonwealth. The Chief Inspector of Stock, I may mention, informed me the other day that he had information laid before him, or given him, that there was a party somewhere within this State "duffing." The inspector took the earliest opportunity of visiting the locality, with the result that he caught the man in question practically red-handed, and found in his possession a number of sheep with their ears bleeding, the ear-marks having been obliterated by lopping off the ears. I have this from the Chief Inspector of Stock, who tells me that owing to the faulty nature of the Act he was unable to do anything, for the simple reason that he did not see the man cutting the ears off. Owing to the deficiencies of the Act he was not even in a position to seize the sheep and confiscate them. Had the Act allowed of so little as that, it would have gone a great way towards preventing the occurrence of such cases. I mention this instance just to show that a new Brands Act is necessary, not only to my way of thinking, but also in the opinion of the Chief Inspector of Stock, who is an authority on these matters. I shall not speak any farther on this motion, but shall merely move it. I therefore move:—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is advisable, in the interests of the stock-breeders of this State, that the Government should, this

session, introduce a new Brands Act on similar lines to that at present in force in Queensland.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mount Magnet): I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

#### PAPERS—KURRAWANG WOOD SYNDICATE.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder) moved:

That all papers, reports, documents, etc., bearing on or relating to the concessions and privileges granted to the Kurrawang Wood Syndicate, be laid on the table.

He said he would simply move the motion, to which, he understood, there was no opposition. There was some doubt existing in the minds of hon. members as to the nature of the privileges which had been granted to the Kurrawang Wood Syndicate, and it was therefore desirable the House should be fully informed on the subject.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH (Wellington) seconded.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:52 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

### Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 16th July, 1901.

Papers presented—Question: Sewerage, Perth and Fremantle, Funds—Question: Dredging at South Perth—Motion: Bush Fires Act, to amend—Roads Act Amendment Bill, postponement—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS (HON. C. Sommers): 1, Mines Regulation No. 26; 2, London Agency, Operations; 3, Royal

Commission on Collie Coal Dispute, Report; 4, Phillips River Goldfields, Mail Service.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—SEWERAGE, PERTH AND FREMANTLE, FUNDS.

HON. H. BRIGGS, for Hon. M. L. Moss, asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Whether any portion of the sum of £150,000, appearing in the schedule to "The Loan Act, 1896," for sewerage for Perth and Fremantle, has yet been raised. 2, Has the said amount of £150,000, or any part thereof, been re-appropriated by Parliament, and if so, what amount, and by what Act and for what purpose. 3, Has any part of the work for which the said sum was allocated, and if so, what part, been undertaken. 4, Has the Government advanced or granted to the City Council of Perth any amount, and if so, how much towards drainage works. If any amount has been advanced, what are the terms on which the money has been lent. 5, Have any moneys been granted to the City Council of Perth for drainage works out of General Revenue since 1896. If so, what amount. 6, Have any such grants been sanctioned by Parliament. 7, Have any grants or loans been made out of the said loan moneys or from revenue to the Fremantle Municipality for drainage purposes; and if so, what amounts, the dates of the grants, and the authority for the grants or loans.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes; £96,943 14s. 1d. 2, £40,000 was re-appropriated by 61 Vict., No. 9, for the purposes set out in the Schedule to the Act. 3, Yes. Contour surveys, collection of data, and various investigations in regard to both Perth and Fremantle. 4, The sum of £40,000 has been advanced to the Perth City Council for expenditure on drainage works; the cost of which is to be debited to the Capital cost of the drainage works as a whole when completed. 5, Yes, £200 as a special grant for the Leederville-Perth drain within the Perth Municipality. This amount was provided on the Estimates, 1900-1901. 6, Part 2 of the Loan Estimates was passed by Parliament, in which reference is made to the nature of works to be undertaken. There does not appear to have been any direct authorisation. 7, No.