

further. We get a ride to the racecourse on the Government railways for 2s. 6d., along what is really a threepenny trip. We have to pay the totalisator tax. Now we are to have a tax on tobaccoists. Tobacco is one of the most heavily taxed commodities in the State to-day. The amount of the tax is three times the value of the article itself. Yet the Government have decided on that tobacco tax. Then there is the brokers and land agents' tax. I regard this as "a bob in." It is more than sixpence. Considering what the land agents have done—what Sommers, Crick, Willis and others have done—I think we can impose this tax. Consequently I shall support it. Then again we are to have a tax on banks. I am of opinion that the banks can very well afford to pay the tax. And I am going to support that tax, if only to get even with them for the half-guinea charged me each half-year for keeping my poor little account. I am convinced that the Government have absolutely failed to advance the agricultural progress of this State, and that we as a State, and Australia as a whole, must absolutely rely on the agricultural progress. That progress can only be made by a solid land tax, with some stringent measures in regard to holding unused land. Until the Government have introduced that land tax, until they have fairly attempted to grapple with the question of land cultivation, they are certainly not likely to advance the progress of this State.

Progress reported.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.34 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th December, 1908.

	PAGE
Question: Goldfields Water Supply, Northam service	1096
Bills: Bridgetown-Wilgarrup Railway, 3r.	1096
Land and Income Tax, 3r.	1096
Upper Chapman Railway, 3r.	1096
Vermin Boards, Com.	1096
Fines and Penalties Appropriation, 1a.	1101
Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment, 2a.	1101
Nannine-Meekeatharra Railway, 2r.	1109
Adjournment, Christmas holidays	1112

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY, NORTHAM SERVICE.

Hon. G. THROSSELL asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the large amount of new settlement in the country North of Northam, and the consequent demand for water, will the Government give early consideration to the devising of some plan for supplying the settlers with water from the Coolgardie mains on more satisfactory conditions than now obtain, and so afford encouragement to further settlement?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Government are prepared to give consideration to any proposition that will enable these extensions to be carried out without loss to the State. The only alternative proposal to a guarantee of consumption equivalent to 10 per cent. on the capital cost of an extension yet suggested, is the introduction of legislation enabling a rate to be struck on all agricultural lands served by a branch main, which has not been favourably received.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Bridgetown-Wilgarrup Railway; 2, Land and Income Tax; 3, Upper Chapman railway—*passed*.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day.

Postponed Clause 47—Funds of boards, rates:

Hon. F. CONNOR moved an amendment—

That after the word "holding," in line 2 of the first proviso, the words "except in the Kimberley Division, as defined in Section 38 of the Land Act, 1898, and such rate made and levied by a board constituted under this Act shall not exceed sixpence for every one hundred acres of a holding within any district situated in the said Kimberley Division" be added.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The provisions of the Bill as printed would enable the board to cope with the rabbits in all parts of the country, and it was to be hoped the Committee would not pass the proposed subclause. It had been argued that the maximum rate should not be two shillings a hundred acres, as many of the holders of land in the Kimberleys had obtained their areas at five shillings per thousand acres. It might be that on the other hand they had obtained their land at too low a price. The amendment was too sweeping, for it took in the whole of the Kimberley Division and embraced not only East and West Kimberley but also the country to the south, not generally known as being in the Kimberleys. Only a few weeks ago urgent wires came to the Government as to the invasion of rabbits about Condon and even further north towards Broome. If there was a time when money was required to be spent to cope with this trouble it was in the beginning. There could not be a differentiation in the rates in the various districts. It was not proposed to declare any portion of East Kimberley a vermin board, at all events at present. Sixpence per hundred acres would not be sufficient to enable the board to carry out the requirements of the measure. Further it was provided that the Government might loan to the boards certain money for rabbit-proof fencing, etcetera, and if the board had not sufficient rating power the Government would not be warranted in loaning the amount. As with municipal councils or roads boards loans they must be a charge on the rates of the district. The rate of sixpence would be so low that the Government could not

give a loan, as it would take that sum for the administration and other necessary expenses without leaving a margin for the repayment of the loan. The Committee had decided that two shillings was a fair and equitable rate and there was now nothing to show that it would take less to keep rabbits out of the Kimberleys than out of the Gascoyne or Carnarvon or other Northern districts. He would again remind members that the two shillings was only the maximum rate. The boards were elected by those who paid the rates and it was in their hands to fix the charge, whether it be a penny, a shilling, or two shillings. If it were found that the rate was too high and abuses sprang up Parliament would surely repeal the measure.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: Kimberley would probably be divided into two or three districts.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: More than that, for the districts would generally follow the boundaries of the roads boards and there were some seven or eight boards in the Kimberleys.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: When the Colonial Secretary said that a sixpenny rate would be insufficient, he hardly realised the enormous areas in the Kimberleys. However he had no very strong feeling in regard to this matter. He was inclined to agree with Mr. McLarty that he would rather take his chance with the rabbits than pay a very high tax. It would be absolutely impossible when once the rabbits got into the Kimberleys—and they would get there in time—to get them out again. The only thing to cope with them would be floods. At certain times of the year the Fitzroy was in flood for 20 miles and was nothing but an inland sea. Fancy trying to fence out rabbits in conditions of that kind! It was a pity Ministers did not travel once a year through the Northern districts, for then they would realise the actual position of affairs there. During the wet season the whole countryside was transformed into a lake. Under a 6d. rate it would be found the board would have far more funds than they would know what to do with. The Bill was ill-conceived and the Government ought next year to bring down a fresh Bill and submit it to a joint committee.

of both Houses, with a view to getting a workable measure.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: The object of raising the fund could not be for fencing out rabbits in that part of the country, for such a project was absolutely impossible. It would cost a million of money. The Colonial Secretary had urged as a reason why this amendment should not be agreed to that the holders of leases in the North probably had their land too cheaply. If the land were too cheaply held the proper thing to do was to increase the rental and not to visit the people up there with a tax of this sort. It was clear that the Bill ought to divide the State into several districts. He would support the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. M. DREW moved an amendment—

That the following words be added at the end of the first proviso: "Nor on any holding which is already in the opinion of the Minister enclosed with a proper vermin-proof fence erected at the cost of the owner or his predecessor in title."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was to be hoped the Committee would not accept the amendment. At first sight it might appear well to have a provision of this kind in the Bill; but it was to be remembered that even in the case of a holding enclosed by a private rabbit-proof fence, that holding would have to be duly inspected and supervised by the board or its representatives. To see that any rabbits or other vermin on the holding were duly exterminated and kept down the property would have to be inspected just the same as the rest of the district. Again, the board might decide to erect some miles of rabbit-proof fence in order to protect the whole of the district. In this event and under the proposed amendment, if a number of these private holders had fenced in their holdings there would be an insufficient amount left to be collected in rates. Again, if a loan were required of the Government the rating on the portion of the district left unfenced by private holders

would be so small that the Government might possibly not feel justified in advancing the loan, having doubts as to whether the taxes to be collected would be sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund. In all probability there would be but few holdings privately fenced, and in any case it was only reasonable that all in the district should be made to bear a fair share of the rate struck.

Hon. J. M. DREW: The Colonial Secretary had been somewhat inconsistent. In the first place the Minister had referred to the possibility of a large number of the land holders fencing in their runs and so leaving but a very small proportion of the district rateable under the Bill; and in the next breath he had declared that there would be but very few runs privately fenced. Surely everybody would agree that the man who fenced his holding with a rabbit-proof fence ought not to be subject to the tax; because even though there were vermin on his holding it would not be possible for them to get out.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: How many of these holdings are fenced?

Hon. J. M. DREW: So far as he knew there was but one. The holder of that had spent hundreds of pounds upon it, probably thousands.

Hon. W. PATRICK: He has spent £2,000 or £3,000.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: If there were no arguments to be advanced against the amendment other than those brought forward by the Colonial Secretary the amendment ought certainly to be agreed to. The Colonial Secretary had said that even where runs were fenced the board's officials would have to inspect them and exercise supervision to see that the holder was not breeding vermin within the fence. Was it likely that any man who went to the expense of putting up a rabbit proof fence in order to preserve his industry would allow vermin to breed inside that fence? The vermin board would probably try to build something in the nature of a ring fence around the whole district; but the prudent man would provide a second security for his holding by erecting his private fence and so keep out any rabbits that might

get through the greater fence. Such a man was deserving of some consideration and ought not to be called upon to pay a tax. After all, it was to be remembered that in the case of the leaseholder the land was not his own; it belonged to the Government.

The Colonial Secretary: If the Government resume it he will be paid for the fence.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: That was all very well, but it was to be remembered that the man was protecting the land for the Government against the time they might require to resume it. If he did not so protect it—if he were to allow the rabbits to get in, what would be the use of the land to the State? This was a national question and not a question regarding the individual.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: There were several runs in the Carnarvon district completely rabbit-proof fenced; and the holders of these runs were already complaining that it would be unfair to visit them with the same amount of rates that holders of unfenced property would be called upon to pay.

The Colonial Secretary: How many runs are fenced in that district?

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: Why have you not that information?

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: It would be interesting if the Colonial Secretary could give them some information regarding the Queensland conditions. There it had been found quite necessary for the holders of land to ring-fence their holdings within the long fences erected by the vermin boards. Certainly the people who spent their money in that direction should be encouraged.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Although he had particulars of the workings of similar Acts in the other States he could find no mention of the exemption sought to be introduced into the Bill. He was not aware that there was in the Carnarvon district any runs surrounded by a rabbit-proof fence. There should be a general rate and everyone ought to contribute to it to protect the district, otherwise there would be certain holdings fenced and the rest of the district would be abandoned to the rabbits. If a man

who had enclosed his holding with a rabbit-proof fence did contribute to the general rate he received a benefit from it because the rabbits were kept back from his holding. While there were rabbits outside the fence there was always the danger of them getting through the fence and into any particular holding.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: The man who improved his property should receive some consideration. That was a recognised principle. These large areas were not going to be enclosed for a few pounds; it would take thousands. Owners who enclosed their runs were protecting the public estate, in their own interests it was true for the time being, but there might come a time when their runs would be taken from them.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: It would be a pity to interfere too much with the Bill. As far as the agricultural districts were concerned this Bill would apply all right. He had been told by the secretary to the Pastoralists' Association that at the meeting which was held the feeling was that they should accept the Bill as printed, and as time went on, if it was found not suitable it could be amended.

Hon. G. THROSSELL: The Minister might accept the amendment which seemed a reasonable one. The Bill compelled every man to fence his run, and if a man had fenced his run he should not have to pay twice.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What the hon. member inferred was not the case. A man was not compelled to fence his run, but was asked to contribute to a rate to destroy the pest. If there were a number of holdings throughout a district containing the best land, and these holdings were fenced, then very little rates would be received from the poorer land. The Government were not liable to pay for rabbit-proof fencing on resuming a run; therefore it was not likely that these runs would be fenced. If the fences were erected round the good land the rate derived from the poorer land would not be sufficient and the Government would not be warranted in lending money to protect the district from the pest. What did it avail a man if he had his holding fenced in if the rabbits were

not prevented from going to the district. Because in time the rabbits would get into the run, for the fence would not hold good always.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	7
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5

AYES.

Hon. J. T. Glowrey	Hon. G. Randell
Hon. J. W. Hackett	Hon. R. F. Sholl
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. S. Stubbs
Hon. W. Oats	Hon. G. Throssell
Hon. B. C. O'Brien	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. W. Patrick	(Teller).
Hon. R. W. Pennefather	

NOES.

Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. J. W. Langsford	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. R. Laurie	(Teller).

Amendment thus passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: It was not possible at this stage for the member to move the new clause of which notice had been given. The hon. member would have to move to recommit the Bill at the Report stage, for the Standing Orders clearly laid down at what stage new clauses could be moved.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved—

That the Bill be returned to the Legislative Assembly requesting them to make the amendments agreed to in Committee, and that the Committee have power to sit again on receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: The amendment which had been carried altered the voting provisions of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not discuss that point at this stage.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: The desire was to call the Colonial Secretary's attention to it.

Motion put and passed; the Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. B. C. O'Brien Bill recommitted for amendment.

New Clause:

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN, for Hon. J. M. Drew, moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 68:—

This Act shall remain and be in force up to the 1st December, 1910.

The measure was somewhat new as far as this State was concerned, and also experimental. It should be mandatory on the part of the Government to submit the Bill again to Parliament for approval or otherwise in the time that the hon. member had stipulated in the new clause.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY hoped the Committee would not agree to the new clause. There was a certain objection to having such a clause inserted in the Bill. There was no necessity for it, because the legislation was neither new nor experimental. It was only in experimental legislation that such a clause would be at all necessary. Although the measure was new as far as this State was concerned, it was quite an old enactment in the other States. There was another and more serious objection. The Bill provided that the board might enter into certain work, but what could they do if they knew that they had only two years' rates to rely upon? Would anyone lend them any money on such conditions? Would the Government do so knowing that they would only have two years' rates as security for the money lent? It would make the Act quite unworkable if the new clause were passed. The boards would have to borrow from the Government, and the Government would have to be satisfied that there were sufficient rates to be levied for the repayment of the loan.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: They cannot spread the rate over a number of years.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; they would have only the two years in which to collect the rates, and these would amount to a sum lower than that which they could borrow.

Hon. R. F. SHOLL: If the amendment were agreed to difficulties would be raised in connection with the financial portion of the Act. He disagreed with the Colonial Secretary, who said

that this was not experimental legislation. It was experimental legislation of the worst description. It was an ill-conceived Bill, which should have received a good deal more consideration. He sympathised with the mover of the amendment. He saw, however, that the Government should bring in a fresh Bill in two years' time. That was the object of Mr. Drew when he framed his amendment. He saw, however, that the clause would interfere with the working of the Bill if it were only permitted to last for the two years. He hoped the Government, next session, would bring in an amendment to the Bill not dealing with the financial question, but one which would make the measure suitable to all portions of this State.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: The amendment should not be supported for the reason that if it were allowed to be put in the Bill it would practically paralyse the financial operations of the board.

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN: On behalf of Mr. Drew he must press the amendment.

New clause put and negatived; the Bill reported without further amendment.

BILL—FINES AND PENALTIES APPROPRIATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South): As far as the first portion of the Bill is concerned, that is the portion relating to the jurisdiction of licensing benches, I know that on the goldfields, at any rate, the provisions contained in the Bill, have been practically in operation for a very long time. The licensing benches in the principal goldfields centres have recognised that a sufficient number of licences have been granted,

and all applications for new licences have been refused. However, that may not apply, and no doubt does not apply generally throughout the State, and there may be portions of the State where it may be necessary to limit the number of licences that are granted by licensing benches. But it seems to me that the Government might achieve this object in a somewhat different way. I think that if they adopted the system that exists in England, where licensing benches are more of a Ministerial character, where they recommend only, that would be more satisfactory. If the powers of licensing benches were limited to recommendations to the Minister, who is administering the Act, I think in that way there would be better results obtained. If the licensing benches were to recommend in the same way as a warden does at present, then the decision of the licensing benches could be checked by the Minister or the Government. The Minister would assist towards making certain that no applications were granted unless they were necessary. In addition to the judgment of the men who composed the licensing bench, there would also be the judgment of the Minister or the Government. The Minister in that way would be a kind of court of review of the decisions of the licensing bench, and the object that is sought to be attained, in the first portion of the Bill, to my mind would be better achieved were some clause of that kind introduced instead of the clause we have here. The Bill, I think, really ought to have been divided into two, because the first portion of the Bill is evidently intended to be merely of a temporary character. It is generally understood that the Government intend to introduce a comprehensive measure dealing with the licensing laws generally later on, and if the Bill had been divided into two parts we could attach to the end of the first portion a clause limiting the operations of the Act to a certain period. If that were to be done in the measure, and if it were to remain in force only until say the 1st December, 1909, there would be the danger of the clause relating to Australian

wine licences becoming inoperative at the end of that time, and that another Act might not have been passed in the meantime. We all know that the intentions of the Government are not always fulfilled, and there are many causes that may arise to prevent the Government fulfilling their intentions in the matter of bringing forward the comprehensive Bill, which is necessary. Therefore, I say that it is rather a pity that there is not some means by which we can limit the operations, at any rate, of the first portion of this measure. It would, as I say, be undesirable to limit the operations of the whole measure, because of the second portion, the portion relating to Australian wine licences. It would be a pity if this portion of the Bill became inoperative. I have no other observations to offer except to point out that there is a danger in connection with limiting the granting of licences. By limiting the granting of licences we increase the value of the licences at present held, and in that way tend to create to a small degree a monopoly on the part of the present holders of licences, and I sincerely trust the Government will bring in the measure that was evidently in contemplation when the first portion of this Bill was framed. I trust it will not be long before that comprehensive measure will be brought before Parliament.

Hon. G. THROSSELL (East): I welcome the Bill and congratulate the Government on bringing it in. My only regret is that it was not passed last session. I have no desire to reflect on any licensing benches, but I say emphatically that many mistakes have been made in forcing hotels on localities where they are not required. Those who know the country, know that we are living in days of speculation. No sooner does the development in an agricultural district appear to justify the erection of an hotel, than the licensing bench is inundated with applications for licences. Then as soon as a licence is secured, it becomes a marketable asset, and hotels are provided without any expenditure on the part of the holder of the provisional certificate. In

many instances I am sorry to say farming communities have become demoralised in this way. I do not denounce hotels proper, but I say that if we grant hotels away in localities where there is no supervision, they should be in the hands of the Government so as to protect the people from abuses that are sure to arise 10, 15, or 20 miles away from police supervision. I speak on actual facts. What I particularly denounce is the speculation in provisional certificates, and the Government are to be commended for bringing in this Bill to last until such time as we have the complete Bill to give the people greater control in regard to these licences. I look forward to the time when we shall have local option pure and simple. Though I recognise it is a two-edged sword and will cut both ways, still we must abide by the will of the people. Surely it should be within the power of the people to say whether they will have this or that hotel. I know instances where there have been petitions presented against a licence being granted and the police have protested and even the resident magistrate has protested, and yet licences have been granted in localities where the people, if they had had their way, would not have allowed any licence to exist. We must have houses of accommodation. Let us take care that they are houses of accommodation and not drinking shops. We talk of the facilities we have given in regard to savings banks, but we take away with the one hand what good we do with the other. We give the gangs of men working in these country districts very easy means of disposing of their money. If hotel licences are to be granted outside police supervision, they should be granted only in such a way that the State can control them. We have already an instance in this State where an hotel is under the national control, and the profits go to the Treasury. At any rate it is not a matter of profit; it is a matter of accommodation to the people, and it is a matter of preventing abuses that are sure to arise in districts removed from police supervision. I am, however, a strong supporter of this Bill until we get the more perfect one.

Hon. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): I welcome the Bill. I know that Clause 2 is objectionable to several members, but I believe that throughout the country to a large extent it will be accepted as an effort in the right direction. With regard to the licensing of new public houses I am not prepared to say there is a hotel wherever one is necessary, but I think one would not be very far wrong in saying so, and we know that in some places there is a vast number of hotels more than necessary for the accommodation of the general public. I am pleased to know the principle of local option is gaining ground considerably, and though I do not think with some belonging to the temperance body that it will work out as well as they anticipate, yet I think is a principle that is acknowledged all over Australia and largely in America and in New Zealand, and that it is a right principle. It is the province of the people who live in a certain district to say whether they will have a hotel in their midst or not, or whether they will reduce the number of licences in a given district. The matter of compensation at present does not enter into the question. I think that it is a matter for future consideration. With regard to the monopoly that may be created, I think there is a sufficient number of houses of entertainment, hotels and publicans' general licences scattered about the districts to prevent anything like an undue monopoly. I do not anticipate there will be any attempt made to take advantage of the limitation in Clause 2 by those who are already engaged in this business, and I certainly think the clause is an effort in the right direction by the Government of the day. Some say the Government should have nothing to do with moral questions, but I think they should take the best interests of the community into serious consideration on all occasions, and be guided by common sense and by circumstances which are continually passing round us to protect, as far as they possibly can, the public from a danger which every man must admit is a very serious one, one of the most serious that can engage the attention of statesmen and of people of more or less standing in a pro-

minent position towards the general public. The principle of endeavouring to decrease the enormous amount of money spent on intoxicating liquor is spreading rapidly. The sentiment of total abstinence is gaining ground and it is only a question of time in Australia when we shall be forced, owing to the circumstances which arise from time to time, to take into serious consideration the mitigation to a large extent, if not the entire removal, of the evil. I do not know which is the worst evil, gambling, betting or drinking: all three are bad to have in a community. They divert the money which should be spent more profitably to the community at large in legitimate channels, and I hold that legislation could do a great deal to prevent this. It is and has been repeatedly said, that we cannot make people sober by Act of Parliament; but if we apply that principle to felonies and dishonesty, we would be at once confronted with a denunciation on the part of all good citizens: because if we say we cannot make people honest by Act of Parliament, at any rate we try to prevent them from being dishonest by punishing them for offences. We can apply the same principle to the drinking habit. People say a man should spend his money as he likes, but we do not apply that principle to all acts of life. We do not let a man burn down his house, because in doing so he may be jeopardising the property of someone else; and so we might carry on the argument. I believe much good can be done by careful and well-conceived legislation. I take it this Bill will meet with the approval of a large number of our best citizens, not only among the clergymen, but among public men, men of the world as we may call them who see the evils in our midst doing such damage in the destruction of our young men. In this State I have seen many of our young fellows, intelligent, earnest young men, brought up respectably and giving promise of a good life of future usefulness, utterly wrecked through the habits of intoxication. Of course we cannot go into reasons why this has occurred, but there it is. We know the insidious nature of taking intoxicating liquor. If

a man takes it for a little time, the habit grows on him, and completely takes away his self-control: and so he goes on, though warned, though knowing in his sober moments that the end of it must be a total loss of character and position and probably every means of making a livelihood. As members know, these things are going on around us every week—I think we may say every day—and I am sorry to see that our papers are filled from time to time with terrible things that take place in other countries. I do not know what I would do if I were a proprietor of a newspaper; I suppose I would try to make it pay; but I am sorry to see these things inserted in our respectable daily papers. Many of these terrible crimes brought about through drink are put in the papers, and come into the hands of young people on whom they have an injurious effect. I remember reading in one respectable newspaper—I suppose it was the leading newspaper of the State—of a case of a little fellow who committed suicide. That was followed soon afterwards by another suicide. The papers should exercise more discretion and not pander to the morbid tastes of those who read these thrilling narratives. It would be quite sufficient if they were to chronicle what takes place in our own State with regard to matters of that kind. It is neither my business nor my duty to say how the newspapers should be conducted, or how the reading matter should be obtained and presented to the public; but one cannot refrain from regretting that expensive telegrams are received from all over the world chronicling these horrible details, whereas good things scarcely ever get into the papers. I suppose it is to meet a taste that has grown up in the public life, fostered as it has been by the pandering of the newspapers—I do not like using that rather offensive word—to the morbid and diseased imagination of the people. I do not think much of the monopoly referred to by Mr. Kirwan, nor do I think much of the arguments used by Mr. Moss with regard to the clause being a reflection on the licensing benches of the State. I was a member of licensing benches for years and I know I should have been only too pleased to have

had a section of this description in the Act at that time. At the meetings of the licensing benches now we see numbers of gentlemen of the long robe gathered together, with evidence brought by the different sides, and we know that a good deal of that evidence is not exactly correct, to say the least of it; and I daresay the bench are often hard put to know which story to accept. They should be guided by their own common sense, but there has been a tendency on the part of members of the benches to be too easy in granting these licences. It was I who introduced the section in the Licensing Act some years ago with regard to provisional certificates. It was taken from the Queensland legislation, and I introduced the section because I thought it would relieve the benches from trouble and difficulty. When a person applied for a licence and showed he had spent a considerable sum of money say in the erection of an hotel, it was not likely that the benches could refrain from paying attention to the fact that this money had been spent. The result was that on many occasions licences were granted against the better judgment of the magistrates. The idea I had was that the benches should be at liberty, in considering the question of a provisional certificate, to discard that element of expenditure and not be compelled to consider the fact that large sums of money had already been spent. However the clause has not worked as well as I anticipated it would. We see great efforts being put forward by persons to obtain licences. They employ the best counsel they can get, who put the cases before the bench and urge them with all the skill and ability they possess. I welcome the introduction of this measure and I trust the House will give it careful consideration. I hope members will dismiss from their minds the idea that the clause is a reflection on the gentlemen who constitute the benches, but will rather think it will be helpful to them and relieve them from a difficult position. If the Bill is passed we shall be more in accord with a growing public opinion which I am glad to say is becoming more and more apparent every year. It is not so apparent perhaps in this

State as in other States, and certainly not so much so as in New Zealand. The Dominion even is behind America in this respect, for in the latter country there are now 30 of what are termed "dry" States. Notwithstanding what we see in the papers at times the institution of prohibition has been a remarkable success, for it has reduced the number of police constables necessary in the States, reduced the number of convictions enormously, and consequently has reduced the expenditure in connection with prosecutions of all kinds. This Bill has gone through another place where the democratic element is supposed to be larger than it is here. I hope it will not be thought by members that the measure is an attack on property. As an owner of property I have always been a very great stickler for its rights and I would resist any unwarrantable or unreasonable spoliation of property; but this is nothing of the kind and I give this clause my hearty support. With regard to the other clauses in the measure dealing with wine licences, I have not quite made up my mind yet whether they are altogether constitutional. That point, however, I will leave to others more able than myself to determine. When I say that the clauses are not quite constitutional I mean that it is not certain that it is legal for a differentiation to be made between the sale of wines produced in the various States.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): This Bill seems to have met with a more favourable reception in the House than it did on two previous occasions. When the Labour Government were in office Mr. Drew introduced a measure somewhat similar to it, but it met with a very adverse reception and was laid aside. Last year a Bill, also somewhat similar, was introduced by the Colonial Secretary and again it was laid aside. On this occasion, however, there seems to be, from what one can judge from the remarks of members, a desire to pass the second reading. I hope the measure is but the forerunner of a more comprehensive Bill dealing with the liquor laws of this State. The question of a consolidating

measure has been before the country and the people for many years, but we have not yet received the Bill. What is desired under the comprehensive measure is not only to consolidate the existing liquor laws but also to give the people more extensive rights in dealing with licences. These rights are now being demanded. Personally I do not attach the utmost importance to legislation on the liquor question, for I have more faith in a general education of the people, and especially of the rising generation, on this important matter. The old point of view of looking at this temperance and liquor question was purely a moral one, but now many men, especially in America, look upon that as quite a secondary point and consider the liquor question strictly from an economical and business point of view. It is being viewed from this aspect by the people of Australia also, for business men here who were not in the past able to advocate the temperance sentiment from a moral point of view, are now doing so from an economical and business one. Their co-operation is welcomed. I see by the Bill that it is not intended to grant wine licences outside municipal districts or duly constituted townships, and I presume the reason for this is that there shall be efficient police supervision. The clause as to the quantity of wine allowed to be sold at a vineyard does not quite meet with my approval and I feel with Mr. Kingsmill that it would be unwise to reduce the amount from one gallon to a quart. The incident the hon. member referred to is fresh in our memory and I fear that if the clause is passed other instances of a like character might result. We want to protect ourselves against anything of that kind.

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN (Central): I desire to say a few remarks on this Bill. It appears to me that this is a measure brought down by the Government as a preliminary to another Bill which they intend to introduce at a future date. Until such time as this comprehensive measure comes before the House I will not make any remarks upon the general

question. As to Clause 2 of this Bill, speaking from selfish motives. I should support it, but I do not think it is necessary. I agree with those members who have stated that the clause will interfere with the business of the able men, men nominated by the Government themselves, men trusted and of good repute, namely the occupants of the various licensing benches. The Government seem to anticipate that those gentlemen will do something which is not right. All new licences should be dealt with on their merits by those gentlemen, and to my mind this clause is altogether unnecessary. If a clause of this kind is to be inserted it should be made to apply not only to the licences set out therein but also to gallon, wine and beer and other licences. A remark has been made that if that were done a greater monopoly would be given to those now in the business. That is being given by the clause as it stands, for it creates a monopoly for those people who at present have licences. A great deal has been said as to the value of these monopolies, but I claim it is nothing like what is made out. There seems to be no occasion for the clause. However, I am not viewing this Bill in an hostile spirit but I intend to retain the right to discuss the larger measure in full when it comes before us.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—New licences not to be granted:

Hon. M. L. MOSS: For reasons which he had already given this clause should be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To strike out the clause would be to do away with the necessity for the Bill. It had been said that the clause would interfere with the powers of magistrates; that was not so. The only object of the clause was to repeal certain portions of the parent Act; that was in regard to new licences of a certain class. The Government were pledged to bring in a comprehensive Licensing Bill at the earliest opportunity.

That Bill would contain a measure of local option. Bearing that in mind it would be well not to make the existing position any worse than it was; because to increase the licences to-day would be in all probability to increase the cases of compensation to-morrow. The clause would leave the position practically as it was to-day. It was only intended to be temporary.

Hon. J. T. GLOWREY moved an amendment—

That the words "club or gallon licence" be inserted after the words "wayside house licence" in line 3.

If the object of the clause was to prohibit any further licences being issued it only went half-way. No provision was made for gallon licences or club licences.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: It was to be hoped the Committee would not listen to any proposal of the kind contained in Mr. Glowrey's amendment. At any time a large firm of merchants from the Eastern States might desire to start a business in Western Australia. How could this be done if it were found impossible to grant them a gallon licence? It was clear that the way should be left open to the licensing bench to grant additional licences if the necessity should arise. If the clause were to be extended to club licences no body of men would be enabled to start a new club anywhere in Western Australia. Could any argument be adduced in support of legislation of this class? Again, apart from the club aspect, if the promised comprehensive measure were not brought down for, say, two or three years the effect of this clause would be to set up a tremendous monopoly.

Hon. R. LAURIE: So far as he could see there was no harm in the clause at all. It did not interfere with existing licences. It simply proposed to hang up new licences until next year. He could not support the amendment to make the clause extend to gallon licences and to club licences. Some proviso should be put in the Bill which would make it clear when the comprehensive Licensing Bill was to come in. It should not be left to the Government who for all anybody knew might go out of office before

an opportunity occurred of bringing in the comprehensive Bill.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The clause commended itself to him as it stood. It was known that the Government intended to bring down in the greater Licensing Bill a measure of local option. This small Bill would assist them inasmuch as it was important that the compensation to be paid should be kept as low as possible.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: It will increase the existing monopoly.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: It could scarcely do that for it was only a temporary measure. The least compensation to be paid the better for the country.

Hon. S. J. HAYNES: The clause ought to be adopted as it stood for the reason that there was undoubtedly a demand for new legislation in respect to the control of the liquor traffic. The present Government had promised to bring in a measure accordingly. Until that measure was brought down it was highly desirable that no further licences should be granted. In all populous neighbourhoods there were at the present time more licences than were necessary, while new centres were provided for in the Bill. Therefore no injustice would be done. If, as time went on, more licences were really required before the comprehensive Bill was brought down, the pressure of public opinion would compel any Government to bring in a proper Bill. As Mr. Sommers had pointed out, the clause before the Committee would serve to limit the compensation that would have to be paid under the promised Bill.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.50 p.m.)

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was no necessity for the addition of the words. The object of the clause was to provide a means whereby the number of hotels would not be increased until we had dealt with the Local Option Bill. Under that Bill compensation would probably have to be paid to any hotels that might be increased; therefore, it was not desirable to increase the number, or to alter the existing state of affairs. That argument did not apply to gallon licences or club licences.

Amendment put and negatived; the clause passed.

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of 48 Victoria, No. 14, Section 11:

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: This was not a move in the proper direction. If this clause was carried we should have applications by ordinary gallon licence holders for a reduction of the quantity they could sell. The quantity of one gallon was sufficiently low.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The object of the clause was to enable a person who manufactured at his own vineyard to sell one reputed quart bottle of wine without obtaining a licence. At present he could not sell less than one gallon. This provision had been in the liquor law of South Australia for many years, and had been of considerable assistance to the growers of wine. It did not follow that if we extended the privilege to the growers of grapes, it would convert the gallon licence into a bottle licence.

Clause passed.

Clauses 8, 9, 10—agreed to.

New clause—Packet licences:

Hon. M. L. MOSS moved as an amendment that the following be inserted as a new clause:—

1. Every packet licence granted before or after the passing of this Act shall authorise the master of the vessel therein mentioned, being a vessel licensed to carry passengers within the State of Western Australia, to sell and dispose of any liquor to any passenger on board of such vessel while such vessel is on her passage. Provided that the provisions of Section sixty-one of the principal Act shall not apply to a packet licence. Provided also that no licence shall be necessary to authorise the granting of allowances of liquor to the crew of any vessel. 2. Section six of the principal Act is hereby repealed.

The object of the clause was to put beyond any doubt the proper construction of what was the effect of a packet licence. It was highly undesirable that the licensing bench of Perth should construe the Act to mean one thing and the bench at Fremantle to construe it to mean another. This clause would create uniformity. He

did not want to give power to sell liquor on a boat at the wharf at Perth or Fremantle. The principal Act authorised a master of a vessel to sell to any passenger while the vessel was on her passage.

Hon. R. LAURIE supported the amendment. It would be absolutely wrong to prevent steamers running on the river from being able to sell to passengers, while the steamers were away from the wharf, such refreshments as might be desired. It was said that these steamers made a lot of money, but it was well-known that one of the steamers was at present in the hands of a company, not a shilling having been made out of it. The men who invested their money in the vessel did not make a shilling. The "Zephyr" was brought to these shores to fill a long felt want. The boat cost between £11,000 and £12,000 and the owners had no desire to sell liquor on that steamer. The result of that vessel's working during two years had been an absolute dead loss, and the question was gravely considered some 12 months ago as to whether it should not be sold to some persons in New Zealand who were after it. The same thing applied to the "Westralian," a vessel that at the present time could be bought very cheaply. That was the condition of the trade on the river at the present time. Those steamers with a packet licence must close their bars while alongside the wharf and even steamers running up the coast had to do this. On one occasion a magistrate at Fremantle fined the master of a vessel £50 for selling liquor while his vessel was alongside and yet a fortnight later that same magistrate when seeing a friend off kicked up a terrible row because he was unable to get a drink on the vessel which was lying alongside the wharf. It had cost one of these steamers trading on the river £70 in the two years to carry a police officer to see that order was maintained on the vessel. That showed that the trade was being conducted in a proper manner. We would be doing an injustice to everyone concerned if we did not allow these steamers to have a packet licence. During the last two or three years the earnings of the steamers

had fallen considerably. The principal reason for that was the improvements that had been made at Cottesloe Beach to which resort thousands of people journeyed on holidays. The wages paid on one of these river steamers amounted in two years to £3,400. That seemed an extraordinarily large sum but it was a fact. The result of the running of that vessel in that period was a loss of £52. He hoped that the clause would be agreed to.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The police had been under the belief that because people were bona fide passengers on the steamers they could obtain liquor on Sunday. Section 61 of the principal Act said:—

"No licensed person shall sell on Sunday, Good Friday, or Christmas Day, and no person holding a publican's general licence, a wine and beer licence, shall suffer any liquor to be consumed on his premises except by bona fide travellers."

It had always been assumed that passengers on steamers were bona fide travellers, and the sales had been conducted openly and right under the eyes of the police. An inspector of police at Fremantle with whom he discussed the matter seemed astonished when he told that officer it was not lawful for these steamers to do so. The object of the amendment was twofold; firstly to secure uniformity of licences granted in Perth and Fremantle, and it would enable the holders of these packet licences to do lawfully that which they had been doing illegally in the past.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: There should not be one law for Perth and another for Fremantle, but as it would be desirable to see the amendment on the Notice Paper he suggested that progress should be reported.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept that from the hon. member.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: Perhaps some other hon. member would move it.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The amendment had been submitted to the Government who had approved of it. The Parliamentary Draftsman had drawn the clause and the hon. member need have no fear

of it unbinging the present licensing laws.

Hon. G. RANDELL: The only objection he had to that was the possibility of drinking taking place on Sunday. That would not be a fair thing to the licensed publicans on shore.

Hon. M. L. Moss: But they sell liquor on Sunday.

Hon. G. RANDELL: People he thought would go purposely to these steamers to obtain drink. The safeguarding of the sale of liquor on board was a good feature of the arrangement. A good deal of trouble occurred a few years ago in connection with these packet licences. He had passenger steamers running on the river for some years, and on one of these vessels before he purchased it, they had been in the habit of selling liquor. As soon as he got possession he stopped that, more for the sake of the men on board than anything else. The steamers in those days of course carried many people. It was before the railway to Fremantle was built.

Hon. J. W. Langsford: What was the fare?

Hon. G. RANDELL: Two shillings and 1s. 6d.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You could purchase more in those days for a shilling than you can to-day.

Hon. G. RANDELL: He was not quite so sure about that. Flour in those days cost up to 50s. a bag. To-day it could be obtained for about £1. He had no objection to the amendment but he supposed there would be some opportunity of correcting undue licence.

Progress reported.

BILL.—NANNINE - MEEKATHARRA RAILWAY.

Second reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: This is another railway proposal. It is to construct a line as the title of the Bill will indicate from the terminus of the Murchison railway, that is Nannine, to Meekatharra. The project is not altogether a new one. It

has been discussed at various times and last year it was brought prominently before one House of Parliament when a resolution was carried to the effect that in the opinion of that House it would be in the best interests of the State and especially the mining industry on the Murchison and Peak Hill if the Government would immediately construct the railway from Nannine to Meekatharra. In October of last year after this resolution was carried, the State Mining Engineer made an inspection of this field with the object of seeing whether it warranted railway communication. He gave a detailed report of the various properties working on the field and formed the conclusion that it would be absolutely necessary if this field was to be developed it should have railway communication. I will read extracts from his report later on to give hon. members a good idea of the possibilities of this place from a mining point of view. That particular report was laid on the table last session and therefore will appear in the Votes and Proceedings which hon. members can see if they care to look them up. Also there was a Parliamentary party visited the field in June last; there were 16 or 17 members, and I understand they formed a favourable impression of the possibilities of the field. I believe there were three or four members of this House in the party, and they, no doubt, took particular notice of the class of country, more particularly as to the possibility of the mines in the district. For the past few years the attention of prospectors has been devoted to Meekatharra, and the district has developed very well indeed. Very little outside capital has been spent there, and the development of the field has fallen almost solely on the shoulders of the pioneers and prospectors. There are several rich lines of reef at Meekatharra, particularly that known as the Ingliston, on which line there are two remarkably rich mines, the Fenian and the Marcomt. No doubt members have heard of both of these mines. Very rich gold has been got in both of them, particularly in the Fenian.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: At what depth?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not certain, but in regard to the details as to the depth of the mines and the size of the reefs, and all other information, members will get full particulars in the extracts I will read from the report of the State Mining Engineer; and if they want to go more fully into the question they can see the full reports in the Votes and Proceedings of last year. Within the last six months a good deal of prospecting for new reefs has been going on in all directions, and as a result many important finds have taken place. Amongst these may be mentioned Gap Well, Garden Gully, and White Horse. The railway will be a distributing centre for a number of settlements in the neighbourhood, including Chesterfield, Abbots, Garden Gully, and other centres which will be served by this proposed line. When we consider the finds made at Meekatharra I do not think the days of sensational gold finds in Western Australia are passed. We have had sensational finds in this district within the last six months; indeed, there are one or two within the last month or two. Within the last month Cook and party on the Black Jack lease obtained 1,454 ounces of gold from a leader they have worked to a depth of 10 feet. The gold output of Meekatharra for 1907 was 21,000 ounces, and the output for the first 10 months of 1908 has been 16,300 ounces, so that the total gold production to the end of October, 1908, has been 78,090 ounces. So members can see whatever the future of the field may be, it has produced so far a very considerable amount of gold indeed. During the year there have been 180 men working on the leases, and 30 men on alluvial, and there is not the least doubt the number of men working on the leases and the number of leases worked will materially increase when the railway is built. Like every other mining place, of course development will be slow until the railway reaches the centre, because the cost of cartage naturally retards progress. Another serious drawback on the Murchison, and particularly in this neighbourhood, is the want of fuel and mining timber. Members who know the Murchi-

son goldfields know that in the past timber has been particularly scarce. It is unlike the Eastern Goldfields because they have not the big gum trees and have to fall back solely on the mulga trees for mining timber and firewood. There has been a public battery at Meekatharra for a number of years, and the value of the output to date has been a quarter of a million sterling. The Government have already spent a considerable sum, £10,000, in water conservation, and this expenditure has materially increased the output from the battery. So also will the railway, I venture to say, increase the output of gold. But the great drawback now is want of railway communication. The need of a railway is felt more in a field like this that has not a natural supply of timber. It costs something like 57 per cent. on the total cost of bringing timber from the coast from Geraldton or Fremantle to Meekatharra, to cart it over the short distance from Nannine to Meekatharra. In support of the line I would briefly mention a part of the report of Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer. He says—

“The district is a rapidly growing one, and bids fair to open up several fairly large mines, and it is to the prospective traffic that we should have to look for profit. Forecasts of the future progress of the district are necessarily speculative and cannot be reduced to demonstrable figures; as a matter of opinion, however, it appears to me that there are good prospects of the mines and population of Meekatharra increasing—if railway connection is granted—to such an extent as to make the line a profitable one. The main argument for the extension of the railway rests upon the economies that would result from it in the working of the mines, and the consequent stimulus that would be given to their development, especially to such as are of low-grade. The district is remarkable for the size and number of its lodes and many of these have been proved to contain large bodies of gold-bearing ore too poor to be profitably worked under present conditions. Many of

these low-grade ore-bodies are composed of clayey soft material, and cheap supplies of mining timber are a necessity for their safe working. They are also very dependent for success in development on cheap fuel, in order that the mechanical and metallurgical handling of the large quantities of ore that must be treated to make low-grade stuff profitable can be carried on at a sufficiently low cost. The richer mines also are greatly concerned in the question of cheap supplies of mining timber and fuel, for though they may be able to carry on work in spite of all disabilities, it is at a heavy cost for transport of their supplies, greatly lessening their profits, and preventing them from working their reserves of low-grade ore."

Dealing further with the supplies of mining timber and fuel, he says—

"Supplies of mining timber and fuel are by no means good at Meekatharra, and it is on their account more than anything else that the railway is required. The mulga scrub in the vicinity of the mines is somewhat sparse and contains but little good heavy firewood or sound timber fit for underground support. Firewood carts have to go out seven or eight miles to get wood worth cutting, and will soon have to go much further. The nearest considerable area of heavy mulga scrub is said to be 15 or 20 miles out from Meekatharra, and this will soon have to be resorted to. If the railway were made, firewood could be cheaply brought in from the wood-line now being constructed North of Cue."

Summing up in regard to this railway, he refers to the benefit that would result by its construction to the outlying districts as follows:—

"The extension of the railway to Meekatharra would be of quite appreciable benefit to the Peak Hill and Abbots districts, the road to which from Nannine passes through Meekatharra, as it would save them 24 miles of road carriage. These districts are very dull at present and making a hard struggle for existence, and every improvement, however slight, in their

transport facilities is of considerable consequence. The Peak Hill Goldfield up to the end of 1906 has crushed 239,603 tons of ore and produced 206,368 fine ounces of gold. Abbots centre is credited to the same date with 33,726 tons crushed for 35,886 fine ounces of gold."

Summing up his conclusion of this very exhaustive report the State Mining Engineer remarks—

"The Meekatharra field is rapidly becoming more and more important and gives every promise of supporting a group of mines of very fair magnitude. Extension of the railway to it would be a very great assistance in rapidly bringing it into full productiveness and is almost an absolute necessity in order to provide the requisite supplies of mining timber and fuel. In my opinion the prospects of this field justify the construction of a railway to it as soon as possible, and there is every promise of its soon becoming a profitable line. The construction should not be costly, the route of the line being through flat easy country."

I think members will agree that this report would warrant the Government bringing in a Bill for the construction of this railway. It is the report from the State Mining Engineer. This is a mining line pure and simple. Though there is a good deal of pastoral country beyond Nannine, it is possible for the holders of that land to get along without a railway. This Bill is purely to serve the mining centre. The State Mining Engineer says—

"In my opinion the prospects of this field justify the construction of a railway to it as soon as possible, and there is every promise of its soon becoming a profitable line."

I think that sums up the situation in a sentence.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: Are you going to build railways on the opinion of one man?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not say we are building the railway on the opinion of one man. In the case of a mining railway I think we must attach

a great deal of importance to the report of the State Mining Engineer, and I say unhesitatingly that it is a convincing report I have just read. The district that will be served by this railway contains a population of something like 1,300 people. Meekatharra has an estimated population of 800, while there are 250 at the 8-Mile, and the balance is spread over Garden Gully, and other places, while the numbers are rapidly increasing. In Meekatharra there are 40 head of stamps at work, and there are 10 head ready to start, while there are a number of mines equipped with machinery other than the stamps I have mentioned. The gold mining area extends for a distance of something like 36 miles from the Gap, nine miles from Nannine, to Abbotts, which is 46 miles from Nannine. In addition to the mines I have quoted, and as is mentioned in the State Mining Engineer's report, there are a great number of low-grade propositions in the district which are not likely to pay and are not likely to be worked until they have the railway there so as to work them under cheaper conditions. The line is to be 24½ miles long. The distance from Geraldton to the commencement of the line at Nannine is 310 miles, and from Fremantle 612 miles. The weight of the rails will be the usual weight for light railways, 45lbs.: the sleepers will be the same; the gauge will be the standard gauge of 3 feet 6 inches. The estimated cost of construction is £24,214, and the estimated cost of rails and fastenings is £18,285, or a total cost of £42,500, an average cost per mile of £1,752. The interest on the capital cost of £42,000 at 4 per cent. would be £1,700 per year, or 7.10 per mile. The population in the area is at present 1,300. The pastoral land available within a 15 mile radius of the line totals 179,000 acres; while the pastoral leases total 282,000 acres; the total area within the influence of the proposed railway thus being 461,000 acres. The gold produced in the district to be served totals 75,500 ounces. Other particulars are given as to the number of gold mining leases in the district and the number of homesteads, with the total area of the homesteads held. Briefly those are

the particulars connected with this line. Like any other railway, more particularly perhaps a mining railway, it is almost impossible to put down in figures exactly what the cost of working or the amount of revenue will be. That may be taken on trust to a great extent. It cannot be said with certainty before a railway is built whether it will pay. It is clearly shown here, however, what the chances are. We have a mining field which at present, owing to the want of fuel and mining timber, is working at a great disadvantage, but this field gives promise that, under favourable conditions, it will develop into one of our leading fields. We have it from the State Mining Engineer that he has made a close examination of the field, and if members turn up his report, they can see his particular remarks on each mine in the district. He gives his opinion that, after the closest examination, he considers it absolutely necessary for the line to be built to this centre, and that if it is built, it will be a payable line in a very short time. I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by *Hon. R. F. Sholl* debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I intend to move that the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, the 5th January. I think it would be better for members not to be brought here for one day next week as we are not likely to get through the business before Christmas. I therefore beg to move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, the 5th January.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 8.20 p.m.