

deal about it. No private person would build two parallel lines of railway to tap the same country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Lush is willing.

MR. A. FORREST: The Government have to satisfy hon. members, I suppose, and satisfy the member for Nannine, who wants to tell his constituents that he has got the railway for them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, I will not.

MR. A. FORREST: I believe you will. I think we should not have two costly railways tapping the same back country and competing in the same traffic. The hon. member for Geraldton says if anything is done to delay the Murchison line he will block the other. I do not think that threat is fair, because the line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie is of such importance that there should be no question about it. We may have to spend a million in making a good harbour at Fremantle, and we may have to spend another million in making another harbour at Geraldton, whereas one railway from the coast to the back reefing country would serve the requirements of both these great goldfields. These two railways are the most important items in this Loan Bill, and no doubt they will be both carried by this House. I have thrown out this suggestion for consideration, because if these railways were laid out by private persons, only one connection with the coast would be made for the economical working of the goldfields traffic. The other works proposed in the schedule are of minor importance, and I shall not take up time by speaking on them now. In the item of "Roads and bridges" I want to see the Northern parts of the colony get a fair share; and unless we get an assurance that the roads and bridges and harbour improvements are to be extended to the Northern districts in fair proportion, I shall oppose that appropriation. I think that we Northern members should pull together, and see if we cannot get something for the improvement of the Northern coast. One portion of the district I represent (West Kimberley) pays to the general revenue £10,000 per annum; and yet it has never had a sixpence of public money spent in it. That is the port of Broome, which should have a jetty. I am sure the good sense of the

House will agree that if this Bill is a fair and reasonable one, and if, as the Government have promised, the whole amount is not to be raised at once, it would be better to pass one Bill for a million and a half than to reduce this amount and leave the Government to come down next year with another Loan Bill for part of the amount. Lenders do not look particularly to see what items are included in a Loan Bill, because they have the security of the whole colony for their loan. If the Government could not raise the money, I have no doubt the proprietors of the Wealth of Nations Mine would lend them a million.

MR. LEFROY moved the adjournment of the debate until the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:40 o'clock, p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th August, 1894.

Railway Platform, &c., at East Northam—Leave of Absence to Mr. Darlot—Defence Forces Bill: third reading—Excess Bill, 1893: third reading—Postponement of Orders of the Day—Municipal Institutions Bill: further considered in committee—Point of Order as to Members voting in a Division—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### RAILWAY PLATFORM, &c., AT EAST NORTHAM.

MR. MONGER, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways,—

1. Whether the Government had sanctioned a railway siding at East Northam, and on what conditions?

2. Whether representations were not submitted to the effect that a platform in a more central position in that town would have proved more beneficial to a greater number of residents?

3. What provision did the Government intend making for the general railway requirements of Northam; and if these would not be sufficient without giving special facilities to certain residents at the end of that town?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. The Government have promised a siding at East Northam for the use of the general public, after repeated and continued application from the residents of East Northam, and more recently from the Municipality of Northam. The Government are not, however, able to take any active steps in this direction at present, as it would interfere with the contractor's workshops.

2. Representations have been submitted to erect a main station in a more central position in Northam; and this question was discussed by me, at Northam, in the presence of the members of the Municipality, and residents of both East and West Northam, when it was shown by myself, and the Engineer-in-Chief, that it was impracticable to remove the present Northam station to a more central position without incurring a very large expenditure—both for acquiring land, and for reducing the grounds to a level. It was pointed out that while the Government were anxious to give every facility to the residents of Northam in the way of station accommodation, it was too much to expect the Government to provide two stations in the small town of Northam for the receipt and delivery of goods, when such towns as Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Perth only have one station for such purposes; and as it was impracticable to provide a station in the centre of the town, except at a cost beyond the means of the Government, the main station at Northam must be either on the site of the present station or at East Northam.

3. For the general railway requirements at Northam, the Government now propose to increase the accommodation at the present station site by putting in further goods sidings, and by increasing

the goods shed, the station building, and the platform; and when this is done, the whole district of Northam and the general public should be effectively served, without providing greater facilities for the other end of the town or district only. It is probable the Milling Company will have a private siding, for which they will pay.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On the motion of Mr. HARPER, leave of absence for fourteen days was granted to the hon. member for the Murchison (Mr. Darlôt).

#### DEFENCE FORCES BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

#### EXCESS BILL, 1893.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### POSTPONEMENT OF ORDERS OF THE DAY.

On the order of the day for the resumption of the debate upon the second reading of the Loan Bill,

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): said he understood it was the wish of some members that this debate be postponed until the evening sitting; he therefore moved that the Order of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of the next Order.

Agreed to.

THE SPEAKER: I wish to draw attention to the growing custom of altering the Orders of the Day as they appear on the Notice Paper, which may be very inconvenient to some members. Of course the Notice Paper is of no use to members if it is liable to be departed from at any moment. A member may be interested in some Bill or some motion, and, seeing it low down on the Notice Paper, he may not attend until that stage is likely to be reached; and if that Bill or motion, owing to the postponement of other Orders of the Day, be taken out of its sequential order, that member may not have an opportunity of taking part in the debate. It is an inconvenient practice; it creates surprise, and ought to be avoided.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I quite agree with what your Honor says.

The Government are quite prepared to go on with the Loan Bill, but I understood it was the wish of members that it should be taken after tea.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.  
IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 142 (continued)—Lighting rate:

MR. LEAKE said that progress was reported on this clause to enable the hon. member for Perth to move an amendment. As the hon. member was not present, he would suggest that the clause be passed *pro forma*, and reconsidered upon the recommittal of the Bill.

MR. JAMES said he was under the impression that the Attorney General was prepared to alter this section in the direction indicated the other evening. He (Mr. James) had some amendments, of which he had given notice, his object being to prevent an injustice that would otherwise arise if the clause remained as it stood. He wanted to provide that the rate for lighting should fall, in the same proportion, on the shoulders of those who enjoyed the light, whether they had the light at present or in the future. This clause provided that a moiety of the expense of lighting should come out of the general rate, and a moiety out of a special lighting rate, and he wanted to provide that the residents of those parts of the town that were now lighted should have their light on the same conditions, in this respect, as the residents of those parts of the town that might be lighted after the passing of this Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN reminded the committee that the hon. member for Perth had signified his intention of moving to strike out this clause, and substituting another clause.

MR. JAMES said, in that case, he would deal with the new clause when it was brought forward. In the absence of the hon. member for Perth, he would now move that the present clause be struck out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said this Bill had been considered by the municipal councils of the whole colony before it was introduced, and in no instance had there been any objection raised to this clause. The hon. member was himself a member of the City Council, and he wondered why the hon. member did not bring forward these suggestions

when the draft Bill was under the consideration of that body?

MR. JAMES said he was not present at the time, and he did not think that the attention of the Municipal Conference had been drawn to the provisions of this clause. He did not think it was just at all that those who enjoyed the light now should be placed on a different footing from those who might enjoy it hereafter.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this clause would not prevent the council from erecting lamps and lighting any portion of the city they chose fit, if they were able to do so, without imposing any special rate upon that part of the municipality. If, however, the council were unwilling to do so, and the ratepayers in that part of the town insisted upon it, the council would be empowered to levy a special rate to defray a moiety of the cost. That was all.

Motion put and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 143:

Put and passed.

Clause 144—Prevention of fires:

MR. LEAKE said this clause empowered a municipal council to supply water for extinguishing fires, from tanks or other reservoirs. This might work a possible hardship where water was a scarce commodity. Take, for instance, a goldfields municipality—Coolgardie or Southern Cross. The Bill, it must be remembered, related to the whole colony, and, if there should be a fire at Coolgardie, and some fortunate or unfortunate person happened to have caught a few hundred gallons of rain water in his tanks, it would be rather hard upon him to have his water supply wasted upon a neighbour's fire, when possibly the small amount of water available would never put it out.

MR. SIMPSON said the probability was that the water would be more valuable than the building that was on fire.

MR. A. FORREST said he was connected, as a director, with one of the insurance companies, and his experience was that, as a rule, no attempt was made to put out fires, except at Perth or Fremantle. Generally, people let the building burn down, especially if it was insured.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 145—Council may construct fountains and urinals:

MR. JAMES moved to add the words "and privies," as it might be necessary to erect these conveniences.

Agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 146—Council to prepare annual estimate, prior to the first day of November in each year:

MR. JAMES said there was hardly enough time now given to prepare these annual estimates before the first day of November, and he moved an amendment to substitute the "first week" in November for the "first day."

Agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 147—Income of municipality, how made up:

MR. JAMES said that sub-section 6 of this clause provided that amongst other sources of income were the fines and penalties payable to the corporation, excepting so much thereof as was "payable to any informer." He wished to add, after the word "informer," the words "not being a police constable." He did not know why a constable, a public officer, should receive portion of a fine for doing his duty.

MR. LEAKE thought there was a special provision in the Police Act dealing with fines inflicted where the information was laid by a policeman.

MR. A. FORREST thought it would be very undesirable to exclude the police from sharing in these fines. They were always about, night and day, and were more likely to witness breaches of the law than ordinary civilians, and he saw no reason why they should not receive half the fine payable to the informer. Other people might not bother their heads to lay an information.

MR. SOLOMON would be sorry to see these words inserted. It would take away from the police all incentive in many cases, and he thought they were well entitled to half the fine in these cases.

Amendment negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 148:

Put and passed.

Clause 149—Lands exempt from rating:

MR. LEAKE said he noticed that among the exemptions were lands "be-

longing to any public body created by statute." What would be the effect of these words upon a body like the Western Australian Bank, which was incorporated by statute, or the Gas Company? He did not think it was ever intended to exempt these bodies from this rating clause.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said they were not exempted now, and these words were in the existing Act.

MR. JAMES said that sub-section (3) exempted lands "belonging to any religious body, and used or occupied as a place of residence of a minister of religion." He moved that this sub-section be struck out. He did so for these reasons: whilst he thought they ought to exclude from rating property belonging to religious bodies used exclusively as a place of public worship or Sunday school, he did not think the same arguments applied to the residences of ministers of religion. All religious bodies could not afford the luxury of a manse, and those who could afford it might well afford to pay the rates upon those residences. As a matter of fact it was very few religious bodies who had built on their own lands a residence for their ministers, and these ministers had to pay rates, whereas the fortunate few who happened to have a residence provided for them on property belonging to their congregation were exempted from rates. By exempting these wealthier bodies from taxation, we were granting them greater privileges than were enjoyed by other religious bodies, instead of subjecting them, as he thought they ought, to some taxation at all events for the privileges they enjoyed. This sub-section went on the principle of giving to those who had, and taking away from those who had not. So far as the municipality was concerned, it incurred the same expenditure in providing roads and footpaths in the neighbourhood of the residence of a minister who was exempted from rates as in the vicinity of private houses, the occupants of which had to pay taxes, whether they were ministers of religion or not.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this clause settled the question of the rating of property belonging to religious bodies, and it was simply a copy of the Act passed only two

or three years ago, and it was merely introduced into this Bill because they were consolidating some thirteen or fourteen Acts in this one measure. The Government did not propose to lend their assistance to alter this clause in any way. It was well settled, after much debate at the time, and he thought it was a just clause, and he hoped the committee would support the Government in endeavouring to retain it, otherwise they should have a question which was much debated and settled in that House only two or three years ago, reopened again. He was sure that circumstances had not changed since that time. They were doing little or nothing in the way of aiding the religious bodies labouring in their midst. [Mr. A. FORREST: The Government give them £4,000 a year.] And the Government paid as much to the Municipal Council. These councils, it appeared to him, wanted everything that came to their net. As soon as a religious denomination was exempted from rates an attempt was made to attack it.

MR. MORAN said this was only a fresh outbreak of an old disease to which the hon. member for East Perth was subject. The hon. member might as well go the whole hog while he was about it, and levy rates upon all churches and chapels belonging to religious bodies. These bodies had to support their Churches, and they also had to support their ministers, and he did not see the slightest difference between levying rates upon church buildings as upon the minister's residence on the same property. He thought it was well worthy the attention of any young and aspiring politician, whether he should not turn his mind to some of the bigger questions of the day instead of imposing penalties upon struggling religious bodies. He thought the hon. member might well wait until he achieved a position of some importance as a civic guide before arrogating to himself the position of a dictator upon questions of this nature.

MR. A. FORREST said he intended to support the amendment, because his experience during the last eighteen months as Mayor of the City led him to believe there were too many properties exempted from rates. What with Government property, and church property, and orphan-

age property, and school property, the Municipal Council was deprived of a large amount of income which it could ill afford to lose. He thought the time had arrived when these bodies should be made to pay their share as well as anybody else. If he had his own way he would strike out this clause altogether and let the Government pay rates like other people, and keep their subsidy if they liked. He believed the Municipality would gain by it. The Government had the best roads and the best footpaths in the town about their property, and yet they paid no rates. Then, as to religious bodies, why should some ministers be taxed and others not? It was those who belonged to the richest denominations who were exempted, while the poor minister who had to live in a private house had to pay rates. Why should wealthy denominations that owned nearly half the town, have roads and footways made around their properties, and contribute nothing towards them in the shape of rates? Surely those who belonged to these wealthy congregations could afford to pay rates as well as private individuals. If the hon. member went to a division, he would go with him. He thought everybody who had property should pay rates, whether it was the Government or anybody else.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is ridiculous nonsense.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said if it was "ridiculous nonsense" he was going to support it, at any rate. He should like the Attorney General to face the arguments of the hon. members for East Perth and for West Kimberley, and say why a minister of the Gospel who lived in a private house, not belonging to a religious denomination, should have to pay rates, while the minister who lived in a house owned by a religious body should be exempted from paying rates? In order to escape paying a rate, these religious bodies must be able not only to keep their minister, but also to build a house for him, while in the case of a weaker congregation that could not afford to do so, their minister had to pay a rate. He saw no consistency in that. It was simply giving to the rich and taking away from the poor. Large tracts of land within the municipality were given away to religious bodies in the

olden days, and these properties had cost those religious bodies nothing in the way of taxation, though in some cases the properties yielded a considerable amount of revenue, now that roads and other improvements had been made around them. He saw no just reason for this exemption. If the amendment now before the committee should be negatived, he thought that, to be consistent, they ought to exempt the residence of every religious minister from being rated.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he also intended to support the amendment, because he thought it was a fair and just amendment. In practice, the principle introduced in this clause let off the heads of the Churches from paying rates, as they got their houses free, whilst the poor curate or ill-paid minister had to pay rates. There was the Church of England, for instance, occupying two whole blocks, with a frontage to the main street, where there was a good road and good footpaths, which had to be kept up by the municipality, although the owners of the property paid no rates. They derived just as much benefit from these roads and footpaths as any poor ratepayer in the city did; and he knew of no sound argument why such properties should be exempted from taxation. As to the Government subsidising municipalities, that had nothing to do with the principle now under discussion. The Government also subsidised religious bodies out of public funds, and these bodies were further subsidised by the municipality, in being exempted from having to pay any rates. He hoped the hon. member would go to a division upon his amendment.

MR. RANDELL said the amendment would have his support. He looked upon this exemption of rates as so much added to the stipend of a minister, not at the expense of his congregation, but at the expense of the general body of ratepayers. As had been already pointed out, the present law operated unjustly in the case of ministers who did not have the good fortune to live in a house built upon Church property. Every denomination could not afford to have a manse. There were denominations in town who received no assistance from public funds, and who had no manse for their ministers, yet these ministers would have to pay rates under this clause. He did

not think there was much analogy in the argument that if you exempted churches and chapels you should also exempt the minister's residence. A church was built and supported out of the pockets of the members of the congregation, and was used for no other purpose than a church or place of worship, and every member of the congregation paid rates for the houses they lived in. He believed that in England all ministers of religion — except, perhaps, the parish minister — had to pay rates and taxes; they had to pay both the parish rate and the Queen's tax. Therefore it was no novel principle that was sought to be introduced by this amendment, and, as the question had been raised, he thought the distinction should be wiped out between the position of one denomination and another in this respect. He thought that all property, or nearly all property, in the city should be rated. He did not know what about the Government, so long as they continued to pay the municipality a subsidy. He could not agree with the hon. member for West Kimberley that the municipality would be a gainer if the Government paid rates and withdrew the subsidy, but he did not expect that this Government subsidy was going to last long. They were reducing it in the other colonies, and, when it was withdrawn here, as he was afraid it would be sooner or later, he thought it would be only right to call upon the Government to pay rates in proportion to the value of their property.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said the argument of those in favour of the amendment was this: because an injustice might be done to one or two ministers who might have to pay a rate, a positive injustice must be done to the many who were exempted from paying. He would point out that they were not seeking in this clause to introduce any new legislation; if they were doing so there might be something in the argument. But this principle had been in operation for some years, and it was adopted after a good deal of discussion and consideration; and, for his part, he saw no reason for interfering with it. The tendency of the clause was to give a certain privilege to all religious bodies alike—not to any particular body. No denomination was

given any preferential claim, and the religious body who did not participate in the privilege to-day might do so to-morrow. It was open to all religious denominations—bodies who received so little and did so much for their country. The hon. member for West Kimberley referred to the fact that they received £4,000 a year from the Government—a paltry meed towards the support of religion in this enormous territory. Slight, however, as this assistance was, it was a welcome one, and, he maintained, a deserving one. A great deal of fuss had been made about this exemption from rates of a few ministers of religion—what would it amount to, after all? The loss sustained by the municipality could not possibly be great, whereas, on the other hand, a wrong principle would be introduced, which would only be the thin edge of the wedge which the hon. member for West Kimberley and others had been seeking to introduce for many years, but, so far, without success.

Mr. RANDELL said there was one aspect of the case which had not been touched upon: by exempting these ministers from paying rates you deprived them of their citizenship. (Mr. MARMION: They will forgive you that.) He knew ministers who would rather pay rates and be allowed to exercise the franchise.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said there was nothing to prevent their paying rates, if they liked to.

Mr. JAMES said the Commissioner of Crown Lands was quite right in saying that this was a question of principle rather than of revenue; but he thought the principle was altogether in favour of the amendment, both as regards consistency and justice. Those who sought exemption from a law that applied to the majority should justify their claim to such exemption. The Commissioner of Crown Lands was entirely wrong when he said that the result of this amendment would be to do a positive injustice to the many for the sake of the few. In Perth, at any rate, the majority of ministers did not reside in manse- or houses exempt from rates; the majority would have to pay taxation under this clause.

Mr. LEAKE did not know whether the Commissioner of Crown Lands had spoken as a minister of religion or a Minister of

the Crown when he opposed this amendment. He did not know that he (Mr. Leake) could claim to be regarded as a religious member, but he was going to support the amendment religiously, at any rate. He thought they should be consistent, and treat all people alike, and, if they were not able to exclude all religious ministers from being rated, they should not make a law in favour of the few. The principle of the clause was to ensure a revenue to the municipality from a particular source, and, unless under very exceptional circumstances, every citizen should contribute to that revenue.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the consideration of this question opened up some important side issues. What was the definition of a minister of religion, and what was the definition of religion itself? Supposing half a dozen men banded themselves together and assumed the functions of a religious body, and they had no place of worship of their own, but held their services in some hall or other building, was that building to be exempt from taxation? Or these people might say, "Other denominations have land granted to them by the Crown, why should we also not have a grant of land upon which we could erect a building which would be exempt from taxation?" He thought that all sections of the community should be treated alike in the matter of taxation, without respect to anybody's religious opinions.

Mr. MORAN said there was no analogy between a public hall, used occasionally for a religious service, and a church or chapel. A hall might be used for a place of worship one night, and for a concert or dancing another night. One was built for speculative purposes, while the other was used exclusively for religious worship. It had been said that these Church properties received as much benefit from roads and footpaths made by the municipal councils as did other properties that paid rates. He happened to belong to a religious body who had a building on the top of the hill, and who had the second largest congregation in Perth, and that building had not a decent footpath near it, except what had been made by the congregation itself.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not know what the object of members was, exactly—whether they

desired to strike out the clause altogether, or whether they desired to include persons in the clause who were not already included in it. If the hon. member would propose that all religious ministers be exempted, he might have a chance of carrying it. This question was one that required some consideration. It was a principle that had existed for a long time in this colony, and he had heard no complaint about it before, nor any demand that the law should be altered. He knew this, that all the religious bodies in this colony were, what he might term, languishing; they were very short of funds, and those who supported them were not very numerous. There were certain sections of the community who kept the churches going to a very large extent. If it was proposed to rate the minister's residence, he thought they ought to rate all Church property as well, because he failed to see the difference between one building and another, so long as they belonged to the Church, whether it was the building in which the minister lived or the building in which he officiated. They would be placing a large burden upon these religious bodies if they were to tax all their property, and he failed to see how they were consistently to make a distinction between one property and another. His view of the case was this: in this immense country, with its scattered population, where none of the Churches were rich, and where there was so much for these bodies to do, and so few to do it, he certainly thought the Committee should hesitate before taking away any of their funds or impose any further burdens upon them.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) was sure the Committee would like to be just in a matter of this sort, and there was no denying the fact that until that afternoon this question had not been discussed in any way since the House agreed to exempt this kind of property from taxation some years ago. It was a very meagre notice to give these people that it was proposed to levy a tax upon them. The hon. member for Nandine said he thought the Government were inconsistent because they did not also allow a private house occupied by a minister to be exempted as well as if the house was Church property. He did not see any inconsistency, because the relief granted

by this clause was to the owners of the property (the Church), and not to the minister. Any man might call himself a minister of religion. He rather believed that in course of time each one of them would have a religious denomination of his own, and then they would want all their houses free from rates. He asked the committee to leave these religious bodies in possession of this small privilege which they had enjoyed so long, and not to rob them of it at a moment's notice. If they began to tax the minister's residence, they would next want to tax the Sunday school, and then the church itself, because they would all be probably on the same ground. But if they were to exempt ministers wherever they lived they would be departing from the principle of the clause altogether, because the object was to relieve Church property, and not the minister. There would be some difficulty in exempting ministers individually, because a minister might live in one house to-day and in another house to-morrow.

MR. RANDELL said the Attorney General argued that because this had been the law for some time it would not be wise or just to alter it. But were they not continually doing that sort of thing? Only a year or two ago the Attorney General himself introduced into the Municipal Institutions Act a little clause which had for its object the very same thing as this amendment, namely, the taxation of certain Church property.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marnion): Property occupied by other people than members of the Church, and rented for business purposes, and let to tenants.

MR. RANDELL: Was not the minister a tenant of the Church also? How could they draw any distinction between one Church property and another Church property? The property referred to was exempted under the old Act, but the amended Act removed the exemption, and this amendment simply sought to do the same sort of thing. He saw no difference at all in the principle involved. Some years ago, the minister of the Church to which he belonged left the colony, and the officers of the Church let the manse to a private citizen, and the moment they did so the City Council came down upon them and asked them



for the rates, and they paid the rates, and he believed were the first religious body in the town to do so, though they were receiving no State aid, and would consider it a disgrace if they did accept State aid to support their own religious principles. [THE PREMIER: You accept land from the State, anyhow.] The majority of Church ministers had to pay rates, and he did not see why the principle should not be general. If it was right and proper in one case, it was right and proper in another.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said he saw no analogy between a building erected by a religious body for the purposes of trade and profit and a building erected for their minister to live in. The minister entered into competition with nobody and spent his time in doing good; the tenants of the other property entered into competition with everybody else in the same line of business. In that case the Church authorities became landlords, like other landlords, and received rents for their properties. It was only right such properties should be rated.

MR. A. FORREST said that a property not many yards away, and now belonging to a member of that House, formerly belonged to the Church, and had belonged to it for 50 years, and never paid any rates or taxes, though the municipality made roads and footpaths around it at great expense. That property was sold by the Church for £4,000, and, directly afterwards, the purchaser had to pay rates.

MR. RICHARDSON thought it would throw some light on the subject if they had a definition of what a religious minister meant. He was not sure whether it had any legal or technical definition. Was it a man who wore a black coat and a white tie, or was it a man paid to preach the Gospel, or was it the man who ministered religion in its truest sense, and who endeavoured to inculcate religious principles and true religious doctrines? It appeared to him that anyone could claim to be a minister of religion if he ministered to any religion, and could therefore claim to have his residence exempted from rates under this clause. [MR. VENN: If on Church property.] He should like a definition of "Church" too. Was not this section a tax imposed upon the small,

and humble, and inopulent religious body, while exempting the rich, and numerous and more influential body? The poorer the body, the more they pressed on it.

MR. MORAN said the hon. member for the De Grey had made out a case against himself. The only thing he would have to do, to get exemption from paying rates, was to start a little sect of his own.

Question put—that the sub-section be struck out—and a division called for.

MR. MORAN (when members had divided): Religion triumphs once more!

AN HON. MEMBER: If you call yourself religious, I am glad I'm not religious.

MR. A. FORREST rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member for Yilgarn in order in calling members on this side of the House atheists?

AN HON. MEMBER: He didn't say that.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No, no.

The result of the division was:—

Ayes ...	...	...	10
Noes ...	...	...	15

Majority against ... 5

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

Question thus negatived.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said, the committee having declined to strike out the sub-section altogether, he wished to move an amendment which would have the effect of exempting from rates the residence of every religious minister, whether he lived in a private house or on Church property. He did not see how they could consistently do otherwise. Why should the pastors and ministers of some denominations be deprived of a privilege granted to the ministers of other denominations, whether he be the Dean of Perth, the Roman Catholic Bishop, the chairman of the Wesleyan Conference, or anybody else? He moved that the words "any religious body and used" be

struck out; the sub-section would then exempt the residence of any minister of religion from having to pay rates.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he agreed that all ministers should have their residences free from rates, if some did; but there was this difficulty with regard to those who lived in private houses, the rates were struck at a certain time of the year, and only once a year, and, if a minister happened to leave a house soon after the rates were struck that house would not be rated at all that year, and the municipality would lose the rates. The minister, according to this, would be exempt from rates, wherever he went to live, and complications would arise.

MR. LEAKE thought there was force in what the hon. member for Gascoyne said; but he thought the difficulty might be got over in this way: let the clause be passed as printed, and move at the end that no minister of religion shall be required to pay rates. They must remember this: that it was the land that was rated, and not the individual; and a tenement might change hands often during the year.

MR. SOLOMON said the question of rating Church property occupied the attention of the Fremantle Municipal Council some time ago, and the matter in dispute was referred to the Supreme Court, the property having been let by the Church to a private individual, and it was claimed that no rates were payable in respect of it. There was also this fact to be considered, that by exempting all ministers from paying rates they disfranchised these people. He should certainly vote against the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. JAMES said he had an amendment to move in sub-section 6. That section read as follows:—"No rate whatsoever shall be struck upon any land or buildings used exclusively as a hospital, benevolent asylum, orphanage, public school, private school (being the property of a religious body), public library, public museum, or mechanics' institute." He moved that the following words be struck out: "private school" (being the property of a religious body)." He did not see why a private school should be exempted, simply because it was held in property belonging to a religious body, any more than a private

school held in a building owned by a private individual. If they exempted all school buildings he would not mind, but he saw no just cause for exempting one school and rating another in the same street, perhaps.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this provision also had been passed by the House only two or three years back, after much discussion, on the ground that they should grant some relief to those religious bodies who used their buildings for philanthropic, charitable, or scholastic purposes; and it was considered that Church property used as a private school came within the purview of that principle. He saw no reason, for his part, for altering the decision which the House arrived at on that occasion.

MR. SOLOMON said that in Fremantle the Church of England had lots of private houses let to private individuals, and, he could not see, if one of these houses should be used as a private school why it should be exempt from rates, any more than any other school held in a private person's house.

MR. RANDELL said the object of the Government of this colony seemed to be to pauperise all religious bodies. He could not see why private schools should be exempted simply because they happened to be held in premises belonging to a religious body. The principle had been recognised that Church property let to tenants for business purposes should be rated, and he failed to see the distinction between property let for school purposes. He did not think the Attorney General had given the true reason why these words were inserted in the existing Act; though, perhaps, it was not worth while referring to it now. He (Mr. Randell) was aware of the reason. [AN HON. MEMBER: What was it?] It was the Grammar School at Fremantle.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): That was not the reason at all.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought the reason why these words were inserted in the present Act was because some Sunday school buildings were used during the week for private schools under the auspices of the same religious body.

MR. A. FORREST said the Girls' High School, in Perth, a flourishing in-

stitution, was, he believed, held in Church property, and, for that reason, paid no rates. Was that fair to other private schools that were compelled to pay rates? This High School charged high fees to the scholars, and why should it not be rated like any other school?

MR. JAMES said they did not care what the reasons were two or three years ago for inserting this provision in the Act; what they wanted to know was what reason there was for inserting it now. If the principle could not be justified why should they continue it? Why should these schools, held in premises that happened to be Church property, be allowed to enter into unfair competition with schools held in premises that were private property? One school did as much good as the other. If these Church premises were exempted because they were used for scholastic purposes, why should they not exempt all other premises used for scholastic purposes?

Upon the question being put—that the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the Bill—the Chairman of Committees announced that on the voices, he thought the noes had it, whereupon Mr. Simpson and Mr. James called for a division.

The doors having been locked,

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member for Geraldton (who was sitting with the noes) having called for a division, when he (the Chairman) had said he thought the noes had it, must vote with the ayes.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said as the hon. member for East Perth (who was also sitting with the noes) had also called for a division, must he not, too, vote with the ayes?

THE CHAIRMAN said he must.

Upon hearing this decision Mr. Simpson and Mr. James retired behind the bar of the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. members will please be seated.

MR. SHOLL said, with all due respect to the Chairman, he thought the Chairman was wrong.

THE CHAIRMAN said the two hon. members' votes must be counted with the ayes.

MR. SIMPSON, who took his usual seat on the Government cross benches, said he would like to ask from his place whether it was possible for him to leave the House before a division, when the tellers had not been named?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. The doors are locked.

MR. SIMPSON: And if I stand in the gangway, Sir?

THE CHAIRMAN: I had to request hon. members to be seated, and I did so.

MR. SIMPSON wanted to know if, in the event of his not being seated, his vote was counted.

THE CHAIRMAN said it was.

MR. RANDELL thought the practice in the House had always been, if members had inadvertently called for a division, not to tie them to it, but if from inadvertence or other causes they crossed the gangway their vote was counted on the side they intended to vote upon. He should like the ruling of the Speaker.

THE CHAIRMAN said he was bound by the Standing Orders.

MR. RANDELL: I think there was a misunderstanding of the question put to the House. As Chairman, Sir, you were aware these members intended to say "no," and not "yes."

MR. SIMPSON begged to direct the attention of the Chairman to the fact that under the Standing Orders, when the hour of 6:30 p.m. arrived, the House adjourned.

THE CHAIRMAN: Not when a division is taking place.

MR. SIMPSON: I was not aware of it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Wrong again.

MR. RICHARDSON (speaking from the left) was quite sure the Government would not take advantage of a catch division.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not a catch division.

THE CHAIRMAN said he must abide by the Standing Orders, and he did so. He heard the member for Geraldton challenge his statement that he thought the noes had it, and he had no alternative than to require the hon. member to vote contrary to what he (the Chairman) said.

The committee divided on the motion—that the words proposed to be struck out

stand part of the Bill—with the following result:

Ayes ... ..	14
Noes ... ..	11
Majority against...	3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Clarkson	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Connor	Mr. A. Forrest
Sir John Forrest	Mr. Harper
Mr. Hassell	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. James	Mr. Keep
Mr. Marunion	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Moran	Mr. Paterson
Mr. Pearce	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Piesse	Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. R. F. Sholl	Mr. Solomon
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Handell (Teller).
Sir J. G. Lee Steere	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Burt (Teller).	

The amendment was therefore negatived.

MR. JAMES asked if his vote might be taken on protest.

THE CHAIRMAN was understood to say the hon. member would have another opportunity of dealing with the matter.

At 6.40 p.m. the CHAIRMAN left the Chair for an hour.

At 7.30 p.m. the CHAIRMAN resumed the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN, referring to the point of order raised prior to the suspension of the sitting, quoted Standing Order 191, in support of the ruling he had given previously: "A member calling for a division shall not leave the House, and shall vote with those who, in the opinion of the Speaker, were in the minority."

Clause 149, which had been under discussion, was put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again on Monday, 3rd September.

#### LOAN BILL, 1894.

##### SECOND READING—RESUMED DEBATE.

Debate on the motion for the second reading resumed.

MR. LEFROY: My hon. friend the leader of this (the Opposition) side of the House, when addressing himself to this question the other evening, said he would not speak as representing a party, but as an individual member. I therefore consider it my duty, sitting beside him, and speaking on an important question such as this, to adopt the same line. The Premier, in the able speech with which he introduced this question, marshalled his facts with considerable skill, and added

his inferences with no inconsiderable astuteness; proving, no doubt to his own satisfaction, that we are in a position, as a colony, to borrow the amount of money proposed in the Bill. It appears that hon. members on this side of the House were thought, last evening, by a certain hon. member on the other side, to be bewailing or bemoaning the position of the colony. I do not think it is the desire of hon. members on this side to wail; but we do consider it a duty to criticise freely any important measure of this sort. I think we would not be doing our duty to the country if we adopted any other principle. With regard to this loan, I am not afraid to borrow money for advancing the interests of the colony, nor do I consider that, if we are in a position to do so, we should not go into the money market and borrow for the improvement of our national estate; but, at the same time, I think the amount now proposed is of very large proportions. The Premier told us this matter had been before the country, and that it was known to the colony and the different constituencies that the Government proposed to borrow a million and a half for certain public works. I am not so sure of that. I am not so sure that some constituencies in the colony would not bid us pause before writing our signature to the large amount proposed in this bill. When Responsible Government was introduced, the Parliament adopted the policy of borrowing for railway works, and I think that policy was generally approved at the time by the country, as well as by the Parliament then in existence. I also think that if we had not adopted that policy we would have lagged far behind in the race among the Australian colonies. There is no doubt that, seeing there is quick transit in other parts of the world, we should adopt the same lines of development in this colony; therefore, I think we were wise in adopting that policy when proposed by the present Government. At the same time, we ought to be careful and cautious, so as not to get into difficulties when borrowing extensively. Our revenue has been increasing for the last three and a half years, the total increase amounting to £266,932, and that is held out to us as an argument for more borrowing. But I say the increase is a *sine quid non*, because

we would be in a terrible state at the present time if our revenue had not increased. The increased amount of interest we have to pay on the loans of nearly two millions borrowed since the introduction of Responsible Government would have been such a drain on the revenue as must place us in a sorry position indeed if our revenue had not increased. The revenue was certain to increase under the borrowing policy at the time. Our Customs returns have increased naturally as a result of borrowing money, and of the money sent into the colony by individuals, causing the further importation of articles required in the colony, and these being taxed through the Customs; but this operation seems to me like taking money out of one pocket and putting it into the other. Although I approve of borrowing to a certain extent, I rather follow the lines adopted by my hon. friend (Mr. Loton), and would prefer to borrow less for the present. I do not see why this House should sanction a loan of one and a half millions, when it is not all required to be spent for nearly four years. I would rather start those urgent works which are required now, and after a lapse of twelve months, if the colony were prospering then as it is at present, we might empower the Government to go into the market and add to the indebtedness. With regard to the first item in the schedule, a railway from Mullewa to Cue, it is imperative that this line should be constructed or commenced as soon as possible; but I think, with my friend the hon. member for the Swan, it might be as well if only a portion of the amount required for this railway were sanctioned by the House at present. With regard to the question of constructing railways by private enterprise, I cannot agree with those hon. members who have supported that principle. The proposals alluded to by the hon. member for Albany were entirely different from the conditions under which land-grant railways have been built in this colony; but, at the same time, I cannot help thinking that in the long run we would have the same result. It is held out as an argument in favour of the private proposals that the deposit which the syndicate or company would have to place in the hands of the Government would be a sufficient guarantee that the works would be pro-

ceeded with satisfactorily. I do not believe in that. I believe, on the contrary, that if some of those gentlemen were to place in the hands of the Government a deposit of £10,000 or £20,000, as a guarantee, and if they found out afterwards they were not in a position to carry out the railway, they would approach some hon. member of this House—perhaps my good-natured friend the member for York (Mr. Monger), who is always so ready to take up the cudgels for those in distress, and I am sure, with his usual good nature, he would come forward—or, perhaps, the hon. member for Geraldton would try an appeal *ad misericordiam* in this House, and in one way or other the Government would probably be induced to give back the deposit instead of forfeiting it. There are certain people who argue that it would be most unpopular for the Government to hold a deposit when an appeal was made for the money to be returned. I know that persons who hold debentures in the Midland Railway Company say it would be a terribly hard thing if the Government forfeited the money which was deposited as a guarantee for the completion of that railway, because they say it was not the promoters' money that was deposited, but was really the shareholders' money subscribed for the work; and they say, "Why do harm to unfortunate people who were induced to invest their money innocently in that concern?" That is the sort of feeling, and I am sure we would have to give in to it; therefore I am not in favour of building railways by means of private enterprise, now that we have started the building of railways with State funds. The Coolgardie railway no doubt is necessary, and is urgent, and I think the sooner it is made the better. There is no doubt the discoveries of gold have been of great assistance to the finances of the colony during the last few years; and without those gold discoveries our position at present would have been very different from what it is; therefore it is for us to endeavour in every way to foster and cherish this goose that lays the golden egg. There are other questions with regard to the Donnybrook-Bridgetown railway and the Collie coalfield railway. I think the Bridgetown project ought to stop, for the present, for I do not think the condition of the colony

warrants me in voting for the expenditure of money on that work. I am sure that in the immediate future, as soon as we are in a position to build this railway, it will be necessary, for there is no doubt a great amount of good land in that part of the colony, and I hope that before long a railway will be made into that district; but at present the project should be held over, because we must be most cautious in the way in which we borrow extensively, and I hope that before two years are over we will be in a position to borrow sufficient money to carry on this work. For the present, I would rather see it held over. There are other questions with regard to additional rolling stock, and so on. Of course we require the rolling stock, but if the existing railways had been properly equipped, a great deal of the additional rolling stock now asked for would not be required. With regard to the item "Development of agriculture, including land purchase, clearing of land, draining," and so on, I think that item might stand over. I cannot understand why the Government require to go into the market and buy land, for I have never heard of any reason for doing so, and I should have thought there was sufficient Crown land, without having to purchase from private owners. Sufficient reasons for that item have not been given, and I cannot support it. With regard to the Collie coalfield railway, we have most excellent reports upon the coalfield, but I would like to see more of that coal raised and tested before consenting to borrow money for that railway, and I think that project might be held over for a time. If these two Southern railways are postponed for the present, there are many other items in the Bill which would bear consequent curtailment. Schools I think might be left out of the Loan Bill, for we ought to be able to build schools out of current revenue. Unfortunately, the principle crept into the last Loan Bill, and was skipped over, and I suppose it is for that reason that the Government have placed the item of schools in this Bill. But, if people want to have their children educated, the necessary schools ought to be built out of current revenue, and not out of loan money. I have now given my reasons why I shall not be prepared to support some of the items in

the schedule. So many arguments have been used by hon. members in this debate, that I do not want to go over the same ground, and weary the House by expressing my views to the same effect; but I am sure the Government will give us credit, on this side of the House, for performing a duty, when we vote on the items of the Bill, which we conscientiously consider we owe to the country. We do not wish to act in a spirit of factious opposition; and we claim to be imbued with as much patriotism, and as much anxiety to promote the interests of the country, as the hon. gentlemen who sit on the other side of the House. The debate last night seemed to have a somewhat harrowing effect on some hon. members. The only hon. member on whom it seemed to have a soothing effect was the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and on him it seemed to have a somniferous effect; so that he, at any rate, did not consider the utterances coming from this side of the House were of a wailing description. I merely rose to make a few remarks on the principles of the Bill, pointing out the direction in which I am likely to vote when the matters are to be dealt with in that form.

MR. PIESSE: I, with others, have much pleasure in congratulating the Premier on the able manner in which he has introduced this Loan Bill to the House. With regard to the financial aspect of the Bill, I shall not deal much with that, because it has been so ably spoken upon by those hon. members who make a study of finance. I wish to state my practical views on certain questions which have cropped up during the debate; and, before doing so, I would like to say the principal items which have caused discussion have been the two railways to the goldfields, which no doubt are warranted by the late important discoveries of gold, and by the successful developments of the fields during the past twelve months, which have attracted so much attention to their wonderful productiveness. Hon. members agree that these two railways must be constructed, and in order to properly develop our great goldfields it is certainly necessary that these fields shall be connected with the centres of population. I cannot agree with some speakers as to

the methods they would wish to see adopted for constructing the railways; that is with regard to syndicates. My experience of railway syndicates has been of long duration, for I have lived on a line of railway which is pointed to as the most successful of those constructed by syndicates, in the past, and that is the Great Southern Railway. We must give to that company every credit for its good intentions, and for the way in which its line has been built and equipped and worked up to the present. The company has had great disadvantages to contend with, and had the company's affairs not been in the hands of good financiers at Home—men of determined character, and men who were able to raise the funds necessary for carrying on the work—it is possible we would have seen just as much trouble with regard to that railway as occurred with regard to the Midland railway. At the time the concession was made to the promoters, the colony congratulated itself upon having got persons to construct that railway, and we all thought we were having a good work pushed through, and one which the colony was not capable of carrying out by itself. Had we then foreseen the difficulties that have since arisen, no doubt we should all have voted against the granting of that concession; and I will prove to-night that, although that railway has been looked upon as a great success, it has really been a bar to the settlement which we so much expected. The hon. member for Nannine mentioned last night that, had it not been for the death of Mr. Anthony Hordern, we should have seen much greater progress with regard to that railway; but I may tell the hon. member that, at the time of Mr. Hordern's death, he had sold his concession to a number of persons in England, as a speculation, and that at the time of his death he owned very few shares in the railway—in fact, not any shares. With all respect to his memory and to his efforts, there is no doubt his intention was to carry out a scheme of his own as to land settlement; but as to carrying out the objects or desires indicated in that concession of the railway, I think they were furthest from his mind. He never intended to carry out that railway scheme himself, and he had disposed of the concession, upon satisfactory terms, to financiers in England who afterwards

carried out the terms of the contract. No doubt had he lived he would have carried out his scheme of land settlement, or we may hope so; but, at the same time, his desire to do so was no argument in favour of land-grant syndicates, or syndicates of any kind. Although the proposals recently laid before the Government by Mr. Lush and others did not contain conditions as to land-grant payment, yet the experience we have had with regard to land-grant railways might also be repeated with regard to the railways proposed to be built by those syndicates. We know the difficulties that have occurred with regard to the Midland Company, and the Premier has already assured us that although these proposals were made to the Government, the parties were not prepared, at the time, to back them up with the money, that the money was not forthcoming, and that the parties would have to raise the money in the market, the same as Mr. Anthony Hordern, Mr. Waddington, and others had to do; so that by the time they had sold their concession to financial investors in London there would have been so much time lost to the country in the construction of these railways. We have been fooled enough by these syndicates, and I can assure hon. members that the syndicate system hitherto has been one of the greatest bars to settlement in the district in which I live. With all gratitude to the Great Southern Railway Company—and I have taken every opportunity of giving credit to that company, because they have carried out their conditions satisfactorily and well—yet their schemes of land settlement and other matters that were to follow the building of that railway have not been faithfully performed; and so it will be with any land-grant or other syndicate that you may enter into engagement with—we shall have these difficulties cropping up. I consider the Government acted wisely in rejecting the proposals of those gentlemen; and I think this colony should never again enter into arrangements with syndicates of any character or class to build a railway, if we can build it ourselves; and if we cannot undertake the work, let us wait until we get into a position to do so. Private syndicates for these purposes are a curse to the country; for though they may make their proposals in

good faith, and no doubt intend to carry them out, yet the question is: will they carry them out? No; they never do. With regard to the proposed railway to Bridgetown, for opening up an agricultural district to increased settlement, I have not had an opportunity of seeing that country, but no doubt the persons residing there should have some means of communication. It is a district which is capable of great development, and it has been pointed out to us by those who have visited the district, that it is a country of large resources; but we cannot lose sight of the fact that it will be a costly line, and, until more particulars are placed before us, I should not like to pledge myself to it in any way, although I would favour the construction of the railway for the reason that I think we should afford every opportunity to those persons who settle in the bush and make homes in the back country, to bring their produce to market. We cannot lose sight of the fact that we have already, adjacent to existing railways, large tracts of country which are as capable of being developed as the land in the district to which this railway is proposed to be built. Let us first develop the Crown land we have along existing railways, and we shall find sufficient scope in doing so. If the facts to be placed before the House will prove this railway will not be so costly as I anticipate, they will be duly considered by the House. The hon. member for Albany seems to have said he would support the building of a railway to Bridgetown because the line should be continued through to Albany in the future; but, as I have said before, to run a line through that country to Albany, parallel with the Great Southern line now connecting with Albany, would be madness.

MR. A. FORREST: The same objection applies to the Murchison line, too.

MR. PIESSE: The character of the land, after passing Bridgetown southward, is much inferior, and the country is hilly. There is no necessity for a second through line to Albany, and the character of the country does not warrant it. No doubt the Premier has favoured the construction of the line to Bridgetown entirely from good motives, because he thinks the pioneer settlers in the bush should be afforded the same advantages for bringing

their produce to market as have been provided in more favoured districts; and I agree with that argument, and would be pleased to help in giving effect to it, but, at the same time, we should not pledge the country to so large an expenditure for this purpose. We should look to other old-settled districts which are very productive already and capable of great development—such an old district as that of the Williams River, where the land under crop is ten times as much as that under crop in the Bridgetown district, and is capable of greater productiveness, especially in cereals such as the country most requires, chaff and potatoes, which are imported in such large quantities, also butter and other dairy produce. The Lower Williams and Maradong would be able to send by railway large quantities of chaff and cereals, if a short line of 25 to 40 miles were constructed from the South-Western Railway, and that branch line to the Williams district would help largely in feeding the main line with payable traffic. That branch line would also open up the timber forests of the Murray, which are admitted, by those persons who know that country, to be the best in the colony; therefore, by tapping those forests, this branch railway would afford to the people in that district a cheap means of sending their produce to market, and would provide some traffic immediately, because the land is already under cultivation. Much good land there has been thrown out of cultivation as a result of the Great Southern Railway being constructed 25 miles too far eastward of the Williams district, so that the old settlers who were located along the Perth-Albany Road, and who used to cart their produce 100 or 125 miles to the Perth market, are now in a worse position with a railway 20 miles eastward of their locations, because the cost of transit by railway to Perth, at the rate for 180 miles, simply prohibits them from sending produce at all. The hon. member for the Swan mentioned that settlement along the Great Southern railway had not taken place at such a rapid rate as had been expected, and that is a fact which strengthens my argument against land-grant railways and syndicates. But he should not lose sight of the fact that within reasonable distance of that railway the settlement is going on apace



now; and there are thousands of acres of Crown land in that district still available for agricultural settlement. With regard to the Collie coalfield railway, I do not know anything about it. The reports laid before us showing the extent and quality of the coal are very encouraging, and I am not quite so pessimistic in my views as some hon. members who oppose this railway, though what the Government should consider is that, after sufficient coal has been produced to supply local wants, we cannot expect to become exporters of coal, taking into consideration the low price at which coal can be put on board ship at Newcastle (N.S.W.), and be delivered at Albany and Fremantle and other ports along the coast. There is one thing the Government might take in hand to do, and that is to thoroughly prospect the country near Albany for coal, and also country nearer to Perth than has been already prospected, because geological measures have been found near Albany which should induce the boring of that country for coal. If coal can be found within a reasonable distance of the fine port of Albany, where there would be no difficulty in putting it on board steamers, that would be a greater advantage to the country than to have to make a port at Bunbury for loading coal. It has been stated by geologists that the country in the neighbourhood of Albany offers encouragement to prospect for coal, and shows certain measures which indicate carboniferous deposits. I think the Government should put down bores in different parts of that district. I am pleased to see in the Bill a further provision for the extension of telegraphs. This is very necessary, and, as I mentioned last session, I hope the Government will consider the extension of the telegraph from Broome Hill to Albany, so that, with the increasing business created by the goldfields, this line may be an alternative route between Albany and Perth in case of breakages, and by relieving it would be of great service to the country. The item of "Roads and Bridges" is one which, although not reproductive in a sense, is of great service, because unless there be good roads over which to travel to the railways, the usefulness of the railways for carrying produce cheaply to market must be barred

to some extent. I should like to see the item of "Schools" transferred to current revenue. The building of more schools is necessary, and there is a sense in which schools are reproductive, because we shall be providing for the future men and women of the colony, and in that way schools will be productive of good, by educating them as good citizens. As to the item "Development of Agriculture," I do not think that needs any defence. There is also before the House a Bill which deals with agricultural settlement, and although opposition may be taken to it, I hope the agricultural development which is provided for in this schedule will prove beneficial to the country. Generally speaking, the items in the Bill, even if reduced somewhat, will be of general good to the colony. The sums are large, and possibly may be pared down a little; but I quite agree that, if we wish the colony to make progress at all, we must go into necessary works and not be afraid to spend money on them. Those who have faith in the colony, as I have as a West Australian, must not be afraid of pushing ahead, because if we do not do so, a long time must elapse before the resources of the colony can be developed. We depend a good deal on the development of the goldfields and on the development of agriculture; and I hope that when this House has an opportunity of helping forward both goldmining and agriculture, it will favourably consider the measures for these purposes.

MR. JAMES: It is somewhat amusing to those who sit on this side of the House to listen to the somewhat airy easiness with which members on the other side arrogate to themselves the privilege of believing most firmly in this great colony. If it is reassuring to them, it is pleasing to me, to hear this from hon. gentlemen, many of whom have not been as long as I have been in the colony, and many of whom have not got the interest which I, as a West Australian, have. I will venture to suggest that we on this (the Opposition) side of the House have as much interest in the colony, and are prepared, just as much as members on the other side, to take on our shoulders the responsibility of a bold policy; but even boldness must be tempered with caution,

especially when we find the bold policy of the Government supported with such arguments as we have heard in this debate. Twelve short months ago, the Premier apologised in this House for bringing forward a comparatively small Loan Bill, and he almost promised that no more Loan Bills should be introduced for some time to come. I recognise that in twelve months the conditions and circumstances may change so materially that men may be justified in changing their opinions. I recognise that only fools are afraid of changing their opinions. But I say the majority of the works proposed in this Loan Bill are such as might as well have been undertaken twelve months ago as now. Can the Premier tell us what has happened to Bridgetown that a railway to it should be proposed now, not as a desirable work, but as a necessary work? I know the "necessity" was that because the Government found it necessary to construct railways to the two principal goldfields, they said, "Let us put into the Bill a few plums; let us start some log-rolling." That was the real reason why this Bridgetown railway and other items were put in this Bill—in the interest of log-rolling. I say that, if the Premier has that forethought which we generally give him credit for, he must have had some idea, twelve months ago, that it would be necessary in a short time to ask this House for a further loan, when he made that statement about no further borrowing for some time to come. If he tells us now that he had no idea of it then, I say that is sufficient for striking out the Bridgetown item at once. In connection with the harbour works at Fremantle, also, did not the hon. gentleman have some idea then that a further amount would be required in a short time for carrying on those works? Most of the items in this Bill must have been present to his mind twelve months ago, if he exercised that foresight which we attribute to him. The hon. gentleman said, last evening, that it is very easy to make proposals. Yes, but it happened in that case that the proposal came from the Opposition side of the House, and of course that was a criticism and an attack on the Opposition side of the House, when a proposal was made from this side.

Might I suggest to him that it is just as easy to come to this House and make proposals for large loan expenditure? It is necessary not only to make proposals, but to support them. I am not one of those who think that railways are justified because we are able to build them; nor do I think this loan policy has come before us supported by the figures of the Engineer-in-Chief. I cannot repeat that too often. We have had this policy put before us, and supported on this ground, that the more you borrow the less you owe. If so, you have only to borrow this money, and the taxation won't increase, and the indebtedness per head will increase a comparatively small amount. If that is true, I say the Premier might have introduced a Loan Bill for not only a million-and-a-half, but for five-millions-and-a-half. He might have said: "Look at your revenue, and the rate at which it is increasing; and if we build these additional railways the population will be increased by so much, and, being so much, the indebtedness on that basis of population will be so much per head less than it is now." So I say, according to that argument, you could have gone into big developments, and have justified a loan of three times this amount. But has the Premier taken the trouble to look up the speeches made by Premiers who have introduced Loan Bills in other colonies? If so, he would have found that almost the same facts and figures were used by the Premiers in those colonies at the time; and can it be said that the loan policy so introduced and recommended in the other colonies has been successful? That policy has brought ruin and disaster on those colonies, as it may do here. Although I say this country is unanimous in desiring some loan expenditure, and while we recognise that to be so, and the Government recognise it too, yet, because they recognise that much, they want to bring in these undesirable items. We on this side recognise that the borrowing of money for necessary works should be restricted to the goldfields. Can we shut our eyes to the fact of how much we are depending now on the developments of these goldfields; how much the settled districts of the colony are depending on these fields; how much the exports depend on the produce of these fields? Can we shut

our eyes to the fact that if it had not been for the discovery of Coolgardie, which was not thought of before the Yilgarn railway was authorised—if it had not been for the discovery of the Murchison goldfields, which were not thought of when the Mullewa Railway was proposed and sanctioned—where should we have been now? [AN HON. MEMBER: Where we are now.] No; the Opposition side would have been where the Government side now are, and rightly so. To introduce a bold policy of expending money, and say it is bold, is not a sufficient reason why we should support it. It does not signify that, because a thing is bold, therefore we are wanting in faith in the colony's future if we do not adopt it. We should recognise that, by supporting this bold policy of borrowing largely, we are hazarding all this outlay practically upon one throw, upon the success or failure of these goldfields, upon the development of that industry, and that industry only. A more practical course would be to say that most of the items in this Bill could well afford to wait, at all events for a year or two; and unless there is an immediate and pressing need for the construction of these works, I do say "Let us be cautious"; and I say that, having as great a faith as any person can have in Western Australia, and also because I am bound to live in it, and it is the land of my birth. When members on this side have pointed out the bitter experience of the sister colonies, and pointed out how necessary it is not to be too hasty, when we have pointed out the disasters that have fallen on some of the sister colonies through indiscriminate borrowing, we have heard members on the other side get up and whittle down the force of these lessons. It is said that what happened in Victoria cannot happen here, because the railways built there were more expensive, and that borrowed money will go further in the construction of works in this colony. I say that no colony in Australia has pledged itself to the expenditure of so much money as we are going to pledge ourselves to here, for the purpose of one industry only. Surely we must have some regard to the population that exists now. Is there any colony that has spent so much on one industry at once? We are building these

railways for the development of the goldfields, and we recognise that unless the progress of these goldfields themselves justify it, the surrounding country will not. Therefore, we are spending this money for one industry only, and I do not believe any colony in Australia has ever spent so much on one industry as we are proposing to do. Apart from the fact that we are depending so directly on the gold industry, are there not questions worthy of consideration as to whether we should construct these railways? Taking the Coolgardie railway, are we justified, beyond reasonable doubt, in saying Coolgardie is going to be the centre? And, if not, must we not all see that in a short time, perhaps in twelve months, we shall be called on to extend this line further in the direction of the recent discoveries to the northward of Coolgardie? We shall, in the course of, perhaps, a few months, have to face the need of a further extension of the Coolgardie railway for developing this industry. A valuable suggestion was made by the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), whether it would not be wiser—as we are building these railways, not for the development of particular towns or ports, but for the development of the gold industry—to construct this railway up to Coolgardie, and thence, as he suggests, in a northerly direction along the new finds, and so connect with Cue, being the same centre as that to which the Mullewa extension is proposed to be taken. The distance from Fremantle, *via* Coolgardie, to Cue, and tapping the whole of the auriferous country northward of Coolgardie, would be 600 miles; and the extra length of line to be built by this suggested route, as compared with the Geraldton line from Mullewa to Cue, proposed in the Bill, would be only 50 miles. The Geraldton route, *via* Mullewa, would leave untouched all the auriferous country and all the new finds existing between Coolgardie and Cue. According to the published reports from Coolgardie, there is a doubt among people there as to whether Coolgardie is to be the centre of those fields. The Ninety-Mile, I understand from persons who know that country, promises to be a new centre more valuable even than the centre at Coolgardie. It is clear that there are

funds running out northward from Coolgardie, and by building a railway from Coolgardie to Cue you would tap all those places, the extra length of line to construct being only 50 miles for taking in all those finds. If we must spend this money almost solely on the goldfields, let us spend it to the best development of that industry; therefore I say the new route by way of Coolgardie to Cue is a suggestion worthy of consideration, and it is also worthy of consideration as to where is the particular spot for the end of this railway on the Coolgardie goldfields. We cannot wait for months to have that point settled, because the railway must be built; and so, on the other hand, we cannot be certain that these fields are going to be as permanently rich as we hope. I believe the Thames goldfield, in New Zealand, was enormously rich, even richer than Coolgardie, when first discovered, but after a time that goldfield collapsed; and we cannot be certain, beyond any doubt, that these fields are rich, and permanently rich, nor can we be certain that Coolgardie is going to be the centre, nor can we be certain that we are right in building a railway from Mullewa to Cue instead of building it from Coolgardie to Cue. In view of these doubts, and in view of the all-important question as to the wisdom of spending this money upon one industry, ours being a comparatively small community, and depending for our increase and development in other directions upon this one industry, we should consider that, if this one industry collapses, the colony will collapse for twenty years. When a man has his pocket full, it is wonderful how rosy and nice the world looks; and if you find a "Wealth of Nations," the whole colony looks nice then, and the possessors of such a treasure cannot imagine anything collapsing. But if those who have not the "Wealth of Nations" do look upon it with a somewhat "blue" view, it is necessary to give some check to the rather rosy view which the Ministerial benches always take of this policy. I think, therefore, that the offers which have been made by certain private syndicates to build railways to the goldfields, are worthy of consideration. The question is whether the terms proposed are such as we can reasonably accept. It is absurd to say that a man

must be judged by the proposal he makes, because a man always asks considerably more than he expects to get; and I want hon. members to bear in mind, when they deal with these proposals, that they should not look solely at the proposals made, but ask themselves whether terms may not be arranged on a basis suitable to the colony. What I complain of is that these men who made the proposals have been treated with a large amount of contempt. We have heard, and will often hear, from the head of the Ministerial bench, that we must do nothing to frighten the foreign capitalist. We are expected all to bow down and worship the foreign capitalist. But if that is a correct principle, why should it not be adopted in reference to men who make proposals in which foreign capital must be involved? We know that some of the persons connected with those proposals are capitalists; and certainly it does not seem to me we are treating the foreign capitalist with proper courtesy when we treat with such contempt proposals coming from men who give the best proof of their being capitalists by being prepared to put down the money. Why should the Government have treated these proposals in such a manner? It is an astonishing fact to me. I look carefully along the Ministerial side of the House, and I have an idea that some of the members there have been connected with syndicates, that some of them are fond of syndicates. I have an idea that this new-born opposition towards somebody else's syndicate is extremely suspicious; and I should like to know whether there would have been this suspicion, this hostility, if somebody else had been in the syndicate? Only a few months ago there was a syndicate in connection with a coalfield. Where then was the Premier's opposition to syndicates? We had one in connection with the tinfields. Where then was his opposition to syndicates? It is a peculiarity that this new-born opposition to syndicates should have come into existence so suddenly. If the best proposals that could be obtained had been unreasonable, the Premier would have been justified in having nothing to do with them; but I do say he was wrong in treating the proposals with contempt before ascertaining whether those who made them were acting *bonâ fide*, and

before ascertaining whether those who made them had stated the best terms they were prepared to make. If we are to have a pre-emptive right over the railway, and also have State control so as to regulate the charges made to the public, we should be in this position, that they would build the railway and run the risk, and then, if it turned out an assured success, we could step in and buy it. If we can borrow the money now, with the chance of these goldfields being a success, surely we can borrow the money at a later period more readily, when the goldfields are an assured success; and thus the private syndicate would run all the risk, and we would have the opportunity of coming in subsequently and buying them out. Unless we had the pre-emptive right and the State control, I say we should not listen to proposals; but I complain that these men have not had an opportunity of showing whether they will come to such terms as the Government would consider reasonable. The Government have put the House in this position, that we have not got the terms before us now—we have not got the terms so as to know whether they are such as we can accept; and, in view of that fact, we should not be wrong in striking out these two goldfield railway items from the schedule. I understand the practice in dealing with loan works is that after the Bill has gone through committee, a separate Bill for each railway is brought in for authorising its construction. Perhaps before the separate Bill comes before us in each case, we shall have an opportunity of seeing whether these men can make reasonable proposals which the Government can accept, and care being taken that, if proposals are made and accepted, there will be a sufficient guarantee to carry them through. I do not believe it is impossible for the Government to prepare an agreement sufficient to bind these men. I do not believe the Government must always be so flaccid as not to enforce its right against syndicates. The giving of the guarantee to the Midland Railway Company was so supported on this ground, and this only, that if the interest and the principal be not duly paid, we will resume the railway. And yet the Ministry tell us they cannot adopt that principle towards those who have

made proposals in this case; and why not? Why should the Government turn round now, and say that resumption powers are mere waste paper, and that the Government have not got backbone enough to enforce them? I believe the Government have got any amount of backbone to ensure that contracts made with syndicates will be carried out and enforced, the same as contracts made with private individuals? Another question, as to whether we shall be justified in spending the whole of this money on these particular works, is whether it will be altogether wise for us to construct such an elaborate railway as is contemplated by the estimated cost in the schedule. It has been suggested that light lines should be constructed to one or both of the goldfields. Is not that worthy of consideration? The Government will tell us the Engineer-in-Chief is against the light lines; but I say you can have too much of the Engineer-in-Chief—too much of a man who wants to spend lots of money in order to make a monument to himself, and not a monument to the colony. It is the experience elsewhere that the head of that department is very apt to expend money on building large and elaborate works, far larger than necessary for the immediate wants of the colony. Until we have definite proposals in connection with these railways, I think these items must stand over. We agree that these railways to goldfields must be built, and built promptly; but the House is almost unanimous that the remaining items in the schedule should stand over for a little while. Let them stand over a few months, until we know a little more about them. It is suggested, in connection with the Collie coalfield railway, that a light line would serve. That suggestion has not been considered, but apparently it does not suit the ambitious views of the present Government, who like to have extravagant works wherever they can build them. This railway is proposed in the Bill for the purpose of developing that coalfield. Now, why should the State build a railway for the development of coalfields and allow private syndicates, which the hon. gentleman dislikes so much, to quietly step in and reap the whole benefit from the construction of the railway? If we have this immense store of wealth, say a hundred

millions in value, is it not somewhat peculiar that for the development of this work it is necessary for the State to build a railway, and then let private capitalists come in and seize hold of this hundred millions and themselves develop it? If the Government are prepared to work the mines for the benefit of the colony, as a State industry, and secure to us the enormous amount of wealth lying hidden in that field, I should like to see them do it, and if they are prepared to do it, I am willing to support the construction of this railway by the Government; but unless they are prepared to do that, either now or twelve months hence, I shall oppose the construction of that railway, because if there is this enormous wealth in that coalfield, I am sure the individuals who would work the mines would not mind spending some £60,000 for the purpose of getting a million. As to the coal, I have a grave suspicion of both the reports before us. I base my opposition on the wider principle that if the Government are going to work these mines—and they ought to work them if they are so valuable—I will support this railway; but if they do not intend to work them, I will oppose the railway. Now the Bridgetown railway can surely wait. When are we going to have an end of agricultural railways, and have some determined effort made to settle the land along the existing railways? Year after year we are met with proposals for borrowing money to construct railways for the settlement of agricultural land. Is that the whole of the land that is available for agricultural settlement? I say that until we have built these goldfields railways, and feel more sure than we can be at present of the permanency of those fields, we shall be wise in deferring the construction of these lines. I see that a notice of motion has been given by the hon. member for Beverley, to defer the construction of this railway for eighteen months, and I shall give my hearty support to that. As to the Fremantle harbour works, we ought to make Fremantle a thoroughly good port, and I am glad to see the Government are going to carry out the scheme. But surely it would be sufficient for our present wants to borrow £100,000 rather than £200,000. As to the item of "Schools," I do not approve of that.

Surely if we have a surplus of over £80,000, we can build new schools out of that. As to the item "Roads and Bridges," etc., the loan money devoted to roads in the past has been spent upon existing roads. That, I think, is wrong, and I hope the money in this item for roads will not be spent on the upkeep of existing roads. The same remarks apply to "Rolling Stock for Railways," if the money is to replace rolling stock which has become worn out; but if it is for procuring new rolling stock for carrying on the existing railways, and the new railways, it may of course stand or fall with the railways in the schedule. In speaking on the Address-in-Reply, I expressed my regret in very strong terms that the Government had devoted so much of their attention to spending money. I think it is much to be regretted that we have not had attention devoted to other matters that are just as important as spending money. I am not one of those who believe a colony is always best and most prosperous when loan money is being expended. I believe most firmly that the present Government have a chance of dealing with difficult problems which no future Government ever will have, and I should like to see them tackle those problems. We are told, in connection with this Bill, that there will be no need to introduce further taxation; but I say we are taxed too high now; we are bled to too great an extent for making up the present revenue, and the Government ought to consider the absolute need of reducing the taxation on the necessities of life. That ought to be done, perhaps, by a land tax. But why do the Government not introduce the betterment principle? If we build railways, now is the time to introduce this principle. Without going into the merits of the principle, we all recognise that, in its broad aspect, it is a just one, because by it those who benefit from the construction of a railway are made to pay some share towards the cost of construction. This has been a serious consideration elsewhere, and is so now; and in this colony, where there is a need of reducing taxation, and when the Government have such a magnificent chance, by reason of their majority and the support they get from every member in this House, surely there can be no more honourable task,

and none that would reflect more to their credit in the future, than in dealing with this important matter, and no time is more opportune than the present one, nor any opportunity so magnificent as this. The fact is that, in talking of borrowing this money, to a certain extent our heads are turned, and we have all been bitten with the gold fever; and if the Government will not recognise it, there is the more need for members on this side of the House to insist on the necessity of caution in dealing with this policy. We are prepared to support the Government as far as possible, if they will spend the loan money on the development of these goldfields; and I say that when so much depends on the gold industry, when the whole future of this colony rests in the balance to a large extent, there is surely an absolute need, when we are borrowing a large amount of loan money in proportion to population, that we should recognise the special circumstances of the present, and above all things be cautious. Be brave, certainly, and be bold, certainly, but not forgetting that boldness must be mixed with caution.

**MR. SOLOMON:** The question before the House is one in which every member should take part and give his views. The policy of the Government is one of vigour, and is a bold one. I do not think any member of the House on this (the Opposition) side will say "No" to that. The question appears to me to be this: Do the present prospects and the future outlook warrant the outlay of so large a sum of money, in addition to the works that have already been done, and for which a large amount of money has been borrowed? If we as a colony wish to progress the same as other colonies have done, or if we wish to progress according to the opinions of people who come amongst us to settle, we shall, without doubt, have to launch into public works, which cannot be done without increasing our responsibilities. For my own part, I think the time has arrived when we are justified in taking upon ourselves the responsibility of a further loan, with a view of carrying on works of a public nature. A great deal has been said with regard to the importations; but I would ask, what has been the cause of a great deal of that importation? Has

it not been in consequence of the influx of people, chiefly coming to our goldfields, and through which we have been obliged to send money out of the colony for importing produce to feed them? Taking that into consideration, I think that, while making the necessary provision for the development of our goldfields, it is also incumbent on us to look to the agricultural interest, and see that the development of agriculture goes hand-in-hand with the development of the goldfields, so as to put the colony on a proper basis for coping with whatever contingency may arise hereafter. The amount of money which has been sent out of the colony during the last few months, for produce alone, amounts to over a million; and that fact must impress every member with the immense sums that go out of the colony for the purpose of feeding our population with imported food. This colony is as yet young, and I should like to see it progress as well in the development of agriculture as in the development of the gold industry. We must try to grow enough produce for feeding our own population, for if we do not, we are bound to go backward. I do not say we should grow more than we require in the colony, because, taking into consideration the low prices for produce in other places, this colony would be far better off if it were to produce just sufficient for its own population, rather than growing stuff for export at very low prices. In my opinion, the exports from the other colonies have not enriched them to the extent that should be expected. In fact, I do not believe that a large amount of exportation is a sign of prosperity, because we have known wheat sold in other colonies at something like 1s. 8d. a bushel, and I do not think any farmer could afford to grow wheat and sell it at that price. Consequently, where produce is exported at such low prices, that export must be a loss to the country which grows it. As I have said, we must develop this country as a whole, and must not confine our attention and assistance to one particular industry. We must look all round, and see that every part of the colony is receiving that attention and stimulus from the State which is necessary and desirable. What is it we are doing for the goldfields? We are

spending thousands upon thousands in providing water and railways. Who is it that is paying the interest on this money? It is the people of the colony generally, and not one particular class. The agriculturists pay their share, which they can ill afford, under present circumstances; and it is our duty to do all we can to foster and develop that industry along with the goldfields industry. With regard to the principle of land-grant railways, after seeing the experience of them in this colony, I cannot see that the Government have acted unwisely in the decision they have come to. It is very easy to say a railway, if built by a private syndicate or company, will cost the State nothing; but I look upon it in this way, that if a railway is not worth paying for, it is not worth having, and I think this colony, with the future before it that it has, can well afford to lay out the money, and reap whatever benefit there is from it. I am surprised the hon. member for Albany should so support the land-grant system of railways.

MR. LEAKE: I did not say a word about land-grant railways. I said private railways.

MR. SOLOMON: Well, taking into consideration the fact that one of the streets of Albany was taken away from the town by persons who represent one of those railways—

MR. LEAKE: I am against land-grant railways. I said so.

MR. SOLOMON: With regard to our mineral resources, we should develop them in the best possible manner; but, at the same time, we have to look to the position of affairs. With regard to the Collie coalfield railway, I think that work should stand over for the present. I should like to see a quantity of the coal at grass before that railway is put under construction. The other items in the schedule I do not think anyone can object to. The goldfields railways are a foregone conclusion, and, in my opinion, the agricultural railway (the railway towards Bridgetown) should also be taken in hand at the same time. When the Bill is in committee, we shall be able to deal with the items *seriatim*. In conclusion, I say the circumstances of the colony warrant the Bill which has been so ably brought forward by the Premier.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I am glad to see on the Opposition benches one hon. member who is not opposed to the Bridgetown railway. One would fancy, from some of the remarks made in this debate, that this colony is going to the dogs, and that instead of these recent grand discoveries of gold, not only at Coolgardie, but on the Murchison, being a benefit to the colony and attracting population, we had had no such discoveries, and that the colony was almost in a state of bankruptcy. One hon. member—in fact more than one—has preached to us the necessity of caution. No doubt caution is a very good thing, but I think that all practical men of business, when they can borrow money at 4 per cent., and see a prospect of utilising it to earn 8, 10, or 12 per cent., will not hesitate to borrow, particularly when the market is favourable. The London market is favourable to us now, when our bonds are quoted at a higher rate than has ever been known in any of the colonies. Personally, I know nothing about the goldfields. Every one says, and hon. members on the Opposition side have acknowledged, that there is a great amount of gold being discovered by merely scratching the surface. At Coolgardie I believe there are hardly any stampers yet at work, and at the Murchison, which is thought by some to be a still better reefing country, there are only about five batteries; so that, in fact, these goldfields are only in the earliest stage of development. Still, if there is gold to be got on these fields, you may depend upon it there will very soon be people on those fields in greater numbers than ever, and they will create traffic for the railways; and when the deviations on the Eastern Railway are completed, and the railway workshops at Fremantle are shifted out of that hole, and you give your engineers an opportunity of working the railways to economical advantage, then I say the Government railways—speaking now of the Eastern line and the South-Western line—will be a source of revenue to the colony. You must recollect that the recent lines have been constructed at a very cheap rate; and I feel certain that if political jobbery is removed from the management of the railways, they will, under the present administration, in the near future be a source of strength to the



revenues of the colony. Something has been said about light lines of railway. I have not seen any railways of that kind, but I do know that where they have been constructed, though the cost in the first instance may have been less, yet the expense of maintenance and working has been very heavy. That system was tried in the early days of America, and failed. It was, for a time, the American *versus* the English system; and though the English system was laughed at and called expensive, yet experience showed eventually that the English system was the best, and the Americans had, at great expense, to revert back to the stronger and more permanent English system.

MR. RICHARDSON: They make light railways still in America.

MR. COOKWORTHY: I doubt it, very much. But our railways, at present, are not of the light description; and, when you can get a railway such as we have at present for £2,500 a mile, I think that in any settled part of the colony it will pay to send a railway there, as the best kind of road. The hon. member for Nannine has stated that this policy of the Government was not placed before the country prior to the elections. I beg to differ from him. The policy of the Government was brought before the country; it was telegraphed far and wide; and, I say, without fear of contradiction, that policy was the accepted policy of the people of the country. [MR. LEAKE: No.] As far as I am able to judge, I never saw any opposition whatever in the public Press, or by individuals even. The hon. member for the De Grey, apparently, would have accepted the whole of the proposals of the Government, excepting only the Bridgetown railway. He puts me in mind of that person we have all read of, who would strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. The hon. member would swallow all the million and a half, with the exception of the £80,000 for the Bridgetown Railway. He would even swallow the million and a half *plus* the Marble Bar Railway! If you can construct a railway to the Bridgetown district, which I contend contains some of the most valuable land in the colony, and which, according to the expert who was sent round by the Agricultural Bureau, is one of the best parts of the colony,

both for agriculture and horticulture, and which largely consists of a volcanic formation, you will enable the settlers there to grow produce at a profit; for, recollecting that there are a great number of settlers in that district, and that the freight rates from the other colonies by the large steamers are very low, that the settlers in that district having to cart their produce by teams over long distances cannot compete against the importations from other colonies, this railway is the only means which can develop agriculture in that district, and make it of value to the colony. I thoroughly believe that if this railway is constructed and the district is brought into connection with the South-Western Railway, the line will not only pay its own expenses, but will add to the results which I predicted of the South-Western Railway and the Eastern Railway. I cannot say much in reference to the other railways in the schedule. As to the Midland Company's Railway, I only hope that, when completed, it will be as profitable as I believe the Eastern and South-Western lines will be. I can assure hon. members that the districts through which the Bridgetown Railway is to run are capable of maintaining a larger population per acre than any other part of the colony, and it is population you want to see settled on land that is capable of maintaining them in comfort. If you deny them this £80,000 for a railway out of a million and a half, you will be doing a very great injustice to men who have borne the heat and burden of the day in times gone by.

MR. CLARKSON: It is nearly time that we on this (the Ministerial) side of the House had something to say upon this important Bill. The hon. members on the Opposition side have had a very good innings. The policy of the Government, as set before us in this Bill, is, I think, what most of us expected it would be—a continuation of that bold and progressive policy which they adopted when they first took office under the new Constitution. A weak and timid policy would have met with little favour in this House and in the country. We are all agreed that the time has arrived when we should, with the aid of borrowed money, attempt to develop the resources of all parts of the country by the con-

struction of reproductive public works. The difficulty, to my mind, is to say what are likely to be reproductive public works. The hon. member for Albany has said railways are not reproductive. [Mr. LEAKE: Do not misquote.] Some hon. member on the Opposition side said roads and bridges are not reproductive public works. Well, I do not know that they are immediately reproductive, but possibly indirectly they may be so. I have always placed them in the list of works for which we are justified in carrying out a loan policy, and I think so still. If we are justified in building railways to centres of population, for tapping country that is capable of supporting a population and capable of large development, I think we are perfectly justified in spending loan money on these works. We have heard a great deal from the other side of the House in support of syndicate railways. When I first heard of the offer placed before the Government by Mr. Lush, I must say I thought that it was a very liberal one; but upon mature consideration, and bearing in mind the trouble we have had in connection with our syndicate railways in the past, I concluded that the Government were justified, and were quite right, in rejecting the offer. We are all sick of allusions to the Midland Company's railway, which has thrown back that part of the colony some eight or ten years, and has caused all the best of our lands in that extensive district to be locked up against settlement, as they are still, in the interest of that company. There is not an acre of land open for sale in the whole of the district I represent (Toodyay), excepting the land belonging to the Midland Company, and they are asking such exorbitant prices that people will not buy it. I have been astonished to hear such a far-seeing gentleman as the hon. member for Albany advocating the building of railways by syndicates.

Mr. LEAKE: Without the land grant, I said; and how would that lock up the land?

Mr. CLARKSON: I am quite aware that the offer of Mr. Lush did not ask for grants of land, but possibly we should have had a repetition of the delays which have kept back the construction of the Midland Railway, and some of the trouble we have had in reference to the

appeals for extension of time, and other concessions. Time after time concessions have been asked for by that company, and been granted, and virtually now the colony is finishing that railway, and I believe the colony will have to take it over eventually. I am not at all afraid of borrowing money for the purpose of developing the colony's resources, providing the money is spent judiciously. I take a very hopeful view of the future of this colony, but I am not prepared to say I can adopt every item in this Bill. I think there is a limit to everything. I will say at once that I do not think we are justified, at present, in constructing the proposed lines to the Southward. We can well afford to wait a little while for them. We were told, when the South-Western Railway was proposed for construction, that the Perth market would very soon be swamped with butter, cheese, eggs, and all sorts of good things; but I believe there is less butter produced in that district now than before the railway was built. I have been told so, and have been also told that a landowner close to Bunbury, who has some excellent paddocks there suitable for dairying purposes, does not produce enough butter even for his own use, and that he uses imported butter for his own table. Now we are asked to construct another line of railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown, and we are again assured that there will be butter, cheese, eggs, jam, and all sorts of things brought to market by that railway. One would think there are "jam" trees there. We have jam trees in the Eastern district, but, perhaps, they are not the same. At this stage, I do not think it is advisable to spend so large a sum on this railway, upon the chance of producing the articles enumerated in the petition from that district, lately presented to this House. We have a large amount of land on the Eastern railway suitable for cultivation—tens of thousands of acres, and we are asked why the owners do not cultivate that land? I will tell you. It is because the operation does not pay. Land there has been cleared at a cost of about £3 an acre, and we find it does not pay to clear more land and cultivate it at the present low prices of produce. Is it to be expected that the people at the Blackwood, who estimate the cost of clearing

at £10 to £40 an acre, can clear such land and cultivate it at a profit? Surely if it does not pay us in the Eastern district at a cost of £3 an acre, how can it ever pay in the Blackwood district at a cost of £10 to £40 an acre? That is quite out of the question, in my opinion. So I think that line of railway can afford to wait for a little while. I feel very reluctant to say a word against the construction of railways in those Southern districts, because enjoying, as we do in the Eastern districts, the advantage of railways, it seems almost selfish not to allow other districts the same advantage. But I do not think the colony is justified at present in building these railways. With regard to the Collie coalfield, how do we know we shall not find an equally good coalfield, possibly nearer to some existing railway? I think that proposed railway can also wait a little while. It won't hurt by waiting. There are other items in the schedule which I need not allude to now, as they will come fully before us in committee. The petition from the inhabitants of the Blackwood district, presented to this House, is signed by some 67 persons, though I do not know whether it includes all who reside in that district, but I suppose it includes the larger portion of them. I notice that, in the last census returns, there were two people less in that district at the time than there had been ten years before. Well, it is to be hoped the population of the district is increasing, because it will certainly have to increase before we shall be justified in building a railway to Bridgetown.

MR. CONNOR: My speech shall be brief, and in keeping with the minute benefit that the district I have the honour to represent will derive from this Loan Bill. There is one thing not brought under notice, and that is the proportion which the North of this colony is to derive in any way from the money that will be spent out of this loan. That amount is entirely out of proportion; there is no proportion at all. I do not disagree with most of the things in the Bill. Taking them as a whole, and with some few exceptions, they are necessary. The principal items certainly are necessary. Whether these railways to goldfields are to be built by syndicates or by the Government, the necessity for them exists,

and we should have the railways. But I would like to bring this under the notice of the House, and shall do so more fully in committee, that there is nothing in the bill for benefiting the Northern parts of the colony, and the absence of any provision for the North is entirely unfair. The first item in the schedule, the proposed railway to the Murchison goldfields, is most necessary. As to the Coolgardie railway, that goldfield appears to be in a more flourishing condition at present, and has such magnificent surface shows, that it claims more attention; but I think the Murchison goldfield is quite as good, and will be a more permanent field at the finish. If we can guard the interests of the colony sufficiently well, and can get private companies to build these lines, I say we should save the colony from the necessity of borrowing money for these railways which syndicates will build for us, or we should spend the money in other directions. The Coolgardie railway is a foregone conclusion. Referring now to the Bridgetown railway, I recently had the pleasure of a visit to Bridgetown, and of enjoying the hospitality of the people there, and I must say the hospitality was exceedingly great; but I am sorry that, after all the hospitality, and after enjoying the genial climate, I cannot support the proposed railway. As to the railway to the Collie coalfield, even if we have all the wealth of coal that the Government Geologist estimates, I do not think we are justified in building that railway at present; because, supposing the coal is there, can we get it raised and brought to market cheaper than we can import it? I say at present we cannot, though I hope the time will come when we can. Given that our consumption increases, and that we require coal on the different goldfields, particularly on the Murchison, where, I believe, coal will be required, I say that until these conditions come about, this railway will be premature. The Fremantle harbour works must be continued, as a national undertaking, and as to that item there will hardly be a dissentient voice, even if the effect is to centralise people in Perth and Fremantle. Item 8, "Development of goldfields, £70,000," is a blot in the Bill; because, I say, that amount is entirely inadequate for what is required for the development of the

various goldfields. Although railways to goldfields are necessities, we could do without railways better than we could stop short in providing water on the fields. If this amount had been trebled, it would not have been too much; and we could well afford to have done without one of the large items, so as to increase the amount of this item. Then, as to how the money is to be spent, we have got goldfields in the Northern parts of the colony, which would be important fields and big centres of population, if properly developed; and I say it is a blot in the Bill that the item for the development of goldfields has been made so small. As to the "Development of agriculture," I shall leave that entirely in the hands of the hon. member for the Williams. "Market and cold storage:" I do not understand what that is; therefore it is a safe course for me, like the Irishman in New York, to say "I'm agin it." If public abattoirs had been included in the item, it would have been better as a means of reducing the price of meat to the people; but instead of that, this cold storage will increase the price to the people. Passing over the other items, and taking the schedule as a whole, I think the Government are to be congratulated upon this Bill; and if they will only allow a little of the sense of the members in this House, those who have had experience in the development of gold-mining, to prevail in committee, I shall support them.

MR. THROSSELL: I am glad to be able to give a general support to this Bill; and I congratulate the Government on the splendid results of their policy during the past three and a half years, and which are far better than had been expected. When the Government introduced their first Loan Bill for a million and a third, we then had no Coolgardie and no Murchison goldfields; and I am not going to say that, if we had not these now, the Government would be in a position to ask for another loan of a million and a half. But every hon. member will know that if we now had no Coolgardie and had no Murchison goldfields, the present Loan Bill would be a very small one indeed. Still, we have them; and I maintain we are not worthy of our heritage if we hesitate now to borrow money for the necessary works of development. Reference has been

made to syndicate railways, and I am glad to see that the Government have set their faces hard and fast against the extension of the syndicate railway system. Long ago I said the adoption of the syndicate system was a confession of weakness on the part of the rulers of the land; although in the old days there might have been no better means of obtaining public works for the colony. The syndicate system in this colony has proved an unmitigated curse; for, besides the troubles and delays, syndicates have been the means of setting up within the colony a different system of land settlement in opposition to that of the Government, and a separate railway policy; and there is now evidence before us to justify me in saying these opposing and conflicting systems will not act, and we shall have to purchase those railways from the land-grant companies. In the case of both these companies, instead of carrying on simultaneously their construction of the railway and their settlement of the land, the Government of the day, in a previous period, consented that both the Government lands and the syndicate lands should be shut up until the railways were completed. The result is that on the Great Southern railway very little settlement has taken place. If a plan for keeping back settlement had been devised, it could not have been more effectual than this arrangement with the companies has proved in keeping back settlement on some of the most desirable land in the colony. With regard to the Bill, I can support it in general terms, and I say that every prediction made by the Premier in introducing it will be verified, and more than verified, by its beneficial operation. What has been the result of the past policy of the Government? It has increased the population by 35,000; and we are now so far advanced as to be able to embark on a further loan of a million and a half; and if every adult is worth £4 per head to the State, how many more new-comers shall we require to enable the colony to pay the interest on this loan, without increasing the burden on the people? We want a further permanent settlement of 15,000 people. If I understand the policy of the Government aright, this expenditure of a million and a half is to be spread over four years; and if

during the last three and a half years, with the expenditure of a million and a third, we have secured an increase of 35,000 people, surely it is not too much to say that, with the expenditure of a million and a half during four years, we shall secure a further increase of at least that number; but if we can secure a permanent settlement of only 15,000 additional population, and these being worth £4 a head, we shall have secured £60,000 per annum, which is sufficient to pay interest on this loan. If that be so, we have no reason to be afraid of the borrowing of a million and a half. But the responsibility lies mainly in the expending of the money, and not in the raising of it. Taking the Bill all through, it commends itself to the country. It is not too much to say that, by the policy of this Bill and the works proposed in it, the Government have anticipated agitation, and killed it by anticipating it. Who can say that, if the Government had not proposed to construct a railway to Coolgardie and a railway to the Murchison goldfields, there would not have been public meetings and agitation throughout the country? The policy of the Government seems to anticipate the agitation which would be sure to arise from the outside public, if the necessary works for developing the resources of the country were not provided. It is not my intention to wade through figures in order to prove the actual and comparative indebtedness of the country, which the Premier set forth in his speech. I believe in the past policy of the Government, and also in their policy with regard to the future. I say, also, that the Government would do well to think seriously of the motion to be brought forward by the hon. member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), in favour of the postponement of the Bridgetown and Collie railways for a short period. If the works are to be undertaken in the order in which they appear in the schedule, I shall regret it, and I believe the hon. member's motion for the postponement of those two items will be agreed to by the House. The Government intend to extend the expenditure over four years, and we shall be able, during that time, to see what development takes place on the goldfields, and the extent to which population is attracted to the colony; so

that, in view of the circumstances two years hence, we shall be able to judge whether they will justify the building of a railway to Bridgetown. I see that £40,000 is set down for "Development of agriculture, including land purchase, clearing of land, draining land." I shall be curious to see the mode in which that amount is to be expended, and I hope it is not all to go to the Bunbury district. So far as the repurchase of land is concerned, if the land to be purchased be in the right position, that policy will have my hearty support. I can only say that many years ago, when the then Commissioner of Crown Lands and others with him advocated the repurchase of land, if that scheme had been carried out at the time, we should have seen a different and better state of things to-day. If the Government, under the present proposal, will purchase land near towns, so that artisans and labourers can settle with their families in positions convenient for employment, that policy will have my hearty support. So far as clearing and draining land are concerned, I warn the Government to be very careful. When these items come before us in committee we shall have an opportunity of speaking on them in detail. I think it will be better to leave the clearing of land to be done by those who intend to occupy it. I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: When the Government brought forward their first Loan Bill, in 1891, many hon. members, and myself amongst them, took exception to the amount then proposed to be raised. I think that those who opposed that Bill, with the information before them and the then prospects of the colony, raised objections which were sound. The Premier has asked those who opposed it, and particularly myself, to own now that we were wrong and the Government were right. I am prepared to go this far: to acknowledge that the Government, with their usual luck, could see further into the future than hon. members who opposed the Loan Bill of 1891. We must remember that one of the items of that Bill was the building of the Mullewa railway; also that the line was sanctioned and the money raised for it before the Murchison goldfields were discovered at all.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You supported that railway.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not think I did. I think I supported a line to Mullewa, by way of Mingenew, as I wished to have it joined on to the Midland railway, but the Government defeated us by one vote. On that occasion, no goldfields had been discovered in the Murchison country, nor any at Coolgardie; and I ask hon. members, what would have been our position at present, if those goldfields had not since been discovered? Would those members who opposed that Loan Bill have been right, or would the Government have been right in their policy of borrowing that money? I maintain that those who opposed that Bill would have been right, and that the Government's policy in raising such a large sum, on a population of only 46,290, was not justified. However, the Government had foreseen the discovery of these goldfields, and their policy no doubt was a wise one. We are told that the South-Western railway, to which very great exception was taken, is now paying more than its working expenses. Well, it is only a few months ago that, by the published returns from the Railway Department, we were told that the earnings were something like £700 per month; but suddenly the Government discovered, just previous to the Premier's election speech at Bunbury, setting forth the Government policy, that by some unforeseen accident some freights that should have been credited to the South-Western railway had not been credited, and they made out that the railway was paying handsomely. If that is the system of keeping accounts in the Railway Department, I have some doubt whether that railway is really paying as well as it is represented to be. I hope the Civil Service Commission which is sitting, when it does set to work, will inquire into this system of keeping accounts in the Railway Department, and sift the accounts to see whether that railway is giving the returns it is supposed to give. I cannot help thinking that sums of money are paid out of capital account that ought to be paid out of revenue, and I think that objection applies to all the railways. I hope the Civil Service Commission will inquire into that; and we

know that in every Loan Bill introduced by this Government, there have been sums in the schedule for such items as "Improvements to opened railways." In the Bill of 1891 there was a sum of £60,000 for that purpose; and in the Bill of 1893, £10,000 was voted for that purpose. In the present Bill, the item is rather mixed up, by including "Rolling stock for above-mentioned railways, and additional rolling stock for existing lines, £174,000." This is a nice little item for those who have the control of the railways to cut at and come again; and when I see these items put in every Loan Bill, I cannot help thinking that a great deal of money is expended on works that ought to have been provided out of the earnings of the railways. The Premier asked whether the works proposed in this Bill are urgent, and whether the colony can afford them. I think the position of the colony is very different now from what it was when the Government introduced their Loan Bill of 1891; and, as far as the colony is concerned, it can well afford to enter the London money market and borrow for reproductive works. I agree with the Government that one of the most important works to be undertaken, and which should receive the consideration of this House, and would certainly meet with the approval of the country, is the rapid development of our goldfields, and that will be assisted materially by the construction of railways. I am glad to see the Government propose to raise money for that purpose; but, in doing so, they could not let it come before the House without tacking on a lot of useless works. Therefore, though I do not agree with some items in the schedule, I certainly shall give my support to these two goldfields railways. The Premier, in dealing with our indebtedness, made a boast that at the present time it is something like £41 per head of population; but he proposes now to increase it to something like £60 15s. per head, if this Bill is passed in its entirety, and taking the debt on the basis of the present population.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not say that.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I say that. I say that if the whole of this money is raised -- though I do not believe the House will agree to all the items in the schedule --

our indebtedness, on the basis of the present population, will be £60 15s. per head; and, if we include the Midland Railway guaranteed loan, the indebtedness will be increased to £67 7s. per head. I know the Premier won't consider that guarantee for half a million is a liability on the colony; but considering that the Midland Company are reducing their nominal capital by a million and a half, or are asking to be allowed to do so, and seeing that the Company have not been able to raise the money for paying the interest due on their bonds without asking this Government to pay it out of the £20,000 deposit, I think it is more than probable we will have to take over that railway in a short time, and will have to pay the interest and also the principal of that guaranteed loan. With regard now to our revenue, I notice that in 1891 the revenue of the colony was £414,000, and in 1894 it was £681,000, in round figures, being a difference of £267,000; and that the expenditure was £401,737 in 1891, and was £650,356 in 1894, showing a difference of £254,619. So that, notwithstanding the increase in our revenue and population, the expenditure has increased in proportion. When we consider the large sums of money received as revenue from the goldfields, and the little that has been expended out of that revenue upon those fields—the principal expenditure being out of loan funds—we shall see that the Government have been really expending more in proportion to the revenue from legitimate sources than they were receiving; because if the expenditure on the goldfields had not come out of loan funds, we would have had to provide the money out of current revenue, and therefore the Government would not now have been able to boast of the credit balance which they have at present. The Premier made a point of saying the Government have a larger credit balance now than when they took office. In comparing the imports and exports, the Premier went out of his way to state a very bad case for the colony.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I stated the best case I could get, out of the figures.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL**: I beg to differ with you.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You state a better one, then.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL**: The Premier stated that our exports in 1891 amounted in value to £671,813, and out of that amount £86,664 was for gold, leaving our exports for that year, exclusive of gold, at the amount of £585,149. He said also that "Three years afterwards, in 1893, the total value of our exports had certainly increased to £918,147; but, of that amount, no less than £421,385 represented the value of our gold export, so that the value of the exports which the colony has been accustomed to rely upon only amounted for 1893 to £496,762, as compared with £585,149 in 1890." The Premier does not seem to think it right to give credit, in our return of exports, for the gold won from our fields, yet at the same time he thinks it wise to include in the imports the sovereigns imported into the colony. If our imports appear large, they are swelled by the coin and certain other articles brought into the colony; for in the report of the Collector of Customs for that year is a sum of £127,880 for coin, also material for bridges, £20,000, and railway plant, £156,931, making a total in these items of £304,811 included as value in the imports; and yet the Premier does not, at the same time, take into consideration the value of our export of gold.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not say that.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL**: What the Premier did state was that our imports are exceeding our exports in value to a considerable extent. I think it was a mistake for the Premier to make such a bad case for the colony as he did. Now, what was the falling off? It was mainly in our timber industry; and yet I have not heard of any depression in the timber trade of this colony. I think the large influx of population and the prosecution of public works have been causing the use within the colony of a great deal of timber which would otherwise be exported, and that local consumption is a good thing for the colony.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Ask Mr. Davies. He will tell you.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL**: I think the jarrah mills are pretty well occupied. There is not a demand for timber on the Darling Range, because that timber is pretty well cleared out. There has been a decrease in certain kinds of imports, showing

really that the colony is to a certain extent prosperous. We find, on page 6 of the last report of the Collector of Customs, that there has been a falling off in the importation of agricultural machinery; and the report goes on to deal with what we are very much interested in, and that is the productions of the country. We find that, in 1893, there was a falling off in the importation of hay and chaff, also flour and several other items. This fact only shows that, notwithstanding our increased population of consumers, the agriculturists in the colony have been able to cope with the increased demand, by producing more than they did in the previous year, when the population was less; and I feel satisfied that, with our large local market, and the increasing demand for produce, there will be no occasion for the Government to try and force agricultural development. The local conditions will force the increase of production, for when our agriculturists see that they can produce and sell at a profit, there will be no occasion for State banks, nor will some of the items on this loan schedule for further assistance to agriculture be necessary. I will now deal with one or two items in the schedule. With regard to the Murchison goldfields railway, Mullewa to Cue, that item will have my support, for I consider that line is of more importance than the line to Coolgardie, because, although the sum is large, I recognise that we built the railway to Mullewa in the interest of the squatters, for bringing down their wool and stock, and that this extension to Cue is for the development of the goldfields, in the interest of the colony. I have been to the Murchison, and believe those goldfields will be capable of supporting a very large population; but, in order to do that, we must assist in developing the reefing industry by providing cheap and rapid transit for conveying machinery to the mines. There is this advantage, that there will be a back freight on that railway in the shape of wool and fat stock. There will also be a timber trade to the fields, and I am sure the gentlemen who are interested in timber stations down South will be pleased to hear that all the timber required for mining purposes on the Murchison goldfields will have to go from these Southern

districts; so that this railway will assist in the development of one of our local industries. I do not think, however, that the Government ought to build these railways to goldfields, unless satisfied the fields will be permanent. I am satisfied, myself, and am prepared to vote for both these lines. With regard to the Bridgetown railway and the Collie coalfield railway, I am not so favourable to these items. In fact, I am decidedly opposed to the Collie railway, because before we are asked to sanction this railway the Government ought to know what they intend to do with the coalfield. Do they propose to let the railway to any one who will work the coal, or do the Government propose to work the field themselves? If they intend to work the field as a State industry, I shall most strongly oppose it, for we know the Government cannot work it as economically as private persons could do, and that it will cost 25 per cent. more for the Government to work a colliery than if worked by a private company. Before the Government ask for this railway, they ought to prove the coalfield; whereas we find they have only just let a contract for deep boring. The Government can bring forward a scheme afterwards. With regard to the reports placed before us, they are certainly very favourable; but I notice one is a report by a contractor for deep boring, made before he started the boring. That is the report of Mr. Atkinson.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): Take it for what it is worth.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: After that contractor has done his boring, I shall look with suspicion at the report he may make upon that work.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): We ought to be much obliged to him for giving his opinion on the coalfield.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think his report is surrounded with very grave suspicion, and any further report he may make on the boring, after he has done that work, will carry very little weight, so far as I am concerned.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): He won't have any report to make.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: With regard to the railway to Bridgetown, I am not prepared at present, at any rate, to consent to it; but I quite realise that the people residing in that district for many



years, and isolated from the centres of civilisation, are just as much entitled to a railway as the people at Busselton, who have also communication by sea. I think this railway should be postponed for some two years, and in the meantime we should give our attention to the development of the goldfields. During that period the people in the Bridgetown district will be able to improve their land, feeling certain that, after a time, this railway will be built. It would be wise for the Government to accept the amendment of the hon. member. As to item 5, "Rolling stock for above-mentioned railways, and additional rolling-stock for existing lines," I must complain of these requirements being mixed up together. Surely the Government or their advisers should know what rolling-stock they require for these proposed railways, and what rolling-stock they require for existing lines. It is very hard for members to get at the amount of the rolling-stock required for existing lines, in a mixed item like this. In the Loan Bill of 1891 we voted £25,000, and in the Bill of 1893 we voted £60,000 for additional rolling-stock for existing lines; so that there appears to be no limit to the rolling-stock required for existing lines. When a line is built and equipped, I think that any addition to the rolling-stock, for replacing trucks or engines worn out, should be provided out of the earnings of the railways. I do not think it is legitimate to replace worn-out stock by using loan money. Item 6, "Additional improvements to opened railways, £44,000," raises the same kind of question. A sum of £60,000 was included in the Bill of 1891, and £10,000 in the Bill of 1893, for works of this kind; so that £70,000 has already been voted in Loan Bills for additional improvements to opened railways. Now if this large amount can be expended—and what the improvements consist of it is difficult to tell, though I hope the Commissioner of Railways will go into this matter—I can only say this is a very clever system of accounting for the expenditure on railways. Item 8, "Development of goldfields and mineral resources," I quite agree with, though I shall be glad if the Commissioner of Railways will let me have the return I moved for on this matter, so that I may be better able to express an opinion on

this item in committee. Item 9, "Development of agriculture, including land purchase, clearing land, draining of land, market in Perth, and cold storage, £40,000:" that is a hotch-potch, if you like—a whole lot mixed up together. I shall certainly oppose this item, because I do not think it is the duty of the Government to compete against private enterprise. Cold storage is already provided in Perth by the Ice Company, which has spent between £7,000 and £8,000 in providing ice and cold storage; and instead of the Government competing against a private company, they should encourage private enterprise to the utmost. If this system of pap-feeding the general community goes on, the Government will bring themselves into contempt, and the colony into disrepute. As to item 10—"Harbour works at Geraldton, including extension of jetty, £10,000,"—we voted £25,000 in the last Loan Bill for a similar item, and, I suppose, that amount has been expended; but I think that, before the Government lay out a jetty at Geraldton or anywhere else, they should find what is the depth of water at the end of it. This new jetty at Geraldton is just as useless as the old jetty was, for, I am told, it has only nine inches more water. I think it is a pity that the Government should expend money on any work unless it fulfils the requirements for which the work was intended. Now that this jetty has been built, it is comparatively useless, and the Government find it necessary to extend the jetty into deeper water, or to dredge it. Item 12, "Lighthouses," I dare say is a necessary item. Item 13, "Telegraphs:" that is a cheap way of developing the goldfields, and I have no objection to it. Item 14, "Roads and Bridges, including Stock Route to Northern Districts, £50,000:" this is an item I must strongly object to. I do not object to the stock route, nor to roads and bridges; but I do object to the spending of loan money on works that are not directly reproductive. Unless you charge a toll on the roads and bridges, and charge so much for sheep travelling over the stock route, there will not be a revenue from these works, and therefore they should not be made out of loan money, but out of current revenue. When we find the current revenue increasing as it has done, a certain sum might be spared

annually for roads and bridges. As was proposed by the hon. member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), the revenue from sales of Crown land should be set aside for such purposes as the construction of roads and bridges. It is now counted in with the ordinary revenue, whereas it is not revenue, but only a receipt, and should be expended on such works as roads and bridges.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** We spend three times as much out of current revenue on these works, now.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** We do not spend as much as we receive from the sale of Crown lands.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** Nonsense.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** Well, we ought not to do so. At any rate, that would assist, and we could make up the balance out of ordinary revenue. There is another item for which we ought not to borrow money, and that is item 15, "Schools, £20,000." They are not reproductive, in the sense that the English investor expects our loan works to be; and I hope this item will be struck out when we get into committee. Coming to the last item, "Miscellaneous, including charges and expenses of raising loans, £30,000;" that "Miscellaneous" is a very convenient item, one of those that you can cut at and come again. The Auditor General cannot question the expending of it, as it may be expended on anything in connection with the loan. If the Government have an excursion party going up a railway line, the expense might be paid out of that item. I will conclude by saying I think it is the duty of the Government, when they bring down a Loan Bill, to be in a position to supply us with information with regard to the different works for which they propose to raise money. On the first occasion I protested strongly that we had not the information before us to justify the House in coming to a decision; and there was the same cause of complaint in reference to the Loan Bill of last year. On the first occasion the excuse was that the Government had only just come into office, and there had not been time to procure the detailed information. But that excuse does not apply now, when the Government have been in office several years. They fixed the amount of the loan at

a million and a half, and they have put down the estimated amounts for the railways roughly. The former member for York (Hon. S. H. Parker), now a member of the Government, gave very sensible advice, when speaking in this House at the opening of the session of 1891; and I will read to the House what he said:—"I think we want a great deal more information, we want a great deal more inquiry, before we undertake these large public works, and what I would suggest is that the Government here should adopt the same course of dealing with public works as some of the other colonies have adopted. Under the provisions of the Public Works Acts of those colonies, no public funds can be expended upon such public works as these without the consent of a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament, who first take evidence on the subject and then report upon the proposed work to Parliament. It has been found necessary in the neighbouring colonies to adopt this system of dealing with their public works. So much pressure was brought to bear upon Ministers, and upon members by their constituents, that it was found that the interests of the country demanded some such safeguard against unnecessary and reckless expenditure. This has been the law in New South Wales for two or three years, and I see that last year they have adopted the same thing in Victoria. It has acted well in New South Wales, and saved the country thousands of pounds; and I think it would be well for us to start at once with this Public Works Act." I think that was a wise and sensible suggestion, and if Victoria had started as early as New South Wales did, many useless works that have been constructed there would have been prevented, because I have read only lately of a proposal to invite tenders for letting some of those useless railways. The sooner we have such a measure here the better for the country, and the better for the Government. I am not going to oppose the second reading of this bill; but, in allowing the second reading to pass, I wish it to be clearly understood that I intend, in committee, to oppose some of the items in the loan schedule.

MR. MORAN moved that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting.

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

Ayes ... .. 15

Noes ... .. 13

Majority for ... 2

**AYES.**  
Mr. Burt  
Mr. Connor  
Sir John Forrest  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. James  
Mr. Monger  
Mr. Moran  
Mr. Paterson  
Mr. Pearce  
Mr. H. W. Sholl  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Traylen  
Mr. Venn  
Mr. Wood  
Mr. Richardson (Teller).

**NOES.**  
Mr. Clarkson  
Mr. Cookworthy  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Mr. Hassell  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Loton  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Plesse  
Mr. Randell  
Mr. R. F. Sholl  
Mr. Simpson  
Mr. Leake (Teller).

Debate adjourned accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.25 o'clock p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 3rd September, 1894.

Tenders for a Steam Service from Albany to Eastern Coast Ports—Leasing Land in the neighbourhood of Goldfields' Towns—Return showing number of Town Lots sold at each Goldfield—Patents Bill: recommended—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): second reading; adjourned debate. Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### TENDERS FOR A COASTAL STEAM SERVICE FROM ALBANY.

MR. HASSELL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier when the Government intended to call for tenders for a steam service from Albany to the Eastern coast ports?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government proposed to do so at once.

#### PATENTS BILL.

This Bill was recommitted, and some verbal amendments made in it.

#### LEASING OF LANDS UPON GOLDFIELDS TOWNSITES.

MR. LEAKE: Sir—I move “That, in the opinion of this House, it would be to the advantage of the country to restrict the grant of freeholds in and near towns established upon the various goldfields, and to substitute a system of leasing for a short term of years.” I am conscious, sir, that in bringing forward this motion for the consideration of members, I am introducing an element which is, perhaps, novel in this chamber; but, before I conclude, I think I shall at any rate supply for members some food for argument. Startling, perhaps, to the minds of some members as this doctrine may be, yet it is not a novel doctrine; its novelty, if any, lies in its application. We have often heard of the doctrine of land nationalisation, and, in considering this subject, we are but discussing one of the first principles of that doctrine. One of the first principles is that the State should acquire all land. It is objected to this question of land nationalisation that it involves interference with vested rights, and that it retakes that which the State has already granted away; and, some even go so far as to say that it amounts to confiscation. But I shall show that here there is no interference in the sense I have suggested, or that if there is an interference it is with the interests of the species of persons better known by the name of land-jobbers, or land speculators, and land syndicates,—a class who have not the interests of the country at heart, but their own individual advancement. Any blow which may be struck at persons of that character, I think, deserves to be supported by every right-thinking person. Circumstances place us, in this colony, in the very position which is essential for the practical application of this doctrine of land nationalisation; for, to begin with, we are, at any rate with regard to our goldfields town lands, in that position which the modern reformer