

industry, and I think it is a fair, reasonable, and legitimate proposal for any member to make.

Amendment put and passed, and the motion as amended agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at six minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th October, 1901.

Petition: Coupon Trading—Papers presented—Question: Railway Signalmen, Nine Hours—Question: Mining Exemption, Paddington Consols—Question: Railways Report, as to Delay—Question: Colonial Products, Exhibition in London—Question: Railway Rates, Kurrawang Syndicate, Loss—Motion: Coal Mines Bill Inquiry, Change of a Member—Annual Estimates, 1901-2: Debate on Financial Policy, second day (progress)—Trading Stamps Abolition and Discount Stamps Issue Bill, in Committee, reported—Mining Development Bill, second reading (resumed), in Committee, progress—Public Works Committee Bill, in Committee to Clause 17, progress—Carnarvon Tramway Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—COUPON TRADING.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) presented a petition from residents of the State, praying for the introduction of a measure for the suppression of the coupon system of trading.

Petition received and read.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Papers (moved for by Mr. Hastie), Stock Imported over Northern border. He said: I desire to inform the House that Mr. Sommers, the Minister for Lands, tells me he did not give these papers to a certain journal for publication.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Return (moved for by Mr. Hastie), Terms of

Exemption and Protection granted on gold-mining leases on Eastern Goldfields.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: 1, Papers (moved for by Mr. Johnson), Accidents on Kalgoorlie-Boulder railway line; 2 (moved for by Mr. W. J. George), Minutes of evidence taken by, and papers presented to, the board appointed to inquire into charges preferred against Mr. G. W. Davies; 3, Papers (moved for by Mr. Rason), Fatal accident to Mr. Hoad, late Station-master at Lion Mill.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SIGNALMEN, NINE HOURS.

MR. QUINLAN asked the Commissioner of Railways, without notice, if he is aware that the Railway Department, since the motion in favour of eight hours per day relating to all branches of the Government service was passed in this House, has introduced nine hours in the case of signalmen employed on the railways, who previously worked eight hours.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: No.

QUESTION—MINING EXEMPTION, PADDINGTON CONSOLS.

MR. R. HASTIE asked the Minister for Mines, without notice: Had he given further exemption to the Paddington Consols Gold Mine?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: In answer to the hon. member, I would like to make a small explanation in regard to the application which has been made for exemption in relation to this property. The Standard Exploration Company have a large number of properties in this State, amongst them being the Paddington Consols lease. This company is in liquidation, and at the present time is protected by Regulation 152 of the Mines Act for non-compliance with the labour conditions. An application has been received for farther protection. I have sent the statement to the warden for his recommendation, and my reason for speaking to-night is that this application is a most important one. If the mineholder were to be refused protection at the present time it would, I am satisfied, do an enormous amount of injury with regard to investors in the old country.

Yet at the same time I recognise the great distress occasioned on the Paddington field by granting protection for a longer period than has been given in the past. The lease is protected at the present time, and the matter will be dealt with by the warden when the application is placed before him.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS REPORT, AS TO DELAY.

MR. McDONALD asked the Commissioner of Railways, When he would lay the annual report on the working railways on the table of the House?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied that he hoped to be able to lay this report on the table the week after next.

QUESTION—COLONIAL PRODUCTS, EXHIBITION IN LONDON.

MR. C. H. RASON asked the Premier: 1, Whether the statement in the local Press, to the effect that this State is to be represented at a Colonial Exhibition shortly to be held in London, is correct? 2, If so, who is to represent this State as Chief Commissioner, and what is the total estimated cost? 3, Whether such estimated cost includes the expense of the broadcast distribution of reproductions of a photograph of such Chief Commissioner?

THE PREMIER replied: The Government have been requested to support this and other exhibitions in London, but have declined to do so. The expense of such exhibitions is not warranted in the circumstances.

QUESTION—RAILWAY RATES, KURRAWANG SYNDICATE, LOSS.

MR. G. TAYLOR, for Mr. J. M. Hopkins, asked the Commissioner of Railways: What is the approximate loss to the railway revenue occasioned by the amendment of railway rates on folio 48 of railway rate book, as applied to truck charges in connection with the Kurrawang Syndicate.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: The information is available, but I will ask the hon. member to postpone his question until the board which is now inquiring into the charges against the General Manager of Railways has completed its labours.

MOTION—COAL MINES BILL INQUIRY. CHANGE OF A MEMBER.

MR. J. EWING (South-West Mining) moved:

That the member for East Kimberley be discharged from the select committee on the Coal Mines Regulation Bill, and that another member be appointed in his place.

Question put and passed.

THE SPEAKER: It would be necessary to appoint someone else. He did not know whether any other member had been approached with a view to his appointment.

MR. EWING: Mr. Wilson had been asked by him, but he did not wish to serve. Dr. Hicks was agreeable to do so.

THE SPEAKER: Would the hon. member now move that he be a member?

MR. EWING moved: That Dr. Hicks be a member of the committee.

Question put and passed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1901-2.

DEBATE ON FINANCIAL POLICY—SECOND DAY.

The Financial Statement having been made by the Colonial Treasurer in introducing the Annual Estimates, 9th October, and the first item moved, the debate was now resumed.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): In dealing with the Estimates of revenue and expenditure submitted by the Colonial Treasurer in his Budget speech, I may say the hon. member made reference to the late Premier, Sir John Forrest, and to the change which had taken place; but probably the allusion was hardly necessary. No doubt the remarks were made out of good feeling and kindness towards Sir John Forrest, who for ten or eleven years had delivered the Budget speech in this House, and was listened to with interest by members. We all noticed the change, and I had not an opportunity previously, or it was an omission by me, to refer to the absence of the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest, as I do now in regard to the annual Financial Statement. All of us listened, in the past, with great interest to the speech of Sir John Forrest; but at the same time we know that changes have to be made, and the present Colonial Treasurer has made his first Budget speech as Treasurer, the first speech made by anyone besides the Right Hon. Sir

John Forrest. I take this opportunity of criticising the speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer, and I may say that in the change and the present condition of things we are both appearing in a new role. On this occasion it is my intention, so far as I can, to deal with the speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer as fairly as I can, but at the same I intend to criticise it wherever possible, and to draw attention to any inaccuracies which have been stated and what I consider are inaccuracies. I intend to be fair, but at the same time there are portions of the speech that I may have to allude to, perhaps with some severity, in connection with statements made about the past Administration, also as to the estimated expenditure for the future. There is one thing I would like to say in regard to the hon. member's position. He is Colonial Treasurer while the Attorney General is Premier, consequently the position that had hitherto been a dual one, is now divided, and instead of the head of the Government delivering the Budget Speech we have the Premier submitting the policy of the Government and the Treasurer following with a statement of the finances. There are some matters which have been alluded to by the Premier in relation to finance that I may have to refer to in my remarks to-night. The Colonial Treasurer stated that it was his intention to make the statement plain and "understood by the common people." The hon. member took a course which no doubt made the statement plain enough, by placing before members certain figures which assisted us to arrive at the conclusion which the Colonial Treasurer was endeavouring to arrive at. I do not think there was any necessity in the circumstances to have given a statement to the House which occupied two hours in delivery, because we had the figures before us, and after all the Treasurer simply placed the same figures before members, but they had been arranged so as to be easily understood, rendering hardly necessary the lengthy speech which the hon. member made in explanation.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: You do not blame me for explaining?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The statement was useful to members and it was useful to myself. The hon. member stated that with the past he had nothing to do, and

that he intended to deal more fully with the future. In the past the hon. member had a great deal to do in criticising the acts of the past Administration; and perhaps now the hon. member has some responsibility in dealing with matters of State, he may be desirous of giving credit to those who carried out the administration of affairs in the past for their good intentions and their desire to do the best in the interests of the country. In regard to the future, I shall endeavour to show where I differ from the hon. member. The Colonial Treasurer stated the year began with a credit of £12,371 and ended with a debit of £74,839. I take exception to the way in which the hon. member arrived at his balance in this instance; because I consider the Government have gone out of their way to introduce into the expenditure of 1900 amounts which were not properly chargeable to that year. On one occasion, I asked the hon. member a question in regard to the railway expenditure, and I found that he had included in the expenditure of the year, payments for 53 weeks, being a week more than should have been introduced, consequently the expenditure was increased by an amount of about £15,000. There was an understanding with regard to certain expenditure in the past, that it was to be spread over one or two years; that was in regard to the South African Contingents. The hon. member endeavoured to swell the amount of debit by every possible means in his power. There is no doubt that if we once pay the amount, we have not to pay it again, but it places before the country an inaccurate statement in some circumstances in regard to the affairs of the State. It seems to me that there was a desire on the part of the Treasurer and his colleagues to place the country in as unfavourable a light to the world as could possibly be done. For instance, instead of endeavouring to have a credit balance or to lessen the debit balance as I pointed out, some expenditure which should properly belong to 1901 was brought into the year 1900. I have mentioned one instance; I understand also that some of the credits which should have gone into 1900, did not go into that year, but were brought into the present year; and the revenue was closed down

promptly at the end of the month, instead of the revenue being made to include the receipts to the tenth of the next month, as had usually been done.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: You know that is not true.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I should like the hon. member to make some statement to show that it is not true; because it is generally believed that it is true. And I may say that the instance I mentioned of this extra week's railway revenue having been brought in shows that there has been an expenditure brought into 1900 which should not have been debited to that year, because there cannot be more than 52 weeks in one year. When we bring in the 53 weeks' expenditure, we increase the year's expenditure, and consequently the debit balance.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: There were only 51 weeks included, last year; so the process was the opposite of what you state.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: In regard to the Excess Bill, which was alluded to by the Premier, I mentioned the other night that in making the statement he made some time ago, he rather damaged the credit of the country by not properly explaining the matter. Probably he did so unintentionally, owing to want of knowledge of the facts, he having not long before come into office. But after all, I think when a statement is made that there is an excess expenditure of £500,000, some explanation should be given, because to the ordinary man it may perhaps appear that this State is indebted to that amount; whereas, when we come to look into the figures, we shall find that part of the expenditure is from consolidated revenue and part of it from loan; and therefore it means that when we come to give credit for the under-drafts, which I mentioned the other night, then, even by the admission of the Treasurer, the actual amount of indebtedness—that is the total extra expenditure of the State as on that date—was £87,210. So that after all there was not a very large amount to be made up. But to the average man it would appear as though the total of the indebtedness of the State, in respect of this Excess Bill, was £500,000. Now in regard to the revenue for the year, the Minister mentioned that the weak point of the year was

the railway revenue and expenditure; that the railway receipts amounted to £1,347,089 with an expenditure of £1,071,576, leaving a balance of £275,413. This statement of revenue and expenditure is of course taken from the railway returns, and forms an abstract of the business of the railways, showing, too, that the working expenses for the year amount to 77 per cent. of the revenue. No doubt that appears to be a large percentage: that amount should be lessened; and in the past there has undoubtedly been an effort to lessen it. But this year the amount seems to have again risen to 77 per cent., whereas last year I think it was brought down to something like 68, a difference of 9 per cent. Now there are many reasons why I think the Government themselves should ascertain the cause of this difference with a view to avoiding it in the future; and that is a point on which I probably may be permitted to dwell for some time, because I think there are reasons which could be adduced for the increase of expenditure mentioned, which increase may in the future be avoided. But I intend to deal with that point when I come to the question of the railway estimates and expenditure for the year. Meanwhile, I shall content myself by dealing with the railway earnings during the last year, and with the Treasurer's figures which he gave us in regard to the cost of the railways, showing that they should pay, as he maintains, interest and sinking fund, together with working expenses. By his figures, he says there was a loss of £1,593. I can prove, I think, that instead of there having been a loss of £1,593, there has been a gain to the country of £16,171. For instance the Minister gave the loan fund expenditure in connection with the railways as £6,690,131, and the expenditure from other sources as £408,108. Now we have to pay interest upon £6,690,131 only, which interest means £225,713. That is the only interest which has actually to be paid. But the Treasurer debits the railways with interest on the £408,108 also, amounting to £17,764. Now there is no interest payable by the country in respect of this latter amount, because that amount has been paid out of consolidated revenue; and therefore it forms portion of the ordinary expenditure of the

country, and cannot rightly be debited to the railways in the way that the Treasurer has debited it.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Do you mean to say the railways are not to pay interest on capital?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I say it is not a debit against the railways in connection with loan funds. That is what you have to consider, after all; and I am sure the hon. member must agree with me.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not agree with you at all.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Well, I will prove it in another way directly. Although it has been the rule to allow for interest on money taken from the consolidated revenue, still when we come to take the figures into consideration and to strike our balance, instead of there being a debit of £1,593, there should be a credit of £16,171; because we do not pay the interest away: it is not paid away on account of the cost of constructing the railways. The practice of allowing this interest came into vogue during the last four or five years only, because it was shown that the railways were capable of paying it. But there is no claim upon the railways for this interest, because the capital in respect of which it is charged came out of the ordinary revenue of the country. I shall take another point. The Treasurer is charging the railways with the sinking fund, too. Now I disagree with him there again. I consider the sinking fund should not be debited to the railways, because sinking fund is for the repayment of your loans, and it really should come out of the general consolidated revenue of the country. Let it come out of consolidated revenue; and at the end of 30, 40, or 60 years—whatever may be the period—you will have an asset in the shape of the railways, which will probably have become an important concern: consequently you would renew your loan at the end of that period; and therefore there is no necessity to provide for sinking fund to pay off that loan. It has been a provision made in the past; but I do not see that it is necessary to debit it to the railways. Then again, if you do debit it to the railways, why do you not credit the railways with the interest which results from the sinking fund? Moneys to the credit of that fund are put out at interest.

That is a point on which, of course, there may be differences of opinion. But I consider, in the circumstances, that instead of the railways showing this debit, the balance should be a credit; and that, after all, the railways have certainly paid not only working expenses and interest on capital, but sinking fund as well. In regard to the working expenses, too, there is another point which might be looked at; and that is, what is debited to working expenses? Have you debited any of last year's additions and improvements to open railways? If that expenditure has been taken from the consolidated revenue, it is not part of the working expenses of the railways. It should have been taken out of consolidated revenue expenditure, and debited to capital in the same way as this £408,108 was debited to capital. Possibly it may have increased the working expenses by from three to four per cent. That is another point which should be taken into consideration when the question comes up as to the cost of working the railways. The Treasurer draws attention to another point with regard to the railway revenue, on page c of the statement he laid before the House when delivering his Budget:—

This state of things demands the earnest attention of hon. members. Our railways must pay cost of working, interest, and sinking fund. It will be impossible to provide out of revenue for railway losses. It is therefore inevitable that rates must be adjusted or staff largely reduced.

I may say in regard to the rates being adjusted, that is another matter for consideration. But I think there is no necessity for our adjusting the rates. The rates to-day are high enough, provided that economy be exercised in other directions, that the rolling-stock which has been ordered be brought into use, and that we avoid the necessity which to-day arises for unloading a great part of the goods which arrive at stations and are thrown on the ground and taken away afterwards by the people to whom they are consigned, which, of course, means cost to the country. If all these drawbacks can be avoided, and if improved conditions result in consequence of the erection of the workshops at Midland Junction; then, notwithstanding the fact that there have been increases in connection with the wages of the men, provided the staff be fully made use of,

it seems to me that there should be no need for an alteration in the rates. From time to time there may be required some small changes; but great care should be exercised before any alteration is made, for such an adjustment might probably result in seriously hampering the development of the country.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Is 1d. per truck per mile a fair rate for chaff?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It all depends on the distance over which it is carried. If it be good enough to carry chaff in South Africa at 0½d. per ton per mile, which is lower than the rate here to-day; if it be good enough to carry it in New South Wales at a 0½d. per ton per mile; surely in this State there should be some assistance given for the development of agriculture, as well as for the development of our coal mines, for the development of our timber and of many other resources of the country. Of course I know that the interjection is a personal allusion, which has been made by the hon. member in regard to the alteration in connection with the carriage of produce. I may say that the rate which was introduced for the carriage of produce was a rate which has been in existence for some six or seven years in New South Wales; and it was introduced here with a view of helping agriculturists. Take the case of a man who resides 230 miles away from the place to which his produce has to be consigned—say, Perth or Fremantle. We must not forget that, taking a distance of 230 miles, where the rate is 12s. 6d., as against 90 miles, where the rate is 8s., though you find the former rate 4s. 6d. higher than the latter, there is a difference of 140 miles. But when you come to look into it, you find that the farmer who is travelling from Perth to the place 230 miles distant has to pay much heavier rates for passage money and for the haulage of all goods required on his farm; he has the disadvantage of requiring to travel a longer time over the line as against a man who lives only 90 miles away, who can visit Perth and return home in one day. So you will see there is some ground for giving a certain amount of consideration to people who reside at a distance from the market. That is the reason why there may have been an adjustment in the

direction of amending the rates for the carriage of produce. And there is this, too. In a country where the distances are so great, we must do something to develop places far removed from the markets; and that is another reason why the adjustment was made: for the purpose of encouraging development in remote districts.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: But you should not misconstrue what I said. I said 1d. per truck per mile. You misconstrued that, and made it to appear that I said 1d. per ton per mile.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It depends on the kind of truck. If it be a bogie truck you cannot compare it with a four-wheel truck. It is not a question of the capacity of the trucks. Some of the trucks carry 2½ tons; others, the four-wheel trucks, for instance, carry four or five tons; and the eight-wheel trucks carry 12 tons. So I think my remark quite relevant. It really amounts to this: there is nothing in the objection. The Commissioner evidently does not understand his business; otherwise he would not have interjected as he did. Before he talks to a man who knows something about rates, and how they work, he should look farther into the subject. The Commissioner's remark was certainly misleading, in a measure. The rate might be 1d. or ½d. per ton per mile.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Do you not know, with your long experience of the Railway Department, that a bogie counts as two trucks?

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: It counts as 2½.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I have explained the matter. As regards the rates, although so much allusion has been made to myself from time to time in connection with the introduction of what are termed differential rates, it is to be remembered that the only instance in which any change has been made is in the case of the rates for carriage of produce. There were and are good reasons for that change, which I say can be unanswerably defended. As regards the rates generally, however, no changes have been made other than those which have been ordinarily made in other countries, under similar conditions. I agree that very careful consideration is required before any change is made in the rates. As regards the Treasurer's

estimate of revenue, I think he has been most sanguine in some instances, and pessimistic in others. It seems to me that the hon. member might, for instance, with a great deal of advantage to himself and the country, have deferred the delivery of his Budget speech for some days, so that he might, before bringing down his Estimates, have known the result of the discussion on the Federal Tariff. For, after all, a great deal depends on what is likely to result from that tariff. The Treasurer needs to have a good idea of what the Federal Tariff will be, before he can calculate his revenue. If the Federal Tariff now proposed is to come into operation, then I say, speaking with some knowledge of imports, that it is very probable the amount which the hon. member will receive from the Customs will be something between three and four hundred thousand pounds more than he has estimated.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I hope so, I am sure.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Take machinery, take oilmen's stores, take drapery, and many other things, the duties on which have been increased: there are large indents on the water, and these must be received and must pay duty. Therefore there must be an immense increase in the revenue in that direction. The hon. member, in my opinion, would have done far better to await the result of the debate on the Federal Tariff. Had he done so, he would have been able to arrive at a more accurate conclusion with regard to possibilities of revenue for the present year. Again, there is this consideration: if, as a result of the discussion on the Federal Tariff there should be a change of Government, and the tariff were in consequence considerably reduced, then the Colonial Treasurer's estimates may be very materially affected in the other direction, and he may not receive as much as he anticipates. Consequently some difficulty may be expected here. These are all matters which the Treasurer should have taken into consideration; and therefore, I repeat, it would have been better for him to let the Budget stand over for some little time, so that he might have a firmer basis for forming his conclusions. After all, the Estimates must be mere speculation:

they cannot be arrived at by any other means than that of speculating. Now, the present Treasurer has very frequently cautioned others against speculating in regard to revenue: in fact, he was always ready to enlighten former Governments as to the revenue possibilities of the country. Now, one would like to have some explanation from him as to how he arrives at the estimate of revenue which he has placed before us. It seems to me that he has simply taken——

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Did any other Treasurer give information of that description?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There is a changed order of things.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Ah, yes!

HON. F. H. PIESSE: For instance, there is the change in connection with the inauguration of the Commonwealth. Under the circumstances it appears to me, therefore, that on this occasion there was a greater need for the exercise of caution and the striving after accuracy in regard to the preparation of the Estimates than ever before. As I said just now, no doubt there is and must be a great deal of speculation on the part of the Treasurer in framing the Estimates which he prepares and places before hon. members. Farther, I may point out that, no doubt for the purpose of balancing his revenue with his expenditure, the Treasurer has over-estimated in several other instances the revenue which he is likely to receive. In mining revenue, I take it there is an over-estimate. The Colonial Treasurer says the revenue for last year was £94,631: for this year he estimates a revenue of £123,800, representing a very substantial increase. There is in my mind much doubt as to whether he is likely to realise that estimated increase. In regard to land, again there is an increase in the estimate of £4,000. Last year was an abnormal one in regard to land settlement: more land was taken up during the 12 months of the preceding financial year than has been taken up for some considerable time. If the Treasurer had kept to the revenue of the past year, or even had taken a little less, he would have found himself, I think, nearer what the results will show. In the estimated postal revenue, which, though a Commonwealth matter, yet affects the total, we find an

increase of £11,000. In these estimates I consider the hon. member has been most liberal and sanguine. In regard to the revenue which he expects from the Leonora railway, I will take his previous railway figures as a criterion; and so I say, although he may receive the estimated income of £40,000, yet the net receipts will be very much smaller; because he has estimated the working expenditure at £16,000, which is only 40 per cent. of the gross revenue. Under the circumstances, I do not see how he can justify his figures. If it costs £77 to earn £100 of railway revenue in one instance, will it not cost as much to earn it in the other? The item is one which needs explanation. The hon. member, I think there is no doubt, has over-estimated the probable receipts by under-estimating working expenses. The final balance will show this. I repeat, in the items I have mentioned, the hon. member has been most liberal, most sanguine.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I had to be sanguine, in order to pay your debts.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I can account for this liberality and hopefulness. I think I can give the House some good reasons for these features in the Estimates. The Treasurer, for some time before these Estimates came out, in his utterances through the Press represented himself as being in a most serious position. He was constantly telling the Press that he had got his Estimates of expenditure in, and that he had found they exceeded the possible revenue by over a million, and that he did not know how he was to cut the estimates of expenditure down so as to bring them within the estimated revenue. Is it such an exceptional thing to have the estimated expenditure exceeding the estimated revenue? Why, it has occurred to every Treasurer! But no doubt the hon. member, in order to make his case good, and with a desire to show that he is the heaven-born financier for whom this State has been waiting, to lift it out of the mire of distress into which it has fallen—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Good! That is open confession.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The Treasurer said these things broadcast: he said, "I have here a million more of expenditure than I can possibly find revenue for: how am I to cut it down?" But, little by

little he did cut it down, or, as he said, "whittled away at it." But, why were all these suggestions thrown out? Why did the Treasurer make so much of that alleged million deficiency?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: To keep the people from applying.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Did any other Treasurer ever blazon forth that he had £1,200,000 to make up, and could not find the revenue to do it? No. Other Treasurers simply went to work quietly and cut down the expenditure, without seeking to make political or personal capital out of the apparent deficiency. They did not go about telling their plight to everybody in the street. No doubt the Treasurer thought to assure the House and the community that he was capable of handling the affairs of the country. Then, after having cut down the Estimates, he steps forward and says, "I have done it: I have brought down the expenditure." But he really required only a bottle of ink and a pen to score out various items. He could have done it quickly, too, if he had used that strength of will and determination he has so often boasted of. Next with regard to the estimated railway revenue, here it appears to me there is another over-estimate. The anticipated revenue for the year is here shown at £1,450,000, and the estimated expenditure at £1,121,000. I have worked out the proportion, and find again that the working expenses amount to 77 per cent. of the revenue. It is evident, therefore, that the figures have been arrived at in the way in which I resolved them. Careful attention has not been given to the estimate of expenditure; because, had the Treasurer done so, he might very probably have seen that the expenses could be cut down in various directions. It has been with him simply a question of arithmetic. The Treasurer has simply estimated, as I show, a ratio of working expenses to gross revenue of 77 per cent. I maintain that any Government desirous of doing good to the country would have endeavoured to cut down the expenses. Indeed, I go farther, and say that any such Government would have brought down the expenses to the figures of last year, when the proportion was 68 per cent, or possibly to a percentage even lower. I say it can be done; but it can be done

only by courage and determination to inquire thoroughly into the affairs of the railways. [MINISTERS: Hear, hear.] But how did the present Government set about the work? With all their promises, I might say with all their threats, to straighten out the finances and to reform in all directions, they simply destroyed all their chances by cutting off the heads of the staff, and disorganising matters in every branch by quarrelling with the men and discovering difficulties in all directions.

MINISTERIAL MEMBER: Creating a strike?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The present Government lost the best opportunity any Government has ever had in this State, or anywhere else, of settling matters in regard to railway administration and reorganisation. Show me the Government that has ever had the opportunity of getting the support which was given to the present Government by myself on the occasion of the late strike, and in connection with other matters relating to the railways!

THE PREMIER: Why, you could not help it!

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The present Government had the opportunity of dealing with difficulties in the Railway Department, and finally adjusting everything on equitable lines by showing firmness. At one time the Premier did exhibit firmness; but afterwards he showed a lamentable lack of courage. [MR. JACOBY: He climbed down.] On one occasion he had a splendid opportunity: he had the support of nearly the whole of the members on the Opposition side, and could have dealt with the difficulty in such a manner as to save the country a great deal of money which it can ill spare. The hon. member at that time said, "I am not looking for a soft place to fall on;" but he certainly could not have looked for a softer than he found. To settle the question of the adjustment of the fettlers' wages, he appointed a board. With the selection of one of the gentlemen on that board I find no fault; but the appointment of the other gentleman was unjustifiable, since he had already expressed himself in favour of the payment of 8s. a day.

MINISTERS: Who was that?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Mr. Alexander, the mayor of Fremantle, who at a public meeting expressed himself to the effect I have stated; therefore I consider that his selection for the position of arbitrator was wrong. Undoubtedly the first proposal made by the Government should have been carried out, namely the submission of the dispute to certain arbitrators who would have the confidence of the Government and that of the men as well.

THE PREMIER: The men would not agree to that.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I say there was an opportunity—

THE PREMIER: That is so stupid!

HON. F. H. PIESSE: My desire was to help the Government in every possible way, while doing what was fair and just to the men, and treating with them in the manner they ought to be treated with. But there was great necessity for firmness. Undoubtedly, some efforts could have been made—

MINISTERS: By the late Government?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: As far as I am concerned, I may say that every effort was made to help the Government in the direction indicated; and no doubt a proper reorganisation of the railway service could have been brought about. The support given by this (Opposition) side to the Government extended not only to the question of the fettlers' wages, but to every other similar question as well: questions which will yet, no doubt, cause the Government and the country a great deal of trouble in their settlement.

THE PREMIER: You have not given us time to adjust or reorganise.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You have had five months.

THE PREMIER: Well, we have been in Parliament all the time!

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I would not require five weeks to do it.

MR. GARDINER: You had five years! [Ministerial laughter.]

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There would have been reorganisation—[interjections and laughter]—if the very men who to-day are in power had given that assistance which they have themselves received, to men who were inclined, I may say who were determined, to see the reorganisation carried out. But the present Commissioner of Railways was one of those who

had most to do with the trouble which to-day we are experiencing in our railway service, and the extra expense which has been incurred in connection with it.

THE PREMIER: You brought about the trouble that had to be reorganised.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I did not bring it about. I attempted to avoid it; and if I had got the assistance I gave to other members, and the Premier too, the matter would have been settled long ago. There is room for reorganisation, and the sooner it is taken up the better. All I say is, when reorganisation does take place, be fair, be just, be conciliatory, but be master. That is what I say we should be. If you are going to rule, let those who are going to be governed know you are going to rule. Do not be vacillating, do not show weakness and want of courage, which I say is deplorable.

MR. CONNOR: Take that!

HON. F. H. PIESSE: With regard to public works, I do not see that the Government could do much more than they have done. There is only so much money to spend, and consequently, I suppose, the little had to be distributed wherever best in the opinion of the Government. I will pay the Government this compliment. I am glad to see that the roads and bridges vote, which after all is a most necessary one for opening up the country, has been increased to £50,000. I hope it will be maintained, because I consider it a most necessary vote, and one which will be very instrumental in opening up various parts of the country, not only agricultural, but mining and other places where development is so much needed. Then a reference was made by the hon. gentleman to agriculture, and I must say there is no doubt a great improvement has been effected. The Treasurer noticed this and pointed out that there was a great improvement. I would like to say that the improvement has been even greater than the hon. gentleman thinks. The imports of last year are not a true indication of the products of this country. The acreage under wheat has been reduced by about 10,000 acres, but the acreage under hay has been increased by 26,000 acres. Instead of our having to import something like 560,000 bushels of wheat, or its equivalent in flour, which seems to

have been imported into this country, there would only have been a necessity to import something like 250,000 bushels of wheat, had only 26,000 acres more land been brought under wheat cultivation than was brought under wheat cultivation last year; therefore, we are nearing the day when the country will be supplied by its own people with wheat and chaff. I think it is most satisfactory to us to find that we are nearing that day so rapidly. In fact, I may say I think we have almost reached it this year, because the increase has been very considerable. The returns which have been given in are not the returns we shall deal with next February. When the crop returns are brought in, I think it will be found that the increase in this direction has been very large indeed. I may say, too, with regard to chaff, which is one of the items I mentioned, that there has been very little imported into the State during the last two years, and this year there is, unfortunately for the farmers, a glut, with prices much lower. I have always said a time would come when we would have internal competition and prices would go down. The only thing is that matters must be adjusted by the cultivation of more wheat, oats and barley, and in that way we shall find a very great improvement in the conditions of agriculture here, with a consequent gain to the country.

MR. HOPKINS: What is chaff at the present time?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I do not know.

MR. HOPKINS: I thought you were expressing an opinion.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: No.

MR. JACOBY: Very cheap in this House.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I have pointed out that there has been an over-estimate of the revenue of the country; and no doubt in the expenditure it will be found that there have been in some instances liberal increases, but probably not more than is necessary for the upkeep of the departments of the country, and for the carrying on of the various works of the State. I think there is certainly need for a more careful revision of the estimated revenue, and, if the Federal Tariff proposed be carried, the Treasurer will find himself with a balance of £250,000 to £300,000 at the end of the year, instead

of the small balance which he has shown. Of course we have been promised a good many changes. We have been promised reform in regard to the railway, and also in regard to the civil service, and there is no doubt need for reform in that direction. Although the Government have not been in office for a longer period than five months, I think there has been ample time to have carried out the various reforms in the direction which they promised. The Treasurer mentioned the other night, in regard to the increases in the salaries, that it is difficult for Ministers to deal with these increases, and that there is no better way of dealing with them than by proper classification, I take it under a properly constituted board, or a better considered Bill, a more satisfactory Bill than that which was introduced last year, because that seems to me to be very necessary, and I think there should be something done in the direction I have indicated. Notwithstanding the fact that we have heard so much about the straightening out of the finances and the improvements to be effected, we have waited in vain for them. We do not see the improvements, for they have not been made. We are just as far off having them made as ever. I thought when the Government came in with such a flourish of trumpets, and after the statements made by the Premier in June last, we should have seen the changes brought about.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: It takes time.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: If there is resolution to do it, time will be found. I think the hon. gentleman and his colleagues could have effected a great deal of change in the direction I have indicated.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: They have been worrying over the Excess Bills.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: After all it seems to me there is greater necessity for managing the affairs of this country upon business lines than there is for going in for too much legislation. The very failure in the past, if there has been failure, has been in introducing too much legislation for the consideration of the House, and measures have been passed without being properly considered. A few people have worked upon a measure, and the remainder have probably not had

the time or the inclination to devote attention to it. It seems to me the Government are doing the same sort of thing in bringing in too much legislation to be considered. If we had less prospective legislation brought in, we should give more attention to it. The member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), who for many years has been threatening this House to introduce much of this legislation to which he is so wedded, has flooded us with a great many measures here which could well have stood over for farther consideration at the hands of this House at a later period. There is no doubt the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill and measures of that character should receive the attention of the House, because if it be possible to prevent such unfortunate strikes as we have experienced in the past, any legislation in that direction should certainly be welcomed.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Which Bill do you object to? Which Bill do you say could stand over?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There is that Bill dealing with co-operative stores. There are other Bills which I cannot think of just at the moment, but they could have stood over.

MEMBER: Requests have been made for them.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Whom by? I asked the hon. gentleman when he was dealing with the matter to give a reason for the necessity.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Why did you not throw the Bills out?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: There is a probability that measures may be thrown out, but it is the duty of every member of this House, if a Bill be brought down, to give it fair consideration, because if there be any necessity for a Bill and any reason in it, it is our duty to consent to it, and not to act in an arbitrary way, and perhaps despatch the matter without properly considering it. All I ask is that we shall not have too much brought here. There should be reason in the introduction of these things, and more time should be given to them than we are able to devote to them at present.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Why did you not act on that principle when you were in power?

MR. CONNOR: We will, later on.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: In regard to the Budget Speech generally, of course there is this about it. As the hon. gentleman said, most of the matters dealt with have relation to the past, and, consequently, very little reference should be made to them except, of course, where there may be any unusual circumstances that may be referred to when the details come under consideration. But, with regard to the future, we can deal with it. It is a question of expenditure and the estimated revenue. They are the two principal points which, in my opinion, should be touched upon. I have touched upon those points in regard to the changed conditions in connection with customs duties, which seem to me to call for very serious consideration at the hands of the Treasurer, and also at the hands of hon. members when they speak upon this subject on going through the Estimates. Of course, as I said just now, if by the customs tariff which is imposed or about to be imposed there is a prospect of receiving through the customs something like from £300,000 to £400,000, or perhaps more—

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: There is no such chance.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I say it is not fair to take that money out of the pockets of the people, if it can be avoided, because it means that the Treasurer will have that amount in excess at the end of the year, and, therefore, it behoves the Treasurer to amend the Estimates. There is no doubt it requires consideration. Then there is the question of the railway revenue. In consequence of the changed order of things, with less importations towards the end of the year, there may be less railway traffic, and a falling off in that direction; so it behoves any Government which is in power to look after this great earning department—earning and spending department I may term it—and there is really a necessity for very carefully going into the whole matter with a view of cutting down expenditure, if it can be done, with the intention of, if necessary, meeting the deficiency caused by the lesser revenue likely to be received. This is one of the principal reasons which I have in mentioning the question of the railways, and as I said just now, there is really more need for carefully managing the affairs of this

country in a business way, because it is after all a great business concern now, more so than it was before, and it needs more careful management in that direction.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Although we have heard it said from time to time that we need this legislation and that legislation, which is often experimental, still, after all, I think more attention should be given to many things which concern the every-day workings of the Government. Every encouragement should be given to the settlement of the country. Notwithstanding the fact that the mines have done so much to build up the country and bring it into prominence, and help forward our agriculture, still after all the agricultural settlement of the country must in the future play an important part in bringing the country into prominence and making it prosperous. Therefore it behoves us not only to deal with the mines in a way which will enable them to go on increasing their output, but we must deal with the agricultural and pastoral interests and everything that concerns the settlement of the soil. Our gold mines are very productive, they have never been more so. I notice by a report that has been laid on the table and returns which have been given, that an enormous amount of machinery, double that which arrived during the previous year, has been introduced into the State, which shows the wonderful increase in mining development. Every mine that is developed with anything like success means success to this country, because we as the people who are resident in the more favoured latitudes are given a greater market, and I hope we shall be able to produce all that will be required for the people's consumption. It will be of mutual advantage to find that all the meat, all the grain, all the fruit, and all the vegetables, and everything required are produced by the people here. It means increasing our wealth and an improvement in the condition of our people; and, farther, it means that which we need so much, that an increase of population must come. There is one thing I would like to say in passing. Probably we would have had a much larger population here had

we remained out of Federation. There is no doubt about it, the enormous Federal Tariff is a great burden on the country. Although a protectionist and one desirous of seeing all articles produced in the country, still I do not think the country was ripe for federation. If we had stood out for some years, to enable our country to develop, we should have done much good for the country, and possibly our population would have increased, more so than it is likely to do under federation. Still that is a matter of opinion. As far as the present Federal Tariff is concerned, although it is large, and although the rate to be charged on machinery and other things is large, it will induce the manufacture of these articles in this country. Still we are in a condition different from the other States. We have no manufactures here, and we cannot have them for some time to come. The Federal Tariff will be a greater burden on the people engaged in the mining industry of the country; it will have a deterrent effect for some time. The Treasurer will have to look out and watch in the future. There is great uncertainty, and it behoves the Treasurer to be careful in taking any course in the future. The economy which has been promised by the Government, and loudly promised, about which the Government made such a great boast, has not come. There has been no change whatever shown in the figures put forward; therefore, I think it behoves the Government to exercise greater care in the future. There is really nothing else I can allude to in the Speech, but during the course of the Estimates through Committee I will take an opportunity of dealing with any specific item which may crop up, and I may have an opportunity, too, of hearing from the Commissioner of Railways about that great concern, the railways, and what he intends to do in the shape of reform which can be made of advantage to the country.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): We had the Treasurer appearing last Wednesday in a new character. As he pointed out, instead of appearing before us as a familiar pessimistic critic, we had him appearing in the new character of an optimistic Treasurer. It seems to me that the Estimates

of revenue and expenditure have been built up on these lines: the Treasurer has evidently ascertained the expenditure and built up a revenue to meet it.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: To pay your debts.

MR. RASON: So that the Treasurer would have a small balance at the end of the year. It seems to me the Treasurer, of necessity, was working in the dark. He did not know the nature of the Federal Tariff; and not knowing what the ultimate tariff would be he was placed at a great disadvantage in his estimate of revenue, from customs at all events.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: No one had any light, you know.

MR. RASON: Leaving the question of customs and excise alone, because that to a great extent is a problematical quantity, I wish to glance through some of the other items in the Treasurer's estimate. He seems to have estimated an advance on every item on document No. 3. He estimates from the Dividend Duty £12,000 more this year than last year; he estimates a revenue of £6,500 more this year than last year for stamps; and from licenses he estimates an increase of £3,000. From probate duty, although the duty last year was only £3,787, he anticipates this year to receive £10,000.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Rich people are going to die this year.

MR. RASON: From land revenue the Treasurer anticipates £3,590 more than last year; from mining £20,000 more; reimbursements-in-aid, £28,850; harbour dues, £4,000 more; fees from public offices, £3,500 more; and fees of court, fines, etc., £1,700 more. I anticipate that is due to an increase in crime.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: To reduction in the duty on whisky.

MR. RASON: The Treasurer anticipates receiving £1,800 this year more than last year from the sale of water. I do not think the Treasurer should be the gentleman to advance the theory that an increase in the consumption of water would lead to an increase of revenue. So the Treasurer goes on through the whole chapter. Dealing with the estimated increase in railway revenue, the Treasurer has estimated an increase of £105,000 this year over the revenue of last year, with an increased expenditure of only

£50,000. The Treasurer himself points out that in 1901 it took, to earn £94,202 more than in 1900, an expenditure of £188,450, or an increased expenditure of £2 for every £1 of increased revenue. Yet, when we come to this year, the Treasurer anticipates to get an increase of revenue of £105,000 by the expenditure of only £50,000 extra. The hon. gentleman reverses the proportion of the figures from actual experience, and estimates that there is going to be such an alteration and that he will earn £2 for every £1 spent, whereas last year he had to spend £2 to earn £1.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: We did not spend it last year, you know.

MR. RASON: That certainly will show a great improvement in the management of the railways, and I hope the Government will be able to do that; but I do not see any probability of it at present. Then again, the Treasurer anticipates receiving £40,000 from the Leonora railway, during the course of construction, by an expenditure of only £16,000. If that estimate can be realised, all I can say is that it is a very great pity that all our railways are not in course of construction, and for ever remain in course of construction.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS: There are special rates.

MR. RASON: I am aware of that. If the Treasurer can earn, by special rates, £40,000 by means of an expenditure of £16,000, he is certainly qualified to be a Minister of Railways not only here, but amongst a more thickly populated people.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not be a bad idea if special rates were charged on other railways.

MR. RASON: The Treasurer goes one better when we come to the Goomalling railway line, because that railway is to receive £1,000 without the expenditure of one penny. Happy Goomalling! I am sorry that there are not a few more railways like the Goomalling line. If the Treasurer can earn £1,000 without the expenditure of one penny, it is very good work indeed. Coming to the Mines Department, the Treasurer anticipates that he will have an increased revenue of £29,000. I do not know how it has been possible to arrive at that estimate. The revenue for 1901 was £12,000 less than the revenue for 1900; yet the

revenue for 1902 is estimated to be £20,000 more than this year, and £17,000 more than 1900. Again, while the revenue for 1901 only exceeded the estimate by £1,800, this year the Treasurer anticipates the revenue will exceed the expenditure by £15,761. The figures which the Treasurer gives us in his mining estimate have never been equalled in this State since the boom year of 1896-7. Is there any reasonable probability of such a boom occurring in mining this year as was witnessed in the year mentioned? I cannot understand how it has been possible for the Treasurer to arrive at these figures. If we apply another test, and take the revenue for the quarter which has just expired, we find that the mining revenue for the quarter amounted to £18,600. If we multiply that by four—I do not say that will give us an actual estimate of the revenue, but we shall get something fairly approximate—we shall receive a revenue of £74,400, or a difference of £49,400.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: When are the rents usually paid?

MR. RASON: A margin of £49,400 is altogether too much, taking into consideration the payment of rents. I cannot understand, and perhaps the Treasurer will kindly inform us, how he obtains these figures. To my mind such a mining revenue cannot be expected or realised, seeing that in no year has it been realised in this State if we except the boom period of 1896-7. I hope the amount the Treasurer estimates will be realised; but I think some food for reflection is afforded in the fact that he proposes to raise £3,417,000 in revenue from the small population such as we have. If that amount can be realised, I say without hesitation it ought not to be; and we cannot expect to continue year after year to drag such a revenue out of the pockets of the people. Allowing for a very considerable increase in our population, which I am almost sure will not be realised, it amounts to a revenue of £18 10s. per head for every man, woman, and child in the State. That is a revenue which is not approached anywhere else in the world—over 7s. 1d. per head, per week, for every man, woman, and child in the country. Possibly that revenue can be raised now; but I am perfectly convinced it cannot continue.

No State could possibly continue to exact a revenue anything approaching that from the pockets of its people. I do not wish to detain the Committee any longer. The Treasurer concluded his speech with a quotation. He said: "Go forward; go in and possess the land." I appreciate and indorse that sentiment; but I should like to add one word of advice: Be like an animal that is indigenous to the land: look before you leap.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): If hon. members have completed their criticisms of the Budget, a very few words will suffice in reply.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): This is a very early stage at which to move to report progress; and I assure the Minister it is not done with any intention on my part of blocking the business, but simply because I had not the slightest idea that I should be required to speak this evening.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: You can speak on the items.

MR. GEORGE: I do not want to speak on the items. I move that progress be reported.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	21
Noes	...	...	...	18

Majority for ... 3

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Connor	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Gregory
Mr. George	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Higham	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. James
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Morgans	Mr. Kingmill
Mr. Nanson	Mr. Leake
Mr. O'Connor	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Phillips	Mr. Moorhead
Mr. Piesse	Mr. Oats
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Reid
Mr. Quinlan	Mr. Reside
Mr. Sayer	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Smith	Mr. Wallace (Teller).
Mr. Stone	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Rason (Teller).	

Motion thus passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

TRADING STAMPS ABOLITION AND DISCOUNT STAMPS ISSUE BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 5—Discount stamps:

MR. GEORGE: Would the member in charge of the Bill (Mr. McDonald), or the Attorney General, explain the clause? It stated discount stamps should be redeemable at any money order or post office. As the post office had passed under Federal control, would not some special machinery be required ere this could be done?

THE PREMIER: For the Bill, he was not responsible, nor had he considered it except regarding its general principle. There was no reason why this clause should not be deleted. It did not appear advisable to encourage this form of dealing.

MR. McDONALD: To that he was agreeable. He moved that the clause be struck out.

MR. DAGLISH supported the clause. As a trader received discount for cash payments and on short accounts, it was not unreasonable that similar encouragement should be given the cash purchaser.

MR. GEORGE: There were two prices: one for cash, the other for credit purchases.

MR. DAGLISH: That statement was not corroborated by his experience; and the result of the credit system was to discourage thrift, as the cash buyer really paid the trader for other people's bad debts. Credit purchasers, from whom bad debts were made, should pay an enhanced price. The clause would encourage the general community to pay cash.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: It was very doubtful whether the trouble involved in the adoption of the last speaker's suggestion would be repaid by the benefits. The tendency was to do away altogether with the credit system and to inaugurate a universal cash system. There was now in Perth a firm which gave credit to nobody; and thus the purchasers from that firm were assured of the full benefit of cash trading. It would be of advantage to the State if the people generally paid cash for their food and their clothes. Certainly anyone who had preached thrift should support the excision of the clause. The transactions of an ordinary general store or grocery were to the extent of 90 per cent. for amounts under 5s., and possibly to the extent of 75 per cent. for amounts under 1s. What discount could be given on purchases amounting to 1s., say?

MR. WILSON: The discount on 20 purchases of 1s. each might be worth having.

MR. GEORGE: What discount could the trader be expected to give? It was very doubtful whether he could allow as much as 5 per cent.; profits were cut so very fine now-a-days. The answer to the argument that credit customers should be made to pay for bad debts, was that if there were no credit there would be no bad debts.

MR. DAGLISH: Credit customers should pay in the shape of increased prices.

MR. GEORGE: The abolition of the credit system, which was quite practicable, would be greatly to the benefit of the State as a whole. For one thing, it would greatly reduce the number of bankruptcies.

MR. McDONALD: In New Zealand, the one State which issued these discount stamps, only a very few pounds' worth of the stamps had been disposed of so far. In Victoria the clauses corresponding to Clauses 5 and 6 of this Bill had been unanimously struck out.

MR. RASON: It was apparent that while retail traders did both credit and cash business, there would be a demand for discount on small cash purchases. Still, it was not necessary that the Treasurer should issue these discount stamps. A trader at Guildford had solved the difficulty for himself by issuing discount stamps in his own name, and why could not every trader issue his own coupons? The clause, he trusted, would be struck out.

MR. F. CONNOR: The value of the Bill would be destroyed if the clause were allowed to stand. It was the general opinion of the majority of traders and business people of the State that the coupon system should be abolished, and not that it should be merely modified, as would be the case if the clause were retained.

MR. WILSON: On the second reading of this Bill he had unfortunately been absent; otherwise he would have made a few remarks with regard to its general principles. It was evident that cash customers did appreciate the facilities for getting discounts by coupons, since otherwise the present coupon companies could not exist. If the operations of the companies were properly safeguarded, no exception, so far as he could see, could be taken to their business. The safe-

guard required was the depositing of a certain sum of money by the coupon companies with the Government to cover the amount of all outstanding coupons. Farther, the companies might be bound by law to redeem coupons in either cash or kind—in the former case with some additional allowance for the cost of issuing the coupons. The amount at which the coupons were redeemable should be reduced; and the companies should be bound to sell their coupons to all traders alike. The present feeling of the House, however, seemed to be in favour of doing away with coupon companies. To a certain extent he sympathised with that feeling, although we must not forget that the proposed legislative action verged on an interference with the liberty of the trader. Not only would the trader's or storekeeper's freedom of action be curtailed, but also that of the customer, who if he wished to accept coupons should be allowed to do so. All legislation, however, tended in some degree to interfere with the liberty of the subject; so perhaps the objection on that score was not a perfectly valid one. The numerously-signed petitions both for and against the system presented to Parliament, showed that this was a party question; therefore the Committee would do wisely to pause before striking out the clause. It should be borne in mind that discounts were universally customary, and that the small cash purchaser was entitled to discounts just as much as the credit purchaser who ran a monthly account. The difficulty was to see how the small cash purchaser could receive discounts except by means of coupons or discount stamps. In view of all the circumstances, we ought to refer the Bill to a select committee.

MEMBERS: Too late.

MR. WILSON: On that point he would like to have the ruling of the Speaker.

THE PREMIER: Select committees were generally moved for on the second reading.

MR. WILSON: The matter was one that should be thoroughly well considered; and he intended, by way of giving his views practical shape, to move "That we do now report progress and ask leave to sit again," so that there might be an opportunity of consulting the Speaker as to whether we could at

this stage refer the Bill to a select committee.

At 6-30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. WILSON (continuing): It would be only common justice that this Bill should be referred to a select committee. Our laws at present did not provide for the prohibition of a trading company of the description of this coupon company. He was not arguing in favour of this or any other coupon company. He felt with other members that we should be better without coupon companies, because they ought not to be allowed to carry on under the present system of transacting their business. The public were not safeguarded. Anyone, no matter who he might be—he might be a person without any means behind him—might start a company of this description and issue coupons to the extent of some thousands of pounds in value, and close up the shop the next morning and clear out of the country, leaving those who held the coupons sadder but wiser people. If these companies were to trade in this particular line, they ought to be regulated by statute. They ought to be made to cover all the coupons issued by a deposit and be made to redeem their coupons by cash or goods, at the option of the holders of the coupons. They certainly ought to be bound to give no preference to any trader; that was to say, coupons should be issued to every trader alike. We must, however, be very careful before putting this measure into law and doing away with the interests of people who were legally established in our midst, whether their trade was a disadvantage or not. Whether it was pernicious in its effect was not of present concern; but it was of concern that every man lawfully trading in this State should have fair play; and before we passed this measure, which would practically close down this trading company, we ought to duly inquire into the matter and give the company an opportunity of putting its side of the case before us. He cared not whether that was done by means of a select committee or by the people appearing at the bar of the House to state their

case. According to our Standing Orders and *May's Parliamentary Practice* we were perfectly within our rights in attempting to have the Bill, even at this stage, referred to a select committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not, he thought, discuss that now.

MR. WILSON: There was no desire on his part to discuss it, but he wished simply to explain that this was the position, in order that members might not be carried away by an interjection of the Premier, which was calculated to make them believe that if we reported progress we could not refer the measure to a select committee. A similar measure had been before a select committee in Victoria, and adversely reported on, he believed. It was again before the Victorian Parliament, and in his opinion it would be carried; but that had nothing to do with it. We were here to legislate according to the facts and evidence before us. There were petitions for and petitions against the measure. He was rather in favour of the measure, but hoped the Committee would agree that progress should be reported, so that the people on both sides might have an opportunity, which was undoubtedly theirs by right, of putting their case before we passed the measure into law. He moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Motion (progress) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	3
Noes	...	...	25
Majority against			22

AYES.
Mr. Oats
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Wilson (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Connor
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. George
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Haywood
Mr. Higham
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Leake
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Rason
Mr. Reid
Mr. Reside
Mr. Sayer
Mr. Stone
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Wallace
Mr. McDonald (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 6—Regulations:

MR. McDONALD moved that the clause be struck out.

Put and passed, and the clause struck out.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

MINING DEVELOPMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 1st October.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): We have heard so much of the intentions of the Government to do all sorts of wonderful things for assisting prospectors and mining generally in this State, that I anticipated we should have a Bill that would really do something to encourage mining development, and especially to assist the *bona fide* prospector who has done so much for this State and deserves so well at our hands. I have looked through this Bill, thinking it possible that it might contain some clause which would assist the prospector, and something that might assist mining development. I have looked for it carefully, and with the best intent, but I regret to say I have been very much disappointed. I can find nothing in the Bill that will assist mining development, and certainly nothing that is even calculated to assist the prospector. The Bill appears to be original, but it has not even the merit of originality, and in this respect I would like to point out that the Government appear to adopt a very strange procedure in regard to their Bills. When a Bill is introduced in this House that differs so materially from the parent Act as to be hardly recognisable, the Government put in marginal notes referring to the parent Act, but where the Bill is copied from the parent Act almost word for word no marginal notes are given, leaving one to suspect that the Bill is original. This Bill is apparently copied from the Victorian Act of 1896, and whoever drafted the Bill has forgotten that there are amending Acts to the Victorian Act of 1896; and, wherever they have altered this Bill, where it differs from the Victorian Act, they have altered it for

the worse. I have no wish to deal out anything but what is perfectly fair criticism, and I hope that will be recognised, but the Bill seems to have been prepared without any great amount of care, and apparently with a considerable amount of haste. The title of the Bill is—

An Act to subsidise or enable persons to further develop gold or other mines, or to prospect for gold or minerals other than gold. But even in the first clause, before we have got over the first page of the Bill, the interpretation of "miner" is as follows: "Miner means the holder of a miner's right." Therefore anyone who holds a mineral license, and he is obliged to hold a mineral license if he is working on minerals except gold, does not come under the operation of the Bill. If a man is developing any other mineral except gold, or is prospecting for gold, it does not offer any inducement to work minerals of any other kind. The first part of the Bill purports to afford some assistance to mining companies. Sub-clause 2 of Clause 8 says:—

The Minister may, in the name and on behalf of His Majesty, enter into an agreement with such company undertaking, subject to this Act and the regulations, to advance by way of loan to such company any sum or sums not exceeding in the whole one thousand pounds.

Subject to an inspection by the Government Geologist and a full report as to the value of the mine, the state of the machinery, and a general description of the whole property of the company. The company can make application for an advance under that clause, and the Minister may enter into an agreement with the company, and on the making of the agreement the Minister at once has a first and paramount charge over and upon all the property, assets, and undertakings of the company other than the uncalled capital, to secure the due payment of all moneys advanced and the interest thereon. Then, for every £1 advanced, such company, according to the agreement, have to spend £1 for every £1 advanced; therefore if a company intend to apply for an advance of £1,000 in two instalments of £500 each, first of all the company have to enter into an agreement with the Minister by which the company give up the whole of their tangible securities; the whole of the assets then belong to the

Minister. Having parted with the whole security, the company have to spend £500 of their own before they can obtain £500 from the Government. Even if that difficulty were surmounted, when the company have obtained the £500, they would then, to obtain the remaining instalment of £500, have to spend another £500 out of their pockets. I do not complain so much about this, although it points to the fact that it would be of no assistance to a company in distress, and unless a company be in distress they are not likely to go to the Government for assistance on these very hard terms. But I do object that it shall be possible for a fraudulent mining company to take advantage of the Bill, to work an enormous swindle. Take the case of a fraudulent company who have obtained a large amount of machinery and a large amount of other mining necessities on credit. So long as there was no mortgage over the mining plant, the average trader would be disposed to assist a mining company and does assist a mining company by providing machinery; but, having obtained that plant, a company have only to apply to the Government for some assistance and sign an agreement, and the whole of the security is gone. Even if there had been a mortgage over the machinery supplied to the mine, the holder of the mortgage is not protected, as the security becomes of no value, because the Government can step in and take a first and paramount charge.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: For the advance, that is all.

MR. RASON: I am perfectly aware of that, but I am also aware of the powers given to the State on the failure to pay the advance. The State can enter, seize the mining property, and sell it by public auction or by private contract.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The State is not a Jew.

MR. RASON: I am glad the Treasurer vouchsafes that information. I may say that in dealing with this Bill only, I should never have guessed it; because there is much of "the Jew" about this Bill. There is much demanding a "pound of flesh" to protect the State, and there is absolutely no regard for the interests of the trader. The Victorian amending Act does recognise the interests of the trader, does recognise that the

trading community are entitled to some consideration; and under the Victorian amending Act, the agreement with the Minister is a charge upon the property, assets, and undertakings of the company, but subject to existing encumbrances, which provision makes all the difference between this Bill and the Victorian Act. Now we come to the encouragement to be given to prospectors. First of all, in Part II., "Advances to miners for prospecting," Clause 14 provides that any four or more miners in combination may apply to the Minister in the prescribed form for an advance by way of loan not exceeding £200. "Any four or more." It is necessary, if you are dealing with prospectors, that before you can encourage them, they must be four in number. Well, the *bona fide* prospecting is not done by parties of four. Most of the prospecting by parties of four is very much in the nature of a picnic. The *bona fide* prospecting in this State has in nearly every instance been done by a man and his mate. Hardly ever do you find a *bona fide* prospecting party of four; yet any less number than four is altogether excluded from this Bill. Then let us see, having your party of four, what is the nature of the encouragement to be given them. They can apply for a loan to the extent of £200. They must give evidence to the satisfaction of the Minister that they are miners; they must give a description of the mine upon which it is intended by such persons to prospect for gold or minerals, and of the means by which prospecting is to be carried on. They are to go prospecting on a mine; they are to describe the mine which they hold and which they propose to work. Before they can prospect at all, they must make a statement showing what security or agreement such persons will give to secure the repayment of such advance, and any farther information the Minister may require, or which may be prescribed. Then, "No instalment shall be paid to any such party of four persons unless and until the Minister is satisfied that for every pound he may advance, such persons have, out of their own resources, after making such application, actually and profitably expended in mining operations on the mine held by such persons, a sum of £2 in work, labour, or

material." I have pointed out that the prospector, when he is in the prospecting stage, hardly ever has a mine in which he intends to work. What is meant by "prospector" is a man who is going to look for a mine.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Not necessarily.

MR. RASON: No; not necessarily.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No; I should think not; and you would think so too, if you knew anything of mining.

MR. RASON: But I wish the House to note the fact that in the case of a mining company, even with all the difficulties surrounding it, the Government are prepared to advance £ for £; but when we come to the prospector, the Government want the prospector to spend £2 for every £1 advanced; and here they have differed from the parent Act, because the Victorian Act makes no distinction between the company and the prospector. Now, why the person who is responsible for the drafting of this Bill, having copied the Victorian Act in almost every other respect, should deliberately treat the prospector in a worse manner than the mining company is treated, I fail to see. I fail to see why, if a mining company can be advanced £ for £, the prospector also cannot be advanced £1 for every £1 that he spends. Speaking generally, I fail to see that this Bill can possibly do any good to the mining industry. I may be wrong. Perhaps it may somewhere contain something that may be of benefit; and in that hope I do not move that the Bill be read at some future period. I shall do nothing to prevent its second reading. Possibly it may do some good, although I confess I am not inclined to burden our statute book with legislation which possibly may not be availed of. I do not think it at all likely that any mining company—certainly not any honest mining company—would seek to obtain any advances from the State under the terms of this Bill. Certainly no *bona fide* prospector will seek such advance; because—and here I am reminded of the Treasurer's interjection that the Government are not composed of Jews—the assistance which the Government are prepared to render prospectors under this Bill, any prospector could obtain from the Jews on the same terms as the Gov-

ernment offer. I certainly object to the distinction made between a mining company and a prospector, in the assistance the Government are prepared to extend.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In one case, the Government have security; and in the other, they have none except the mine.

MR. RASON: In either case, the Government propose to obtain all the security they can get. From the four prospectors they want a description of the mine in which it is intended by such persons to prospect for gold or minerals.

MR. J. GARDINER: That is a valuable security—a description of a mine!

MR. RASON: It is not nearly so trifling as hon. members seem to think. If the prospectors have a mine, and enter into an agreement with the Minister, the Minister at once comes into possession of that property and of whatever they may have in or about that mine; so that the prospectors really give as much security as the mining company. And as I pointed out at the beginning, the fatal objection to my mind is that although it is proposed to assist people to develop gold and other mines, and to prospect for gold or minerals other than gold, any one who is not working gold—that is, not being a holder of a miner's right—is shut out from the operation of the Act.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: You can move to add another license.

MR. RASON: Oh, it would be quite possible to add a few clauses, to strike out a good many, and then to have a Bill that would do some good.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mt. Magnet): To a great extent I agree with the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason). Before dealing with the Bill, I wish to refer to a matter which has often occurred to me in this House, that whenever it is necessary for hon. members to make any disparaging remarks on monetary transactions, they refer to "the Jews." I hold no brief for the Jews; but I say that as regards the mining industry, it owes a great deal to the Jews—if not in Western Australia, in many of the other States, and particularly in Queensland. I only wish—

MR. TAYLOR: That you were a Jew, I suppose.

MR. WALLACE: I wish some of us were Jews. We should probably progress

a great deal better than we do now. The first point in this Bill which occurs to me is the interpretation of "miner," which reads: "A miner means the holder of a miner's right." It will be necessary for me to go on to Part II. to show what I desire. According to the interpretation, any person holding a miner's right is a miner; but when we come to Part II., "Advances to miners for prospecting," we find in Clause 15, sub-clause (a), that "Any persons who apply for advances under this part of this Act shall supply the Minister with evidence to the satisfaction of the Minister that they are all miners." That certainly does not agree with the interpretation; because we know that there are many women holding interests in mines, who hold miner's rights; and to my mind the interpretation clause should include women. But when we come to the portion of the Bill to which this word "miner" applies, we find that the applicants have to prove to the Minister that they are all "miners." If this be the interpretation, I fear it will be very difficult for the miner to get any consideration at all such as is intended to be given him under Part II. The first part of the Bill refers to assistance to companies. Personally, I did not expect a Bill to be brought into this House for the purpose of assisting mining companies. I was desirous—and I have spoken of it to the present Minister—that some such assistance should be given as is given in New South Wales, namely to prospectors. I believe in that State, in days gone by if not to-day, there was an annual vote called the "prospecting vote"; and out of that vote money was given to *bona fide* prospectors, men who should come under the heading of Part II. of this Bill. It was given them in a manner very much more liberal than is proposed to be given here, and given so that the development of the mineral resources of the State was likely to meet with some attention; not as in this Bill, by which the development of the mines will not, in my opinion, be encouraged. The member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) touched upon one or two points which struck me forcibly, and I was glad to hear him make his remarks so explicit that they must have been understood by every hon. member, especially when he compared the nature of the

assistance given to a company with that given to the prospector. It seems to me to be most unfair that a mining company, because it has more security to give to the Minister, should receive £ for £. Of course, I understand that the conditions under which the advances are made are pretty hard. Nevertheless, a mining company can get £ for £ advances up to £1,000. Part II. is that in which I am more interested. Here we find that the unfortunate prospector who has a share in a mine, without any large amount of funds, is asked to expend £2 before he can get 1s. from the State; and after he has expended £2, the State will liberally advance him £1. Then he has to get over about a dozen "ifs." If he can prove to the satisfaction of the Minister—

MR. RASON: There must be four of him.

MR. WALLACE: The member for Guildford (Mr. Rason), who evidently pays the greatest regard to prospecting, has pointed out that the provision that there must be four miners is a bad one. I know of a case on the Murchison where one man held a lease for three and a half years, and spent over £3,000 on it; yet that man could not obtain assistance under this Bill; and he surely was worthy of assistance. He could not come under the Bill because he was not four, but only one. I do not understand why the Bill should have come down in this form, unless it be that the Minister for Mines is desirous of meeting the wishes of hon. members, and asks their help to frame such a measure as would be in the best interests of the prospectors as well as the mining companies. In the instance I have mentioned, a very deserving person could not come under the provisions of the Bill, simply because he was not four persons. I hope the Minister will see his way to reduce the number from four to two when we go into Committee. The Minister may advance at his discretion a sum or sums up to £200, but the applicant shall supply him with—

(b.) A description of the mine upon which it is intended by such persons to prospect for gold or minerals, and the means by which prospecting is to be carried on:

(c.) A statement showing the period of time over which the advance is to extend, and the instalments in which such advance is required:

(d.) A statement showing what security or agreement such persons will give to secure the repayment of such advance, and showing how and when such persons intend to repay such advance.

The clause winds up by saying that the applicant shall supply the Minister with—

(e.) Any other and further information as the Minister may require, or as may be prescribed.

I do not think the Minister will be called on to advance very much money under those sub-clauses. No doubt applicants will be numerous, but I do not think much money will be given in aid. The provisions are too stringent altogether. If the Minister desires, as I understood him to say a few weeks ago he desired, to assist the pioneer, the prospector, and the developer, he will have to alter his Bill very materially. I contend that if the House adopts a scheme of assistance under which two miners, having a claim on which they desire to prospect for gold or other minerals, will be able to make application to the Minister for assistance, we shall be doing what is in the best interests of the mining industry. On the application for assistance being made, the Government could send a practical man to inspect the property. I should have said first that if the applicant should state to the Government that his property cost him £2 per foot, we will say, for sinking, the Minister would send a practical man to inspect the claim. If that practical man should consider the work done worth only 30s. per foot, the Government would advance so much less proportionately. In this way we could assist the poor prospector, the man who develops goldfields throughout the world. It is not right for the Minister to bring down a Bill asking the poor man, who sometimes finds it almost impossible to get sufficient money even to buy food, to give such security and to supply such information as required by Clause 15. I trust that the Minister will consent to amendments of the kind I have indicated when we get into Committee; or, better still, that he will have the Bill redrafted, and that a number of these clauses will, as the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) suggested, be obliterated and some better and more workable clauses inserted in their stead. Part IV., referring to assistance to public bodies for boring, states

that the Minister will not pay more than half of the cost of prospecting by public bodies for gold, minerals, or water in any mining centre or locality. Clause 22 reads:—

Should the Minister be satisfied, after receiving a report from the Government Geologist or other professional officer, that boring either for gold, minerals, or water is desirable in any mining centre or locality, and that such boring has a chance of success, he may agree with any Municipal Council, Roads Board, or Miners' Association to pay a proportion of the cost of such boring, not exceeding one-half the total cost.

I think that when the Minister was framing Clause 23 "the Countess" must have been haunting him. The clause is a good one, and will take away from unscrupulous companies the chance of defrauding the State, as I contend the Countess Gold Mining Company defrauded it. Under Clause 23 the Minister will be able to control such companies as the Countess.

MR. GEORGE: Are you referring to that mine at Cue?

MR. WALLACE: Under Clause 24 the Minister reserves to himself the right to pay the whole cost of boring operations. The clause reads:—

The Minister may pay the whole cost of boring for gold, minerals, or water in any locality should he be satisfied, after receiving the report of the Government Geologist or other professional officer, that boring is of importance to the State.

The clause is one which may be very largely availed of in the interests of the State; but I fail to see how the Government Geologist is to decide. There have been many differences of opinion between one Government Geologist whom the State possessed, and various practical and scientific mining men, in connection with a lease at the Boulder—I think it was the Ivanhoe Venture Lease. In connection with that case we had statements that the lode did exist, and other statements that the lode did not exist. There were many statements for, and many against, and many doubtful; and amongst the doubtful ones was that of the Government Geologist. I would like to know, therefore, what chance there is of any money whatever being expended under Clause 24? In my opinion there is no chance. Clause 25, by which the Minister is empowered to make

reserves, is, in my opinion, a very good one. I hope that when the Bill comes into Committee the Minister will have excised several objectionable clauses and inserted in their stead others more workable; and I trust he will recognise that the Bill as it stands does not render justice to the pioneer. The Minister should not lose sight of the fact that the man to whom is due the whole credit for the discovery, and I contend the development, of the mineral resources of this State, and indeed of every State, is the poor unfortunate prospector, who never has sufficient money or anything else to give the Government such security as the Bill in its present form demands. As regards Part I., which deals with advances to companies, I intend, when in Committee, to move the reduction of the maximum amount which can be advanced.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I desire to offer a few remarks on the Bill with a view to eliciting information from the Minister, and not as one who can call himself a mining expert. Clause 11 makes the liabilities of a company under this Bill a Crown debt. I do not see in the Bill, though, of course, it may be there, a provision such as obtains under our present law, whereby a bill of sale, or mortgage, or debenture issue given or made for the benefit of one particular creditor over other creditors, has to be made known. It seems to me, speaking as a commercial man, that it is only just that when the Government take such an absolute lien over the plant, as they do take under this clause, that at any rate the advance of the money and the lien should be as well advertised as the giving of an ordinary security would be. As regards Clause 14 in Part II., which has been referred to by the two previous speakers, I think the provision that not fewer than four miners can apply to the Minister a little too strong. The Bill is intended, as has been well pointed out, for the benefit of prospectors; not exactly for the benefit of men working a property already prospected, but for the benefit of prospectors looking for mines. It seems to me all that is necessary is to get a few more miners in connection with a property already prospected, and so to form a limited liability company, which can come under Part I. of this Bill. Clause 17, Sub-clause 6, seems to my

mind absolutely impracticable since it states:—

No instalment shall be paid to any such person until the Minister is satisfied that such persons have previously actually and properly expended, in mining operations on the said mine, all previous instalments advanced by the Minister.

And yet the clause states that no instalment should be paid! What is the object of saying that no instalments shall be paid, and then making it a condition that until it has been shown that previous instalments, which cannot be paid, have been actually and properly expended, no further instalments shall be given? That is a matter which wants altering. A little farther on Clause 26 says that the Minister himself may advance or expend moneys. What for? To drain any mining area, to assist mining by sinking or cross-cutting, by sinking shafts, and so forth. But the clause does not state what control there is to be over the Minister's method of expenditure. So far as I can gauge the feeling of the House and the country, it is generally considered inadvisable that Ministers should continue to have what they had in the past, unlimited control over the public funds.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I have provided for that.

MR. GEORGE: The expenditure of money should be at the will of Parliament; and therefore it seems to me that Clause 26 requires the insertion of a farther provision securing to Parliament the control. I respectfully submit these remarks to the Minister, and I shall look with interest for his reply.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): After hearing the last three speakers, the Minister for Mines, I feel sure, need have no fear but that the Bill will pass the second reading, though, of course, its provisions can be reconsidered in Committee. Previous speakers have been very careful to point out all the possible disadvantages of the measure. The member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) criticised it very severely; but at the last moment he dispelled my fears by stating that he would not offer any opposition to the second reading. I took that statement really to mean that the mechanical majority of this House does not intend to squash the Bill. I regret the member

for Guildford did not give us a little farther information in his particularly good, careful, and useful style, and point out what should be the main objects of the Bill. Undoubtedly the Minister should not have *carte blanche* to do what he likes with the money to be expended under this Bill; but the fact remains that for some years past Ministers have been spending practically whatever money they wanted to spend. The position taken up in this House by the Minister for Mines, is that he is prepared to ask the House for a certain limited amount of money to be spent under certain regulations and conditions. Therefore, he brings forward a Bill which will so far bind him; and if the House consider it unwise to trust in the Minister's discretion under those regulations and conditions, then I am sure the House has power to limit the amount of money to be expended under the Bill. To my mind the principal points the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) omitted were the question of public batteries and the question of boring. From every part of the House we have heard that the public batteries have been of an extremely unsatisfactory nature; in fact, every person seems to admit that they are capable of being improved; and this Bill contains some particularly good clauses, at least, in my opinion, with that object in view. The other point is that of boring. The last Government, and to some extent this Government, have gone in for boring for gold and other minerals, and I understand it is not only the intention of the Government, but the wish of a large number of members of this House to continue to increase that system of boring; but, unless a Bill of this kind be passed, no regulations will rule the boring to be done in the future. I am not saying the regulations here are unsatisfactory. Like, perhaps, other members of the House, I am making suggestions which I think of great importance. In connection with public batteries I shall take the opportunity when in Committee to try and get a suggestion inserted. First, let me explain that if the Minister is getting control under really good regulations, if he resides in Perth it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for him to deal with public batteries scattered over different parts of this large

country. I do not believe it is possible for a Minister to control them well from Perth. In my opinion, there is one way in which the batteries can be greatly improved, and one way alone, that being that in every place where a public battery has been erected, a local board, elected by the miners of the district, shall be brought into existence; that the Minister shall fix a minimum amount of stuff to be crushed per month, say 250 tons, or a smaller figure; and that there shall be a perfect understanding that if for two or three consecutive months that limited amount of stuff be not crushed, the battery shall be shifted. It will work in this way, that if people know it is a regulation that will not be deviated from, the local committee will see that the amount of stuff is always available; and when in Committee I shall do my best to get some arrangement of that nature inserted. Referring to one point taken by the member for Guildford, and which has been repeated by the other two gentlemen who have spoken—that there is no attempt to assist the genuine prospector—it seems to me the genuine prospector these gentlemen have in their minds is he who goes out into “the never never land,” going perhaps 50 or 100 miles farther than anyone else. They seem to think it is desirable to give that man or one or two men a certain amount of money to go out wherever they please—[MEMBER: I never said that]—without stating where they are going, and there being absolutely no control over them. There is much to be said from that point of view, but I take it this Bill does not refer to him at all. This Bill refers to the miner who is willing to prospect a certain piece of ground, and that man will be assisted there. Until I read this Bill I never heard it suggested by anyone that there should be a difference between assisting an individual and assisting a company, and I feel certain the Minister will not insist upon this clause. The regulations that are required for cases of this kind must necessarily be severe though not necessarily so severe as those indicated in the Bill. Companies have been mentioned, and the speakers to-night, and the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) the last night we had this Bill before us, justly complained that this measure requires too much security. It

requires a mortgage under any and every circumstance when companies get an advance. That will need to be very much modified, otherwise the effect will be that no company will be able to get an advance unless the company has no mortgage and has no debt. We must remember that most companies which have done genuine work have got perhaps some, if not all, of their stamps on credit. All these companies will be put aside. It has been suggested by several members that this Bill should be to assist the individual and not to assist the company, but I do not think we should prevent a company from getting assistance under certain circumstances. There are many instances in mining matters where, if a company got assistance for a specific purpose, it would do a great deal of good to the entire district. It would be likely to do more good than would assistance to any small party of miners working "on their own." I appeal to those gentlemen who seem to have regard for the prospector who goes out "on his own," to consider that we have not an unlimited amount of money.

MR. TAYLOR: He wants some of it.

MR. HASTIE: That man wants some of it, but I know some thousands of people who want some of it. If we are to be very free and easy in the spending of money, we shall get thousands of applicants and we shall have comparatively speaking very little prospecting done by them, more especially if these mining affairs have to be regulated from a centre such as Perth. I am not quite sure the amount of money spent in assisting the development of mining in Western Australia, and also in the other States of Australia, has on the whole been spent satisfactorily. I have some experience of Victoria, and I am bound to say that until I left there, I very rarely could see that it was satisfactory. In a tremendous lot of instances people tell me it is very unsatisfactory, and mainly because the wrong men always get the money. I shall not speak farther on this measure, but I trust that the House will be good enough to let it go into Committee. I shall only say this in conclusion, that I believe the present system is not very satisfactory, and I farther believe that until we have decentralisation in these

matters, until each district has a properly elected mining board, it will not be wise for us to go in for any particular extravagance in that direction. If what I advocate be done and we allow the representatives of the people of the district themselves to control to a large extent the amount of expenditure, we can wisely and safely do our best to assist the development of the country.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply): I can assure you, sir, I am very pleased indeed at the way this Bill has been criticised, and also to think that members are so very desirous—at least, they have expressed themselves as being very desirous—to assist the prospector. I must also congratulate the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) upon the very able manner—or upon the manner—in which he has been tutored with regard to this Bill. The hon. member says he anticipated that greater assistance would be given to the prospector than is provided for in this Bill. I would like to ask what action he and other members took in this House when the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson) desired the Minister to have power to provide camels with a view of assisting the industry. So far as I know, there has never been any great desire expressed by members of this House to enable people to go out prospecting, and, having seen a great deal of prospecting parties sent to the goldfields in the old days, I for one would feel very sorry to provide Government money for the purpose of sending people out into the backblocks of this country.

MR. RASON: Excuse me. If the hon. member will take the trouble to inquire, he will find I recommended prospecting, and a local mining board, years ago.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I think I explained very clearly when I introduced this Bill that the first portion of the measure would necessarily remain a dead letter for some time, because the only amount that has been placed upon the Estimates for assisting companies or miners is the sum of £2,000, a portion of which has been allocated by a previous Minister. So, as I say, the first portion of the measure must, to a great extent, remain a dead letter. I stated also that I had no objection to the amount of £1,000 being reduced to £500.

MR. GEORGE: Did you say a portion of the money was allocated by a previous Minister?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. There is a vote for deep sinking. I desire regulations so that the officers of my department shall be compelled, before these moneys go away, to execute a proper agreement. In a case at Norseman a dispute has occurred as to whether a lien we want on a mine, which is being developed partly by Government money and partly by money belonging to the company, includes machinery upon the mine. All these matters should have been arranged beforehand, and I desire that when any assistance is to be given to a company the officers of the department shall be compelled by Act of Parliament to see that the Act is carried out in its entirety. I think that where we advance money we should have a mortgage upon the property. We have no desire to claim upon any uncalled capital, but we do desire, when advancing money to a company, to have proper securities. I am not at all eager to advance moneys to large companies. There are a few small companies at distant places I wish to aid.

MR. HASTIE: The Bill speaks very favourably for the larger companies.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I was going to point out that when advancing to companies we obtain securities, and if companies apply for assistance we require them to spend pound for pound before we advance money. Supposing a company applied for £100, before we made any advance whatever we would insist upon their expenditure of £100. Then we would advance them £100, and before making any further advance we would see that the money had been properly expended, and they would also have to expend another £100 before we would make any farther advance. In dealing with the interpretation clause, I can see the necessity which has been pointed out by the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) that we should insert an amendment, making the interpretation of "miner" the holder of a miner's right or mineral license. In Part 2 of the Bill, there will be no objection to "four" being altered to "two." It is the object of Part 2 of the Bill that where a person is making some effort at development and

can show that through scarcity of funds he is unable to carry on his work of prospecting, application can be made to the Government, and if the Government feel satisfied that the lease will merit the expenditure of any money, they will give some assistance. It does not mean that the miner would have to expend £2 in cash in developing the property before the Government would give assistance: but, he will have to spend the money in labour. I have heard many instances in which storekeepers do assist men. The storekeeper will say, "I will find you the food, you go on with the work." The prospector may ask the State for assistance, but the State will ask for a lien on the lease, and the Government will require the prospector to expend money to the value of £2, or labour of that value, before they will advance £1. The agreement I would insist upon is that when a man has disposed of his lease, or has crushed sufficient stone to realise a profit from his labours, then he should repay the State. I think that part of the Bill is all right: the assistance which will be granted will be clear. The Government have only a small amount of money to grant, but assistance will be given *pro rata*. There are many prospectors who will be very pleased to get some assistance. Very little has been said about Part 3 of the Bill. I want regulations to deal with the public batteries. We have spent over £100,000 in the erection of public batteries, and plants for cyanide purposes are to be erected. For some time past I have been endeavouring to bring forward new regulations dealing with our Mining Act, and these should be ready for gazetting in a short time, probably within the next two weeks. The regulations have only to be considered by Cabinet, receive approval and will then be gazetted. Under those regulations we are making special provisions to give reward leases to prospectors. If a man discovers a new line of reef, the Government will allow him to take up a property without payment of rent or fees, according to the distance the property is from any other existing line of reef. I would like to point out that the late Administration authorised the purchase of tailings from batteries for cyanide purposes, and were paying for tailings according to the following process: assuming 100 tons of ore are

put through a public battery, it was estimated there would be 80 tons of tailings. The tailings would be assayed and the owner would be paid 80 per cent. of the assay value less the cost of extraction. Many descriptions of ore are put through a mill, with only 40 or 50 per cent. of tailings—all the rest running away in slimes—therefore, if tailings were paid for on the 80 per cent. basis, the extraction would have to be a very high one to make it up on the other parcels. I saw some tailings from the Mulgarrie district in the tailings pits at Kalgoorlie; they had been there three months, and yet 5dwts. of gold remained in them. It was impossible to extract the gold by the cyanide process, and if the Government had purchased tailings of that description the public battery system would soon have got into disrepute. I think I have adopted a principle now which I hope to be able to submit to members very soon. In regard to the erection of cyanide plant, the system to be adopted is as follows: we will take care that all the tailings are arranged by measurement: they will have to be run into pits, and the manager will determine what amount of tailings there are after the crushing. They will then be assayed, and the owner will be allowed 50 per cent. of the value, less the cost of treatment. At the end of three months there will be a thorough clean-up, and then all those persons whose tailings have been treated during the three months will receive the remainder, according to the ratio of the quantity treated. We might only realise 40 per cent., or perhaps more. It is absolutely impossible for the Crown to pay for gold before it is extracted.

MR. GEORGE: What about four or five ton lots.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We will have nothing to do with small parcels like that. It will be impossible for the State to make any loss by the means I intend to adopt. I have gone to a lot of trouble and obtained reports from some of the best mine managers, and they think the State will be thoroughly protected. In regard to the question of an advisory board: provided the Government have the nomination of a fair proportion of the members, boards might be appointed, but they will be only advisory

boards. Still, they may be able to give good advice to the Minister in regard to many things. We have also issued a rule to the effect that where a battery is at work, and insufficient stone comes to hand, that battery will be closed down, and it is only to-day that I gave instructions that the Tuckanarra battery should be closed down, because there was not sufficient stone, and the battery will not be reopened till 200 tons of stone are there to crush, and we shall not allow the wages to be running on, as in the past. The public batteries are to be made a success.

MR. GEORGE: What has been the system in the past?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It has been very bad indeed. The Mulline battery treated 1,000 tons, and realised £750, that was at 15s. per ton; 900 tons of tailings realised 10s. per ton. If this sort of thing was kept going for twelve months, it would mean £12,000 or £15,000 from that battery alone.

MR. GEORGE: Do I understand when a battery has been closed down, the wages have gone on?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It has been so.

MR. GEORGE: No wonder they did not pay them.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I can tell hon. members there was one ten-head mill by which the Government lost £2,600. If the hon. member took charge of that mill, ran it for twelve months, and charged the prospector nothing for crushing the ore, he would find there would be very little profit at the end of twelve months. I have taken a great deal of interest in this system. By the returns published last month, which to some extent were approximate, although they were nearly correct, I find that the batteries paid their way, and from this out they will prove a fair benefit to the State. I am very pleased at the way in which the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) dealt with the Bill, and I hope members generally will see their way to assist me to put the Bill through Committee. There are one or two clauses which require alteration. In Clause 2, I think we might strike out "four" and insert "two." Also, we might alter the interpretation of "miner." It will depend on the House whether any assistance shall

be given to mining companies when the Government have a full mortgage over the assets. I think the Government should; still it is a matter for the House to decide. I hope the second reading will be agreed to, and that we shall be able to go into Committee at once.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

MR. RASON moved that at the end of the interpretation of "miner," the words "or mineral license" be added.

Amendment put and passed.

On motion by MR. RASON, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Constitution of Committee:

MR. HUTCHINSON: By the clause, two members out of the five would be members of the Legislative Council. It would work better were one a member of the Council and four members of the Assembly.

MR. HOPKINS: And make the councillor chairman.

MR. HUTCHINSON: As the Assembly controlled the purse strings, and dealt finally with public works, they should deal with the initial stages also.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS opposed the proposal. The Upper House should have more representation than one out of five. The chairman would be elected by the Committee. After all, the Council had a power of veto on works, and if the hon. member's proposal were passed, the Council might veto not only the works but the Bill.

MR. HUTCHINSON: The Assembly consisted of 50 members, the Council of 30; yet the latter House would have a greater proportionate representation than the former.

MR. DAGLISH: The mode of appointing members of the Committee, which was to be the same as that adopted for select committees of the House, was not good. Was this the procedure adopted in Victoria and New South Wales? The ballot without nomination frequently

resulted in the selection of ill-qualified members.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The mode of selection proposed by the Bill was similar to that of New South Wales. The wording of the Victorian Public Works Committee Act was puzzling, for it stated that the Committees should be elected in the manner in which select committees were elected, but that the elections should not be by ballot. Evidently that referred to election in open House, either on the voices or on division.

MR. HOPKINS: The clause was objectionable. The franchise of the Council was not so liberal as that of the Assembly, nor was the Council roll so large; and if one of the Assembly committee members were made the chairman, each Chamber would then have equal representation. Better let the clause read, "The chairman shall be a member of the Legislative Council, and the other four members shall be members of the Legislative Assembly."

MR. GARDINER: The Victorian custom might well be followed. There, members were selected by the whole House; and unless motions for their appointment were carried on the voices, divisions were taken. That was preferable to balloting, for the country could then see whether the best men were selected.

MR. DAGLISH: The words "but not by ballot" should be added after "respectively." Perhaps the Attorney General would draft a proper amendment.

THE PREMIER: Evidently the words "according to the practice regulating the selection of members to serve on select committees" ought not to stand. He moved that the words between "appointed," in line three, and "two," in line five, be struck out, and "by the said Council and Assembly respectively, but not by ballot," inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. HOPKINS moved as a farther amendment that in Sub-clause (1), line eight, the word "two" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "The chairman shall be a member of the Legislative Council and four shall be members of the Legislative Assembly."

MR. W. J. GEORGE: It was his strong opinion that the original wording

of the clause was better than that proposed. Members of the Council, as a rule, represented a large portion of Western Australia, whereas members of the Assembly represented only districts. Of course, members of the Assembly should be more closely in touch with the requirements of their districts than members of the Legislative Council. The latter, however, being elected for a period of six years, were likely to have greater accumulated experience than those of the Lower House. He certainly objected to the proposal to make a member of the Upper House chairman of the Committee.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not being for a moment afraid of creating a bad precedent, he trusted that the original wording would be adhered to in preference to that of the amendment. The Bill in this respect only followed the legislation of the Eastern States, where committees constituted as proposed here had proved successful; and that in spite of the fact that in most cases the Upper Houses of the Eastern States were of a more cast-iron, conservative description than our Upper House. No sufficient reason had been advanced for making the proposed alteration.

MR. RASON: In considering this amendment we had to ask ourselves whether we wanted a Public Works Committee or not; because it was perfectly certain that if we proposed to give another place such a small representation as suggested by the amendment, then undoubtedly there would be no Public Works Committee.

HON. W. H. JAMES: We were all agreed on that.

MR. RASON: Perhaps the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) would not press his amendment.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: A public work approved by the Committee had to be passed by both Houses before it could be proceeded with. Another place would like, before passing a Bill authorising a work, to feel satisfied that the work had been sufficiently examined, and that the place in question had had a sufficient say in the matter. The probability was that both Houses would lean to a very great extent on the decision of the Public Works Committee, and that the question of the advisability

or necessity of proposed works would not be so much canvassed in Parliament as under present conditions. It was necessary that both Houses should be thoroughly satisfied that proposed public works had been well considered by an independent board. The representation fixed by the Bill ought to stand.

THE PREMIER: The member for Boulder, who had probably moved his amendment only to invite discussion, ought to see that it was not necessary to persist. If the Council were not given fair representation, a feeling of jealousy might be aroused; and this would militate against the fair consideration of the Bill. After all, the Committee were supposed to be representative of Parliament, and not representative of one House any more than of one party in a House.

MR. HOPKINS: Plainly there was no use in pressing the amendment, since the members were against it.

MR. WILSON: There was not the slightest doubt that if the amendment were adopted, the Upper House would throw out the Bill. That House would never be satisfied with a representation of one member. Its numerical strength entitled it to two members. The proportion, as he had worked it out, was $3\frac{1}{8}$ members to the Assembly, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ members to the Upper House. As it was not possible to split up members into eighths, two was the proper proportion for the Upper House. With regard to the chairmanship, he hoped the measure would be altered so that the chairman would be selected by the Legislative Assembly, and from among its members. This should be so, as the Committee's report in nine cases out of ten would, in the first instance, be made to the Legislative Assembly.

THE PREMIER: That could be moved as an amendment in Clause 5.

MR. HOPKINS: Having no desire to force his amendment on an unwilling House, he would withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Chairman and vice-chairman of Committee:

MR. WILSON moved that in Sub-clause (1), line one, after "chairman" the words "who shall be a member of

and be elected by the Legislative Assembly" be inserted.

MR. GEORGE: Would it not be best to let the Committee elect the chairman?

MR. WILSON: No; let the Assembly elect him.

HON. W. H. JAMES: It was better to pass the clause as it stood.

MR. WILSON: On this occasion he ventured to disagree with the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) and respectfully to point out that the hon. member was wrong. It was much better to have the chairman appointed by the Assembly.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The Assembly members had the voting power, being three to two.

MR. WILSON: Yes; but it would be better to let the House decide which of the three should be chairman. The work of this Public Works Committee was like that of a Royal Commission, and the chairman of a Royal Commission was named by the Governor, under advice. Let the chairmanship of this Public Works Committee be a special appointment.

MR. HAYWARD: The general rule, which worked well, was that committees elected their own chairmen; and in this case the Committee ought to be permitted to elect its chairman.

MR. DAGLISH: The amendment would have his support. If it was the general rule that committees elected their own chairmen, still it was a rule that did not apply to select committees of this House.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: It does.

MR. DAGLISH: The chairman of a select committee was usually the member who moved for its appointment.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Not necessarily.

MR. DAGLISH: The proposer was usually chairman, as a matter of fact. The objection to allowing the Committee to elect the chairman was that any person proposed for the chairmanship, no matter how unfit he might be for the position, was usually appointed; for the simple reason that no member cared to state personal objections. That was so in connection with committees of all sorts and sizes. The chairman, whether elected by the House or by the Committee, should undoubtedly be a member of the Legislative Assembly.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Would not the hon. member's objection apply also in the case of a chairman elected by the House?

MR. DAGLISH: No; the area of choice was very much wider in the House, and there was less chance of back-stroking by 50 members than by five. If a member objected on a committee like that to which he had referred, there was often a tendency, no matter how earnest and reasonable his objection might be, to allege he was after the chairmanship himself. He did not think we should make it necessary to object in such a small body as that, but the House should take the responsibility on its own shoulders.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was to be hoped the members would leave the clause as it stood. Parliament would be electing these gentlemen to one of the highest positions they could bestow. They would be placing practically a very large share of the control of the public purse, if not in their hands, within their sphere of advice, and if those gentlemen were fit to occupy that position they were fit and proper persons to elect their own chairman. The House would, if he might use the expression, be rather casting an aspersion on the Committee by insisting on electing the chairman.

MR. DAGLISH: An aspersion could not be cast on an unelected committee.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We should be casting an aspersion in this way, that we should say apparently we did not think the Committee fit to elect their chairman out of their own number.

MR. DAGLISH: Fifty were better than five.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: As to restricting the nomination to members of this Chamber, he would object, because that action would be a slap in the face to another place. He wanted the Bill to get through. He believed it to be one of the best measures the Assembly ever had before them, and it ought to have been passed years ago. He did not want the measure jeopardised, and, as he said when introducing the Bill, the measure was the result of 10 years' satisfactory experience in the other States.

MR. QUINLAN: Supposing the Assembly were not sitting, and a vacancy took

place on the Committee, what would happen?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : That was provided for.

HON. W. H. JAMES : The vice-chairman would act.

MR. QUINLAN : The consent of the Governor-in-Council would have to be obtained.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : If the amendment were adopted.

MR. QUINLAN : For that reason he thought it better to keep the clause in the Bill. He congratulated the hon. member on the introduction of the measure, which he regarded as one of the best ever introduced into the Assembly.

MR. HOPKINS : The object of his first amendment was to widen the scope for the selection of a chairman. He probably had as much experience of committee meetings as any member. Directly a meeting assembled, one member moved that so-and-so be the chairman, and nobody else objected. Nobody cared to do so in a small body of five. We ought to claim that the chairman should be a member of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. EWING : It did not follow that, because there were more members of the Legislative Assembly than there were of the Legislative Council, we had a right to say there was more ability in this House than in the other. It was quite possible that one of the two gentlemen elected in the Upper House might be a man of large training and great experience, and he might be worthy of the chairmanship. It was far better to leave the appointment in the hands of the Committee.

MR. GARDINER : If we limited the choice of chairman to members of this House, we might possibly not get the best man for the position. The members selected by us might be very excellent practical men, but not suitable for the position of chairman. The possibilities were that it would be better to leave the election of a chairman to the Committee. We ought, if possible to get the best chairman, irrespective of which House he belonged to.

MR. HASTIE : The success of a meeting depended almost entirely upon the chairman. If the selection of chairman were left to a small committee, that committee would take no particular steps to get the best chairman. It had been sug-

gested that a really good chairman could be selected from the Upper House; but if a person were a member of the Upper House that, to his mind, was a disqualification. In 19 cases out of 20 this House would decide what work had to be proceeded with, and it was absolutely necessary that the chairman of the Committee should be a member of the Assembly; the chairman could at every stage place the matter before the House infinitely better than any other man.

MR. GEORGE : At first he was in favour of having the clause as it stood, but after the remarks which had been made by the member for Kawowna (Mr. Hastie) and others he had altered his opinion. As a rule the member who moved for a select committee was chairman, for it was considered that he knew most about what he wanted to elucidate. In order to prevent any sort of jealousy or soreness that might appear in regard to the Committee under consideration, and might possibly militate against the good work of the Committee, perhaps it would be better for the House to elect the chairman. There did not appear to be, but he presumed there would be, means propounded by the Minister as to nominating persons as members of the Committee. Someone might be nominated and be unwilling to serve.

MEMBER : He could withdraw.

MR. GEORGE : Under the Bill the only thing he could do was to resign after election, whereas it would be more satisfactory to him not to be elected to a seat he did not want to fill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : The proposer and seconder would probably find out whether one was willing to serve.

MR. GEORGE : That should be so, but it might not be. It would be best to let the whole of this Chamber choose the chairman, and the man thus chosen would be considered to be entitled to more respect from the country than would be felt if there were the slightest suspicion that one occupied the position through a cut-and-dried arrangement beforehand. There might not be a cut-and-dried arrangement beforehand, but the public would think there was.

MEMBER : What about giving the Upper House a voice?

MR. GEORGE: The Legislative Assembly were the custodians of the public purse, and would have the first shot in regard to any public work that came forward for discussion. The chairman should be in this House to explain the reasons, and to fight for or against the proposal made.

MR. T. HAYWARD: If we tried to secure too much power for this House, we should jeopardise the measure in another place. We had better be content with the clause as it stood. We got fair representation, and there was fair representation for the other place.

MR. TAYLOR: This House was, he thought, influenced too much in its legislation by fear of some other place. If this House was going to pass legislation, it should do so irrespective of the other place. If the other place would not pass it, the onus should rest upon the other place, and the people would know when the elections came on who was guilty of not passing useful legislation. This Chamber ought to nominate the chairman of the Committee, who would be able to show quite clearly to the Assembly the reason why works were advocated. For that reason he would vote for the amendment of the member for Perth.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Members should not forget that this was to be a parliamentary committee, and not a committee of the Legislative Assembly. While not admitting the suggestion of the member for Mt. Margaret that we should be afraid of the Legislative Council, still members of that House were entitled to courtesy, and the Committee should be elected not only from the aspect of the Assembly, but also from the aspect of the Legislative Council. The Assembly would have three members on the Committee, and we should not believe that those members belonged to the craven school which the member for Boulder referred to. Because a bad man was proposed, every man would not have the courage to propose a better man as chairman. It would cause a very serious reflection upon the House to send such men to represent them on the Committee. The three members sent to represent the Assembly on the Committee would be the three best men of the House. This legislation existed in the sister States, and it had not been felt necessary to do in the other States

what was suggested here, therefore we were justified in assuming that the provision did not work unfairly. The chairman should not be elected by the Assembly, because the Committee was not to consist only of members of the Assembly. If the three best men of the Assembly were not bold enough to express their opinions, what right had the remaining 47 members of the Assembly, who were not such good men as those selected on the Committee, to choose the chairman. Personally, there was something in the suggestion that a member of the Upper House should be the chairman, and if he (Mr. James) were a member of the Committee, and two members were proposed as chairman of the Committee, one from the Assembly and one from the Council, both being equal, he (Mr. James) would give his vote for the member of the Upper House, as that member would not so often be electioneering. If we were going to send to the Upper House a Bill which would give the Legislative Council two members, and which gave the Assembly power to appoint the chairman, he would be astonished if the Council did not reject the Bill.

MR. HASTIE: In the other States the chairman was always selected from the Lower House. Supposing Brown, Jones, and Smith were selected from the Assembly, Brown might propose Jones, but Smith would not have the courage to say he was a better man than Jones.

MR. WILSON: This was not a question of courage, but of right. The Committee would have to inquire into works which would entail public expenditure, therefore the Council would recognise the undoubted right of the Assembly to have one of the members of the Assembly as chairman. The reports of the Committee would of necessity have to be made to the Assembly first, which should have some weight with the members of another place, and the chairman was the proper man to make the report to the Assembly. For the same reason that we had a majority of Ministers in the Assembly, we wanted a majority of members on the Committee and the chairman in the Assembly. On occasions a member of the House of Lords was Prime Minister, but more often the Premier sat in the Lower House. It expedited public business, and it was a lot better that the head

of the Government should be in the Lower House. By the same line of argument it was much better for the chairman of the Committee to be a member of the Assembly. He did not think the Council would take any exception to the chairman being appointed by the Assembly, although the member for East Perth thought the Council would be justified in throwing the Bill out if such a proposal were inserted. As to the method of election, the proper way was to elect a chairman, and send him with the weight of the Assembly to take charge of the Committee. No matter what was said about individuals, no man was going on the Committee to advocate his own abilities. He might believe that he was the right man to take charge of the Committee, yet out of courtesy to the other members he would refrain from pushing himself forward. If a ballot were resorted to, perhaps each member would vote for himself as chairman. Every member of the Committee might think he was the best able to take charge of the Committee, and it might be his honest opinion. It had been said that during the recess the chairman might resign, and the Committee be in a fix to fill his place, but the vice-chairman would take the place of the chairman in case of resignation, and if anything happened to the vice-chairman the Committee could have power to elect some one else temporarily.

MR. BUTCHER: No argument had been brought forward in support of the amendment. There was no reason why any of those appointed should not be suitable for chairman. If we selected the best men for the position everyone would be as good as the other. We should leave it to the good sense and judgment of the Committee to choose their own chairman.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the members chosen on the Committee were good enough to give advice to the Assembly on public works, they were good enough to elect their own chairman. He did not know if anyone elected to the Committee would have so much mistaken delicacy of feeling not to speak his mind as to the selection of a chairman.

MR. HASSELL: The clause should stand as printed; it was the best proposition before the Committee.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes ...	12
Noes ...	20

Majority against ... 8

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. George	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hastie	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Holmes
Mr. McWilliams	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Reid	Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Reside	Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Leake
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Hopkins (Teller).	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Pigott
	Mr. Quinlan
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Sayer
	Sir J. G. Lee-Steere
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Butcher (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. HASTIE moved, as an amendment, that a sub-clause be added to stand as Sub-clause 3: "At all meetings of the Committee the chairman shall have a deliberate vote, in addition to a casting vote." If a member of the Assembly were elected chairman, there would be two representatives of the Council, and two of the Assembly: and if one Assembly member were absent, the Council members could control the business. To conserve the rights of the Assembly, there should be no doubt as to the chairman's having a deliberate vote.

MR. HUTCHINSON: But if a member of the Council were elected chairman, the representation would be equal. What then?

MR. HASTIE: The chairman would have a casting vote, when necessary.

MR. QUINLAN: It was surprising to find an apostle of one-man-one-vote advocating plural voting. Though the casting vote had been in existence in municipal councils from time immemorial, the amendment would undoubtedly give an unjust power to the chairman. No fair objection could be taken to the members of the Upper House, who were the right people to check "Hastie" legislation.

MR. HASTIE: Surely to disfranchise one member of the Committee was not the best way to check hasty legislation. Except in Australia and in the English Parliament, a chairman had always a deliberative and a casting vote.

MR. GEORGE: In the event of the Committee being equally divided, the chairman did not require more than a casting vote.

MR. HASTIE: Not when all the members were present.

MR. GEORGE: All should be present.

MR. HASTIE: What about illness?

MR. GEORGE: Postpone the sitting till the sick member recovered. The most important duties of the Committee would be performed in recess, and serious delay through illness was unlikely. The sick member could resign. Was it too much to ask that all the members of a Committee which dealt with such large expenditure should regularly attend?

MR. HUTCHINSON: If a member of the Council were chairman, and one of the Assembly members were absent, then the Council would be equally represented with the Assembly, and the chairman could out-vote the Assembly members.

MR. WILSON: Surely this was not a question of Assembly *versus* Council. The Council had even now a right to throw out a Public Works Bill. The casting vote was merely to prevent a stoppage of business. It would be necessary to provide for a quorum of three. A member might be sick for months.

MR. GEORGE: Let him resign.

MR. WILSON: Why, if he were a good man? The chairman should have simply an ordinary casting vote in case of a tie.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Under Clause 8, the Committee had to make a report to Parliament; and in matters of this sort differences of opinion would not be settled by disputing, but by mutual concessions. The work of this Committee should be altogether beyond the reach of disputes. At the same time he desired to point out, in connection with Clause 8, that there would be no use in the Committee sitting during the session, since they could not report till the commencement of the next session.

MR. WILSON: The hon. member had certainly overlooked Clause 7.

SIR JAMES G. LEE STEERE: It was certainly his opinion that the hon. member had not interpreted the clause correctly. The proposed Committee could make a report at any time, before the commencement of Parliament if they chose.

MR. WILSON: The Committee had absolute power to sit at any time. The report referred to in Clause 8 was an annual report like those of the various departments. The proposed Committee could report from time to time, and at the end of the year make an annual report.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Clause 16 elucidated this point very clearly:

Where a proposed public work is referred, the Committee shall, with all reasonable despatch, deal with the matter, and make their report to the Assembly.

MR. GEORGE: Quite so.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In connection with the amendment before the House, he desired to point out that in the legislation of the Eastern States there appeared, strangely enough, to be no mention of a quorum.

MR. SAYER: The quorum might be a matter of regulation. There was power to make regulations under this Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the Committee thought it necessary, a sub-clause might be inserted providing for a quorum; and this was the proper place to do it. With regard to the amendment proposed by the member for Kanowna, he did not think it mattered very much one way or the other.

MR. SAYER: The Committee would have nothing particular to vote on: they had simply to make a report. The only occasion when members would be called on to vote was when a question of adjournment, or, say, the question of punishment of a witness for contempt arose. The vote would always be on comparatively minor questions, the main business being the furnishing of a report. In this connection there might be a majority report and a minority report. No difficulty would arise with regard to voting, so far as the material objects of the Committee were concerned.

MR. HOPKINS: To appoint a person to this Committee and to refuse him a vote was not satisfactory. It might very well happen that the regulations of this Committee would be a copy of the procedure for select Committees, under which the report must be prepared by the chairman and put to the Committee clause by clause. Under that procedure, the bringing in of a minority report might not be in order. If the chairman of the Com-

mittee was competent to preside over the deliberations and to prepare the report, he was certainly competent to vote. In reference to the question of a quorum, he would suggest that three members might take evidence, but the recommendations should not come from less than five. In the case of illness of a member, the Governor in Council should have power to appoint some person as a substitute for the member during his illness.

MR. QUINLAN: In this matter we found good guidance in the constitution of Parliament itself. Neither the Chairman of Committees nor his Honour the Speaker had two votes. In municipal councils, at any rate in that of Perth, the chairman had a second vote. For his part, however, he had never agreed with that; and there was only one occasion on which the second vote had been exercised. The same thing applied in the case of the judicial Bench. Suppose the Chief Justice sat on a case, and afterwards reheard it on appeal: he had not an additional vote. Of course it might be argued that the judicial Bench, and perhaps also the Legislative Assembly, were worthy of greater power and dignity than this proposed Committee; but still we ought to trust the Committee. The amendment should be withdrawn. If it were pressed, he would vote against it.

MR. DAGLISH: The member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) had travelled a surprising distance in order to find reasons against the amendment. The chairman of the proposed Committee would presumably be the ablest and fittest man to manage the business of the Committee. So, if the chairman were not given a deliberative vote, it meant practically that the best man would be disfranchised. That was not a reasonable position. The cases of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees in this House were not analogous, since the proceedings of the Committee differed materially from those of Parliament. The chairman would scarcely ever have a vote, as the whole of the five members of the Committee would rarely be present. With regard to cases of illness, a man ought not to be punished by removal for falling ill. In the absence of a member, the chairman should have a deliberative vote; and he should have a casting vote in the case of a tie. There was no valid

objection to the chairman, the best man of the Committee, having two votes. The amendment would have his support.

MR. HOPKINS: The chairman would not have a deliberative vote unless the voting were even.

MR. HASTIE: It would be wise to provide that the chairman should always have the right to cast one vote, the same as any other member, and in the event of the Committee wanting to come to a decision, he should be allowed to exercise a casting vote.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Power of Committee to transact business during recess:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would, in his opinion, be a reasonable thing to provide that three members should form a quorum of the Board, and that the report should be considered by not less than four. It might be impossible to get a full Committee. He moved as an amendment that the words "and three members shall form a quorum" be added to the clause.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 8 and 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Powers of Committee:

MR. BUTCHER: If a Quaker refused to take oath, as he would be justified in doing, what would be the result? Could he be fined £50?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was usual to provide that persons who objected to take oaths should be able to make affirmations. He moved as an amendment that after "oath," in line 26, the words "or affirmation" be inserted; also after "oaths," in line 26, "or take affirmations"; also after "sworn," in line 31, "or affirmed"; also after "oath," in line 33, "or affirmation" be inserted.

Amendments put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 11 to 16, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 17—No work of which estimated cost exceeds £5,000 to be carried out unless referred:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that progress be reported. A report was being prepared embracing the experience of the last five years and showing the number of public works which had cost between £5,000 and £6,000, also those

which had cost over £10,000. Such a statement would be of considerable assistance to the Committee in arriving at the solution of the somewhat vexed question as to the amount of the work which could be carried out without being placed before the Public Works Committee. Personally he thought £5,000 too low.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

CARNARVON TRAMWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Kingsmill) in moving the second reading, said: This is a little Bill which it is just as well we should get off the Business Paper as soon as possible. The Bill has been brought forward under peculiar circumstances. The tramway referred to has been in existence for several years, but it is proposed now to bring the line into legal existence and to enable the department to make regulations for the carriage of goods and passengers under the Railways and Tramways Act. It is for this object alone that the Bill is brought forward. I do not suppose that there will be any great amount of discussion on the Bill while it is going through. With this brief explanation I move that the Bill be read a second time.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I object to any Bill authorising the construction of a tramway of this sort passing at this hour, when members have had no information placed before them. An understanding was arrived at that we were to go on with the business of the House, now we are informed that as soon as this Bill is passed the House will adjourn. Members who live out of town have been kept here, and it is just as well now to go on. I object to the second reading being passed in this manner when members have had no information placed before them.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): When negotiating with the other side, I do so with the leader, and the leader of the Opposition had intimated that he would like to adjourn. I am willing to adjourn now or sit until midnight; but I wished to meet the member for the Williams.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct tramways:

MR. NANSON: Was this tramway already constructed or was it about to be constructed?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tramway had been constructed for some years, and the Bill was to bring the tramway into legal existence and to enable the Government to make regulations for the carrying of goods and passengers under the Railways and Tramways Act.

MR. NANSON: The Bill authorised the construction of a tramway. Would it not be in the power of the Government to construct another tramway?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The description was given in the schedule.

MR. NANSON: How was it possible to give power to construct a tramway which was already constructed?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tramway was already constructed along the line described in the schedule to the Bill, and he would assure the hon. member that it was not intended to superimpose another tramway along this line.

MR. NANSON: This was a legal question; perhaps the Attorney General could give his opinion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The line was already constructed.

MR. NANSON: In accepting the assurance of the Minister, he hoped it would not lead the Government into any unnecessary engagement.

MR. JOHNSON: Who built this tramway, and who now controlled it?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It had been built by a former Minister for Works.

MR. GEORGE: What work did it do?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was extremely useful to the inhabitants of Carnarvon and district, as the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) could doubtless explain. The sole object of the Bill was to bring the tramway within the scope of the Railways and Tramways Act, so that the department should have the power to make regulations. The line was now, by the courtesy of those who

used it, controlled by the Harbours and Rivers Department.

MR. F. REID: Under what control would it be in the future?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under legal control.

MR. BUTCHER: Evidently the Government has been illegally imposing a tax for the last few years.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:55 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 22nd October, 1901.

Motion (without notice): Midland Railway Inquiry, to appear before Joint Committee—Question: Harbour Dues for Mail Steamers, Differential—First readings: 1, Bread Bill; 2, Gaols, Prisons, and Houses of Correction Amendment Bill—Motion: Railway Crossing, Spencer's Brook—Motion: Resident Magistrate, Residence at Northam (withdrawn)—Roads Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Sales by Mortgagees Bill, third reading—Roman Catholic Church Lands Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported—Probate and Administration Amendment Bill, recommittal, reported—Trade Unions Bill, in Committee to Clause 4, progress—Dog Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, resumed, progress—Friendly Societies Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, progress—First readings: 1, Excess Bill (1900-1); 2, Carnarvon-Babbage Island Tramway Bill; 3, Early Closing Act Amendment Bill; 4, Fourth Judge Appointment Bill—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MOTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY INQUIRY, TO APPEAR BEFORE COMMITTEE.

HON. M. L. MOSS (West) moved that the Standing Orders be suspended, in

order that he might move the following motion without notice:

That the receiver and manager of the Midland Railway Co. be at liberty to appear before the joint select committee appointed to inquire and report upon the affairs of the company.

HON. H. BRIGGS (West) seconded.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers): Reasons should be advanced for the suspension of the Standing Orders. Why had not notice been given?

THE PRESIDENT: By Standing Order 88, if any member objected to such motion, notice must be given.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Might notice be given now?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Motion passed.

QUESTION—HARBOUR DUES FOR MAIL STEAMERS, DIFFERENTIAL.

HON. M. L. MOSS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Why are differential rates of harbour dues charged to the North German Lloyd Company and the German Australian Company. 2, If it is the intention of the Government to place both companies on the same basis in the matter of harbour dues.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The North German Lloyd, together with the P. & O. Orient, and Messageries Maritime Mail Steamers, was allowed to enter the harbour at Albany on payment of £30 per annum in satisfaction of all harbour dues, and, as the North German Lloyd Company was the pioneer company to call at Fremantle, a continuation of the privilege was sanctioned. 2, The German Australian Company is on the same footing as all other cargo steamers which enter the port of Fremantle, and pays the regulation rates, and it is not intended to make any alteration in regard to those rates.

BREAD BILL.

Introduced by HON. A. JAMESON (Minister), and read a first time.

GAOLS, PRISONS, AND HOUSES OF CORRECTION AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by HON. A. JAMESON, and read a first time.