

His Excellency the Governor, in the speech with which he opened the session of 1886, informed the House that it would be requested to provide from general revenue a sum of £7,000 for the purpose of improving the defective water supply at Fremantle. Subsequently it was decided that the money should not come out of general revenue but be re-appropriated from the unexpended Harbor Works loan; but the original intention was that it should come out of current revenue. Had such been done there would have been no interest to provide, and he presumed the Municipality would have had the benefit. The House, however, in its wisdom decided that the money should come out of loan. When the matter was first brought under the attention of the Government the intention was—as was evident from His Excellency's speech—that the necessary funds should be provided out of general revenue, and he believed the original intention was that the Municipality should not be expected to pay the interest on the money expended. It appeared to him that they might with equal reason be expected to provide interest on the money voted towards the erection of their Town Hall.

The vote for "Works and Buildings" was then put and passed.

Roads and Bridges, £8,400 :

Agreed to, without discussion.

Ecclesiastical Grant, £3,543 :

MR. A. FORREST asked that the consideration of this item be postponed until next day, as several members who wished to speak to it were absent that evening. It was his intention to move that the vote be reduced. Although the grant had been going on for some years, that was no reason why it should last for ever, or no reason why it was right. The grant some years ago was a very large one, but it had been cut down in proportion to the strength of the different denominations. One of these bodies refused to accept this State aid, and he should like to see the other religious bodies equally independent. They knew that there was no such thing as State aid in the other colonies. In Ireland, too, it had been wiped out, and there was a strong agitation to do away with it in England. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would consent to report progress and

postpone the consideration of the vote until the next sitting day.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

The House adjourned at a quarter past eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Monday, 26th March, 1888.

Repair of Police Station at Pinjarrah—Water Supply, stock route between Northampton and Ashburton—Proposed Mining Act—Residence for Medical Officer, Pinjarrah—Hampton Plains—Esperance Bay Railway Proposals, Rejection of—Railway from Bayswater to Vasse (Messrs. McNeil & Co.'s offer): referred to a select committee—Estimates (Revised), 1888: further considered—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

REPAIRS TO POLICE STATION, PINJARRAH.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works if any steps were to be taken to repair, or build a new police station at Pinjarrah? He asked the question in fulfilment of a promise made, some two years ago, that certain repairs would be made; but nothing had been done up to the present time, and the place was going to wreck and ruin.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that as soon as the Estimates for works and buildings were passed, these repairs would be taken in hand.

WATER SUPPLY, STOCK ROUTE BETWEEN NORTHAMPTON AND THE ASHBURTON.

MR. RICHARDSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works what vote the sum of £2,000 voted during last session, for a stock

route between Northampton and Ashburton, was to come out of; also what steps, if any, had been taken by the Government with the view to carry out the object in question.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said that no amount was voted last session for this purpose. The House adopted an address to the Governor, requesting a sum of £2,000 to be placed on the Estimates for the current year. His Excellency's message in reply was to the effect that he would comply, or endeavor to comply, with the request of the House in the matter. Unfortunately, however, His Excellency had been unable to comply, owing to there being no funds available.

MINING ACT FOR THIS COLONY.

MR. SCOTT, with leave, without notice, asked whether it was the intention of the Government to bring in a bill this session, similar to the Mining Act in force in Victoria.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said his learned friend the Attorney General, who had the drafting of the bill, had had it in hand for some time, but it was a measure that required a good deal of consideration, and it would necessarily be a lengthy one. Even when finished it would take some time to print. Whether it was practicable to bring it in this session he could not say. If the hon. member would give notice of motion he would give a formal answer.

MR. SCOTT said he would give notice that in the opinion of the House it was advisable to bring in a bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): We are all agreed as to that. It is merely a question of time.

MR. MARMION said that although it might not be expedient to bring in the whole of the bill it might be possible to bring in some portion of it.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton): The no-liability clauses?

MR. MARMION: Yes. He did not know whether it would not be possible to adopt the Victorian Act *en bloc*.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): No.

RESIDENCE FOR MEDICAL OFFICER AND MAGISTRATE, PINJARRAH.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT moved that an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he would be pleased to have placed on the Estimates for 1888 a sum of money sufficient to erect a suitable residence for the Medical Officer and Resident Magistrate at Pinjarrah. The hon. member said he was anxious to bring to the notice of the Government the fact that there was such a place as Pinjarrah. They had appointed a Resident Magistrate and Medical Officer there, but provided him with no place to reside in, and they would probably lose this gentleman's services unless some steps were taken to provide him with decent quarters. This officer received the smallest salary of any Resident Magistrate in the colony, yet he was not provided with quarters, and soon he would be without a house to live in. He presumed there was no intention on the part of the Government to do away with the office altogether, and, under the circumstances, he thought the best they could do was to give the Resident Magistrate a residence. He was sorry to say that his district was entirely neglected by the Government; not a single penny was spent in it upon any public works. They had been promised a breakwater at Mandurah, and £1,300 was voted for it years ago, but not a penny of the money had been expended; and he would suggest that the amount be spent in providing a Residency at Pinjarrah, which he thought would be a most legitimate re-appropriation. The Murray district was a very large district, and its requirements certainly deserved some recognition. The promise made by the Government with regard to the police station and the breakwater reminded him of the story of the school teacher, who promised a little boy an apple if he would behave himself. The little boy did behave himself, but the teacher after giving him the promised apple took it away again to show him how to eat it.

MR. LAYMAN was understood to support the vote.

MR. SHOLL was sorry he could not support it. He thought it would be a great saving to the country if some of these magisterial appointments were

done away with altogether. He thought the Resident Magistrate at Bunbury might very well do duty at the Vasse also, as well as at Pinjarrah, which would be a considerable saving to the colony. There was a proposal now before the House to provide these districts with a railway, and, if that were done, he thought, with the improved facilities for transit, the magisterial duties at Bunbury, Bridgetown, Vasse, and Pinjarrah, might easily be done by one and the same officer, as was done at Champion Bay, where the Government Resident at Geraldton also did duty at the Greenough, Dongara, and he believed Northampton. The same might apply to the Eastern Districts; one Resident Magistrate doing duty at York, Northam, and Newcastle. These places were now connected by rail, and there would be no difficulty in attending. He thought that by amalgamating these offices in this way the country might be saved thousands of pounds. He did not know so much about Perth and Fremantle. He thought the Police Magistrate at Perth had enough to do, as he had Guildford to attend to as well. He had always been opposed to repairing old buildings in the hands of the Government; he thought, as he had said on a former occasion, it would be more economical for the Government to dispose of these old buildings altogether, and give the officers an allowance for house rent.

MR. RANDELL was somewhat sorry that the hon. member for Carnarvon had opposed this vote. He thought the House ought to pass it, with acclamation. Although the arguments of the hon. and gallant member were so forcible and his reasoning so cogent, there was one argument which he had neglected to put before the House, namely, that Pinjarrah was the only Field of Mars which Western Australia could boast of, the only historical battle-ground in the annals of the colony. He thought if the hon. and gallant member had reminded the House of this fact, there would have been no opposition to his address.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the House had now come to look upon this motion as one of the hon. and gallant

member's annual appeals to the Government for money. It came forward regularly in one form or another, either in the shape of lodging allowance or quarters—always the same old dish, and it was becoming stale. *Toujours perdrix*. Unfortunately there were other places besides Pinjarrah where medical officers required quarters, but he doubted whether in the present state of the finances it would be expedient to provide them.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT said the Director of Public Works had charged him with always asking the Government for money for his district. He would again remind the hon. gentleman that of the £1,300 voted by that House for a breakwater, they had not seen a penny. Might he ask whether the hon. gentleman had pocketed it? The house where the Resident Magistrate at present lived did not belong to him, but to the clergyman of the district, who had purchased it in the event of his decease; and it was quite possible that the Resident Magistrate might at any day be turned out, and have to make a wigwam in the bush.

The motion was negatived, on the voices.

HAMPTON PLAINS-ESPERANCE BAY RAILWAY PROPOSALS.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved as follows: "That the proposals of the Hampton Plains Railway Syndicate, sent down to this House by His Excellency the Governor, last January, be accepted, and that the Government be authorised to conclude a contract with the Syndicate, subject to confirmation by the Legislative Council." The hon. member said that, by leave of the House, he proposed to add the words, "Provided the Government receive satisfactory assurances that the Syndicate are in a position to carry out the contract." The hon. member said that it would be in the recollection of the House that these proposals were sent down by a Syndicate representing a number of people in London. These proposals were that they should build a railway on similar terms to those accepted by the Syndicate of the railway line now in course of construction between Beverley and Albany. This Syndicate had acquired a large area of land—about 1,300,000 acres at the Hamp-

ton Plains, which they held with a right of purchase at 2s. 6d. per acre. They also held freehold land at Esperance Bay. They proposed to build a railway from Hampton Plains to Esperance Bay, for which they were to receive 3,000,000 of acres of land. They proposed to purchase the land which they now held on lease, and this purchase money would amount to about £170,000, which, in the present state of our finances, would be a nice little addition to the Treasury. They proposed to pay, as soon as the contract was signed, the sum of £10,000 deposit, as a guarantee of their good faith. Last July he proposed that this House should accept the offer made by these gentlemen in London. The proposals were brought down to the House in January last, and from what was understood at the time, that the Government did not wish to then go on with that business, he was asked to bring these proposals on in March. He had done so, and he now asked for the support of the House for these reasons: at Esperance Bay it was well known there were several people living, and there were others between Esperance Bay and Hampton Plains. The latter place was well known as a good country, and the newly discovered gold-fields at Yilgarn were within a fairly reasonable distance from the Plains. About sixty miles from the Hampton Plains were the Nullabor Plains, which were also good country. The Syndicate proposed to introduce a large number of immigrants on the land. They did not ask the colony to spend sixpence on the line; all they wanted was the land, and, as he had already explained, they offered to pay into the Treasury £170,000 besides the deposit. The Hampton Plains were not returning at the present time £1,000 to the Treasury, and the land had lain idle from the foundation of the colony, and was likely to do so, unless there was railway communication; therefore he did not think they could go far wrong in accepting the proposals. The Syndicate not only offered to build the line, but offered to work it also, and to place on the land a large number of people. When these proposals were before a select committee, Mr. Septimus Burt, who was examined by the committee, assured them that the syndicate was composed of men of substance, and not men of straw. The

House might presume they were in a position to carry out the work, and, as far as he was concerned, he thought that if these men offered to do this work it was their own "look out" whether the venture would pay or not; they did so with their eyes wide open. It was not fair to say they did not know what they were doing. Surely they did not intend to make this railway and lose by it. He would not for himself in any way believe that anyone could vote against these proposals, because they were all on the side of the Government and the people of this colony.

SIR T. COCKBURN - CAMPBELL seconded the resolution. Last session, he said, when this matter was under consideration, the chief objection to the scheme was that, in view of a transcontinental railway—which was a national or an intercolonial work—it was considered that the proposals of the Hampton Plains Syndicate, if carried out, would have an injurious effect upon that great work. Since then he had had several conversations with the hon. member for Kimberley, and had extracted a great deal of information from him about the character of the land at the Hampton Plains. From that information it appeared to him hon. members were to a great extent in error when last session they discussed the matter. The hon. member for Kimberley had assured him that the land between the Hampton Plains and Eucla was all of the same character. Under these circumstances, he felt justified in seconding the motion of the hon. member. His (the speaker's) constituents took a very great interest in this matter, and were of opinion that if a settlement were located at Esperance Bay they would be able to draw the trade to Albany. He would not, however, have been willing to second the resolution if the words as to the Government being assured of the *bona fides* of the syndicate had not been added to it. If the Government found that the assurances which the representative of the company had given them were correct—if they found that no financing was required, and that the members of the syndicate had the money in their own hands, and were not going to hawk their concessions in the English market—he did not see that any great harm would

result from sanctioning the scheme, and on that understanding he seconded the motion of the hon. member.

MR. MORRISON said that if this colony had suffered from anything it was from having injudiciously accepted promising terms offered by English syndicates. He did not wish to keep any gentlemen willing, in a *bonâ fide* manner, to invest in this colony from doing so, but he did not wish to see the colony sacrificed for the sake of members of English syndicates, as it had been in the past. He should like to know how many, if any, of the members of the Hampton Plains Syndicate were members of the original Midland Railway Syndicate. If any of the Midland Railway speculators were in the Esperance Bay syndicate their necessary policy would be to take their promises *cum grano salis*. The strongest possible proof of the *bona fides* of a syndicate such as that before them should be required. To men who could deal with such large sums as £170,000 to be spent in land and a million to be spent on a railway, our reply should be: "Very well, gentlemen, you wish to spend your money here. Your proposal will suit us, but our terms are—not £10,000 deposit on a work like this—but a £50,000 deposit, you drawing the interest." If they declined to do this, the Government need not trouble themselves any further about the matter. A deposit of £50,000 would force a syndicate to work, and he was certain that if that sum had been demanded as a deposit in the case of the Midland Railway, that project would have been fairly on the way at the present time. A deposit of £10,000 was little for a syndicate of eighty or a hundred London capitalists to lose, but £50,000 staked would be almost certain to cause them to go on with any scheme they undertook, and, at any rate, would be some guarantee of the *bona fides* of the scheme.

MR. MARMION said, though fully in accord with much that had been said by the hon. member, Mr. Morrison, it was not his intention to support the proposal, but to oppose it in every way in his power. Did this colony wish to have its land dragged publicly through the United Kingdom, and the finger of scorn pointed at us, as if we did not know what to do

with our land? Had we not already two land grant railways, one in course of construction, and the other hanging fire, for the want of means to carry it on? Did the House want to have another, and see it in the same plight? He was surprised that an hon. member who had been intimately connected with the unfortunate Midland Railway scheme, from its initiation, should have come forward and advocated another and a rival scheme. He believed himself that the Midland Railway scheme, although it had been hanging fire for a long time, was far more likely to be a profitable undertaking than this. In the Midland Railway they had a line starting from the centres of population and going to another part of the colony where there was a considerable population, and it would connect the present railway systems of the colony. But this proposed line would start from the coast, hundreds of miles away, where there was no population, and terminate at a point inland where there was no population—in fact it would be a line going from nowhere to nowhere. Yet the colony was asked to allow this project to be placed on the London market, in competition with the other two great national undertakings to which the colony was already committed. Beyond that, could the members of that House shut their eyes to the fact that, in placing a project of this kind before the British public—a project in which thousands of intending emigrants were asked to invest their little all in getting themselves settled upon the syndicate's land—the colony was virtually countenancing a project which might result, and probably would result, in disastrous consequences, if not utter ruin, to these deluded people? No one had pointed out where the profit of the railway, if constructed, was to come from. They had had some very charming pictures in the press, filling the imagination; but there was nothing real or practical about them. Were they, because they were offered a tempting bait of £170,000, to allow the good name of the colony to be dragged through the mire, until it stank in the nostrils of the British people? He, for one, was not going to be a party to it. The scheme was rejected by the House when it was presented before, and he saw no reason why they should be more

ready to listen now than they were then, except perhaps that the colony was a little poorer. No additional arguments had been put forward in favor of the scheme. Nothing could get over the fact that this scheme, if carried out, must necessarily have an injurious effect upon that great national work the Transcontinental Railway, which they all wished to see initiated, so as to connect our own metropolis with those of the other colonies. If for no other reason than this, he should oppose the scheme with all his might and main. He saw no reason whatever why they should have been asked to re-consider this project, and, to his mind, however tempting the bait might appear, it behoved them to resist the tempter. They were told there were dukes, and lords, and other titled men amongst the directors, and that there could be no doubt about the genuineness of the whole affair. But dukes, and lords, and titled men, in these days were often as glad to earn a guinea as people in the humbler walks of life. Whatever might be done with regard to this project in the remote future, he thought most hon. members would agree with him that, for the present at any rate, it ought to be consigned to the limbo of oblivion.

MR. SCOTT said that the only question they had to consider in connection with these land grant railway schemes was the settlement of the land. The settlement of the land was the only possible argument in favor of a land grant railway, and unless they could have a very good guarantee from those who proposed to make these railways that the land they received would be open to *bonâ fide* settlement, these schemes had better be left alone. To have another land grant railway scheme hawked about the London market was likely to make the name of Western Australia come into disrepute in England.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said the additional words which had been added to the motion, in the nature of a proviso, were, to his mind, the very essence of the whole thing. No concession should be granted to any syndicate until the Government had received satisfactory assurances that the whole of the capital had been subscribed. To have the colony

dragged about the streets of London, and its land hawked about all over England, would be a most suicidal policy. It was all very well to say that land grant railways were merely private lines, but, to all intents and purposes, they were all railways guaranteed by the Government, and it was necessary for us to see that the concessions were given to proper people. The hon. member for Fremantle had said that this line might prove a rival to the Transcontinental line; it would prove a "dog in the manger"—a perfect stumbling block, and most probably prevent several other lines from being carried out at all. He had not changed his opinion in the slightest degree since last he had spoken upon the subject. He had said that he did not believe that the line was a proper one, or would be likely to be a paying one for those concerned in it; but that, at all events, they should listen to what the members of the syndicate had to say. He had also stated that we should offer the syndicate a better line, and if they refused and persisted in their idea—which the House considered to be a wrong one—then the question would have a totally new aspect. He did not know that any answer had been received from the syndicate to the resolution of the House, passed last session. The Government had placed themselves in communication with the syndicate, but no answer had been received from them so far as he was aware. If, however, the money required were forthcoming, and there was no question as to the *bona fides* of the whole concern—if these gentlemen persisted in making a line which never could pay—then it was for the House to say whether they should be allowed to do so.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the persistency with which the hon. member for Kimberley followed up this project was certainly to his credit as an advocate. Last January—in the early part of the present session—the hon. member brought forward an almost similar motion, but—for reasons which he believed were satisfactory to His Honor the Speaker—the hon. member had been allowed to proceed with the matter again. He could not imagine himself that the House would go back from the conclusion it arrived at, during the early days of the session, when it

decided to shelve this question. He entirely agreed with the hon. member for Fremantle that, while we have two other important lines in hand, involving the alienation of millions of acres, it would be an unwise, and he thought dangerous, policy for the colony at the present time to commit itself to another. Although on a former occasion he had given his support to the proposal, and would be prepared to do so now under other circumstances, still he could not help thinking this was an inopportune moment for pushing the scheme forward. We must be guided by the circumstances in which we found ourselves placed. It was thought, when the proposal was under consideration last year, that the works on the Midland Railway would, ere long, have been renewed, and pushed on with vigor. Such, however, was not the case; that important undertaking was still "hanging fire" (as one hon. member had said), and he thought we ought to satisfy ourselves that it was likely to go off, before we embarked in any other scheme of a similar character. He thought, without closing the door altogether to the present scheme, or coming to the conclusion that it may not possibly be considered at some future time, hon. members would agree with him that no advantage would be gained by the colony entering upon this project at the present time.

THE SPEAKER said he wished to explain a reference which the Colonial Secretary had made to his action in allowing this motion to be brought forward. The hon. gentleman said that the House, in January, at an earlier stage of the session, had negatived a similar motion. If it had done so, he should not have permitted the same question to have been brought forward again during the same session. But he would point out the difference between the present motion and that of the 4th January. The motion made in January was, "That the proposals of Messrs. Stone and Burt, asking for a definite decision as to the original proposal of the Esperance Bay-Hampton Plains syndicate be taken into consideration at once, by the House." The House decided it would not take the proposal into consideration "at once;" but that did not preclude the House from taking it into consideration at a later period of the session upon due notice

being given. The House came to no conclusion as to the proposal itself.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. J. Forrest) said he did not like to remain silent on an occasion of this sort, when such a very important question was under discussion. He thought the system of building railways on the land grant system in this colony—where that system was first undertaken—was still on its trial. We had already two large contracts entered into to build lines on this system. We proposed to alienate about three million acres on the Great Southern line, and three and a-half million acres on the Midland line—altogether six and a-half million acres—in order to get railway communication from Greenough to Albany. During all the discussions that had taken place in that House with reference to the land grant railways, there was scarcely one hon. member who had taken much interest in the matter but must have felt that the colony was entering upon schemes the ultimate result of which would be watched with much interest. The effect of these last concessions, so far as he could see, would be that large areas of land in this colony would be alienated to absentees. The railway companies, in order to raise money to pay for their works, would have to sell their land, and, no doubt, in England many people would be attracted by the offer of large areas of land in a temperate climate for a very small price. And what would be the result to the colony when very large areas fell into the hands of persons who would be absent from the colony, and who would hold these lands with a view to their value becoming enhanced in the future? We had some experience already of that in this colony. He knew of an instance, on a very small scale—he referred to the land held by the West Australian Company in the Southern Districts near Bunbury, and of another, in the grants of land acquired by Sir James Stirling, in the early days of the colony. He had no hesitation in saying that the lands held by that company, and by the family of Sir James Stirling, had very largely interfered with the progress of the districts in which they were situated. For many years an acre of land could not be bought near Bunbury, and it was only during the last few years that land there

had been available for purchase. What good country there was to the eastward of the Brunswick River was held by the W. A. Company, and the result had been very much to the detriment of the district. Even now, the effects of that land being held in such large blocks by persons who made no use of it, had not been overcome. In both these cases, the areas alienated were small—100,000 acres in one, 20,000 in the other—and if the effects upon the district to which he referred had been so great, what would be the effect of three millions of acres being alienated between Beverley and King George's Sound? He believed that the difficulty that might arise in this case would be great—although he tried to take a hopeful view of things. The colony had entered into these schemes, and he was not too hopeful of the result. The Government of a country, he considered, were better able to deal with the lands of a colony than private individuals. And the Government of a country were better able to settle people on the land than private individuals. The hon. member for Kimberley had, no doubt, put a very strong case from his point of view. The members of the syndicate proposed to come to this colony with their eyes open. They were business men, and knew what they were about. They asked for a concession, which, it was said, could not do the colony any harm, and must do it good. That was a good argument he thought. But, when they had six and a-half million acres of land pledged in this colony, it was not the time for them to go into the market with two or three millions more. They must wait and see the result of the two large schemes now in hand before entering upon a third. He did not agree with his hon. friend the Director of Works, and the hon. member for Fremantle, when they said that the proposed railway would be a rival to the Transcontinental Railway. He did not think that it would affect the greater scheme one bit. If he thought that the Esperance Bay scheme would be a success, he would not care two straws about its interference with the Transcontinental scheme, because he believed there was room enough for both. His difficulty was that he did not see how the Esperance Bay scheme was to be a success. He did not think it would

result in good to the colony if they were to enter into negotiations with persons to build a railway which, in the opinion of hon. members, would not be a success. Such a step would do them more harm in the end than good. The Great Southern and Midland schemes would be of benefit to the colony, if, first of all, they proved of benefit to the speculators who had promoted them. From what had been said of the Hampton Plains, one would think that it was another Goshen, a land flowing with milk and honey. He had no great information as to the richness of the locality, but he did not think it was a place that one would wish to live in. The rainfall must be very limited, for at the nearest settled spot—the Fraser Range—there had been no rain at all for three or four years, and that was a likelier place for rain than the Hampton Plains. In some of the prospectuses of the company, the lakes were described as fresh water lakes, whereas he knew very well that they were not. He did not charge anyone with misrepresentation, but he did think that persons going into a scheme of this sort ought to be fully informed of the facts, and saltwater marshes ought not to be described as freshwater lakes. One hon. member said that the railway would lead from nowhere to nowhere. He did not believe that Esperance Bay was destined to be the outlet of large railway communication, and he did not believe either that the Hampton Plains were likely to become a large agricultural district. If he had thought so, he would have done all in his power to assist and advise the Government to encourage this enterprise. There were plenty of very good enterprises in this colony languishing at present for want of capital. If land grant railways were to pay in this country, the line to Geraldton must be a better enterprise than that from Esperance Bay to Hampton Plains,—and they all knew the difficulty there had been in getting men in London to take the Midland scheme up. He gave the promoters of the scheme credit for good intentions, but he did not think they were possessed of the facts. In London he had said to them, "I would advise you to expend your capital in enterprises closer to centres of population, and serving country where you would have better

chances of success." He regretted that he had been obliged to speak as he had, because he thought we needed at present what his friend the hon. member for Fremantle called a "bold" policy. We wanted to encourage men of capital to come to the colony, but he could not join in encouraging people to expend their capital in places where their schemes could not pay them. The members of the syndicate might be wiser than hon. members; but what were they in that House to do but to exercise their judgment in all matters that came before them? And his judgment as regards this matter was that a railway from Hampton Plains to Esperance Bay would not pay, and would be ruinous to the promoters of it; and, believing that, he could not support the motion.

MR. LAYMAN said if he thought for one moment, as had been suggested, that the members of this syndicate were the same people as the members of the Midland Railway syndicate, he should oppose the scheme; for he thought one failure was quite enough at a time. Or if he thought that the syndicate had not the necessary capital subscribed to carry out their proposals, he should object to it altogether. But he thought the colony would be protected by the words which had been added to the motion. He thought the Government of the colony would be able to take care of themselves—though they had not always shown themselves so. But surely they had legal talent enough amongst them to be able to draw up a contract that would protect the colony. Many hon. members seemed to think that the promoters of the scheme could not make anything out of it; but how did we know? We might not be able to see where the profit was likely to come in; but that was no reason why others should not.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT said he would support the proposal. He considered it was a dog-in-the-manger policy on the part of the Government not to accept it. They could do nothing themselves, nor would they allow other people to do it for them. We wanted population, and we wanted capital: and this syndicate offered to provide both. If there was any miscalculation about their making any money out of it, that was their look out. The colony couldn't lose by it.

The colony would gain £170,000 in the sale of land,—land which was utterly worthless to us; and it was a dog-in-the-manger policy refusing to part with it. It appeared to him a very reasonable proposal, and no doubt the syndicate saw its way to make it a commercial success. As to the suggestion that the deposit money should be £50,000, instead of £10,000, he did not suppose there would be any difficulty about that. He believed there was no question at all as to the money being forthcoming, and he thought it was a great pity that the Government should try to quash the scheme, because they had not brought it forward themselves.

MR. A. FORREST said he should like to be allowed to say a few words in reply. As to the question of the hon. member, Mr. Morrison—whether any of the members of the Midland Railway syndicate belonged to this syndicate—he had it on the best authority that not a single member of the Hampton Plains syndicate had had to do with the Midland Railway. [MR. MORRISON: What about Mr. Straker?] He should be sorry himself if he found one name of the Midland Railway syndicate lot amongst this crowd; he should not be there to support the scheme if there had been, and for more reasons than one. As to what fell from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who had laid himself out for a set speech, he should like to suggest to that hon. gentleman, and also the hon. member for Fremantle, that they ought to constitute themselves as a Board of Advice, charging a certain fee to every man who came to the colony, with a view to speculation, for their advice as to whether this or that speculation would be likely to turn out a success; and if these two oracles said it would not, people would be able at once to turn their backs upon the colony, clear out, and take their capital with them. What did it matter to this colony whether this or that scheme paid, if people entered into them with their eyes open, and they believed they saw an opportunity for making money out of it? He should like to ask the hon. member, Mr. Morrison, whether, if a purchaser came to him wanting to buy a piece of land, he would advise him not to buy it, and tell him it was no good. It had been said this line would do great injury to the

Transcontinental line. He would ask hon. members to glance at the map, and they would see at once that the route which this railway would take could not in any possible way interfere injuriously with a line from York to Eucla, and thence to Adelaide. On the contrary, this line would act as a feeder to the Transcontinental line, and would be a great help to it in many ways, both as regards the conveyance of material and other advantages. He was surprised at the attitude of the Commissioner of Railways in this matter. Last year the hon. gentleman was most strongly in favor of the proposal; and he believed if the hon. gentleman had his own way he would vote with him (Mr. Forrest) on this occasion instead of with the Government. The hon. member for Fremantle seemed very anxious that the English people should not lose their "little all," and seemed to have great sympathy with them. Why should the hon. member have all this sympathy for people thousands of miles away, who were desirous of speculating with it in this colony? It really made him quite ill to find members getting up and talking what he called a lot of nonsense about people losing their money, and that people who wanted to speculate ought first to come to that House and ask whether they ought to spend their money in that way. He was astonished at the Commissioner of Crown Lands—a liberal-minded man, he believed, in his way, but since he had been on the Government bench he seemed to have altered altogether. Not long ago the hon. gentleman told him we could not do wrong in advocating this line, as the colony could not lose by it. As to the Commissioner of Railways opposing it, he really could not understand it. Amongst the elected members of the House, the last man in the world he should have thought would have declined to support this resolution was the hon. member for Fremantle, who had actually gone out of his way to cry it down,—because the line did not go near Fremantle, he supposed. If the syndicate had offered to build a railway from York to Fremantle the hon. member would have supported it. The hon. member said it would do the colony a lot of harm to have this railway "hanging fire," like the Midland Railway. But

this scheme had nothing to do with the Midland Railway; it did not rank in the same class at all; and he believed, if the House accepted this proposal, it would be a great help towards restoring confidence in the Midland Railway at home; for there were a number of gentlemen at home who had invested a very large sum in these lands at Hampton Plains, and in the preliminary expenses contingent to the promotion of this railway; and, if it were cabled to England to-morrow morning, as no doubt it would be, that the House had rejected the scheme, Mr. Keane would find great difficulty in financing the Midland Railway scheme.

The motion, upon being put, was negatived on the voices.

BAYSWATER-BUSSELTON RAILWAY: MESSRS. NEIL McNEIL & Co's. OFFER.

MR. PARKER, in accordance with notice, moved that the proposal made by Messrs. Neil McNeil & Co. to construct a railway between Bayswater and the Vasse be referred for consideration to a select committee. Hon. members had, no doubt, perused the offer referred to. It was proposed to divide the line into four sections, the first being from its commencement, at Bayswater, to the junction of the Jarrahdale railway; the second, from Jarrahdale to Pinjarrah; the third from Pinjarrah to a point of junction with the railway constructed by the Government from Bunbury to Dardanup; and the fourth from Bunbury to the Vasse. They proposed to build the line on the same survey that was submitted to the House, two or three years ago, by Mr. Dobson, and they offered to build one or more sections, as the Government thought fit, leaving the remainder to be constructed hereafter. He thought the proposal was well worthy of consideration, and his motion was that it be referred to a select committee. He took it that the committee would have some little labor in obtaining the necessary information for presenting the scheme in all its bearings for the consideration of the House, to enable them to come to a conclusion as to whether it would be expedient to accept the offer or not. For instance, he presumed it would be necessary to take the evidence of the Commissioner of Railways, as to the question of whether or not the amount that was asked for

building the line was fair and reasonable; the committee would also have to ascertain what land the line would go through, also the probable amount of traffic. He proposed that the committee should consist of the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Marmion, Mr. Venn, and himself. If any hon. member wished to have the committee elected by ballot he had no objection.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said hon. members were aware this project was not a new one; a similar offer had been before the House at a previous session. It was true that the proposal brought forward on that occasion was in a different form from the present one, and very probably the present proposal was a more advantageous one. If the object of referring the matter to a select committee was to ascertain the relative merits of the two schemes, well and good; but he thought it was right he should state, and state distinctly, that he could not see what was to be the practical outcome of the committee's deliberations. The Government were not prepared to entertain such a proposal; the Government were not prepared to pledge the colony to large annual sums chargeable against the revenue, for many years. He had thought the House understood that the Government were not in a position at the present time to incur any fresh liabilities; therefore, he could not see the utility of a committee sitting to consider the details of this proposal. He hoped the hon. member would be content to let the matter rest, at any rate until another session. He trusted the hon. member would agree with him that, in the present financial and political position of the colony, this was not an opportune time for pushing this scheme forward.

MR. LAYMAN said it would be better, in his opinion, to have the proposal considered in committee of the whole House, instead of referring it to a select committee. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that the same question was well threshed out, a session or two ago, and he could not see the advisability of again referring it to a select committee. What did they want to find out? They had all the information they required. He thought that to refer it to a select committee was only one way of prolonging

the session. He was certainly surprised to hear the Colonial Secretary saying that the Government were not prepared to entertain the proposal. What were they prepared to do? Stand, with their arms folded, and let the colony go to the dogs? He moved, as an amendment, that the proposal be considered in committee of the whole Council.

MR. SCOTT, in seconding the amendment, expressed the opinion that the proposed railway would be in every way an advantageous one, particularly at the present moment, when the position of the labor market was so critical. The Government said they were not in a position to accept this offer at present; but he thought now was the accepted time. There never was a time when it was so necessary for the country to initiate some scheme of public works; and no one ventured to deny that this particular scheme was one which presented many solid advantages. He thought the Government should have a decided expression of the views of the House on the subject. He could not help thinking that even that august body, the Colonial Office, might be persuaded that it would be a most beneficial thing for the colony if it were allowed to enter upon this scheme at the present moment. It appeared we were not in a position to go in for a loan, and here was an offer which would enable us to have a most desirable line of railway constructed for us, without our having to borrow another penny. He could not help thinking that if proper representations were made by the Government to the Secretary of State as to the desirability of our accepting the offer, there would be no objection on the part of the Home Government. He hoped the House would take a firm and decided stand in this matter, and show the Government that its desire was that the work should be prosecuted at once. He failed to see what was to be gained by referring the matter to a select committee. They had already had the opinion of the Commissioner of Railways on the subject. The Commissioner told them that Mr. Dobson's proposals were very fair and reasonable, and it was evident to anyone that the present proposals were still more so.

MR. SHENTON thought it would be

advisable to have the matter referred to a select committee. Last year, when Mr. Dobson's proposals were before them, he was one of those who opposed them, considering that the amount asked was too high, and that the colony might get the work undertaken upon far more advantageous terms. That he was right in that conjecture was proved by the proposals now before them. There was a difference of something like £140,000 between the two offers. He thought an important scheme of this kind ought not to be rushed through the House. They might find that some other contractor would be prepared to do the work at a lower rate still. He noticed that the syndicate proposed to take payment in Government bonds, bearing interest at the rate of 4 per cent., at par. On reference to the quotations of our bonds in the London market it would be seen that they were now quoted at £110, and they had not been lower than £107 during last year; therefore some allowance would certainly have to be made for the discount given to us for our bonds, or premium, according to the price ruling in the London market, when the contract came to be accepted. If it could be shown that we had the necessary ways and means for paying the interest he should be inclined to favor the project.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Wright) said hon. members must know that he had always been greatly in favor of the projected line, considering as he did that it would be one of the best paying lines in the colony; but, after what had fallen from the Colonial Secretary, it appeared to him it would be totally useless to consider the scheme at the present moment, and simply a waste of time to refer it to a select committee. He thought it would be infinitely better, even in the interest of the scheme itself, that it should be allowed to come up on some future occasion.

MR. RICHARDSON said it appeared to him that in the present state of affairs the Legislative Council was expected to take a back seat altogether. They were told that the Government were not prepared to do this, that, and the other; and were expected to acquiesce in any proposition, no matter how humiliating. Was the colony to suffer, were the set-

tlers of the colony to suffer, were the interests of the country to suffer, was trade and industry to be paralysed, simply because the Government had got it into their head that, in the present position of affairs, it would not be expedient to do anything? If so, he thought the sooner the better they all retired, and left the Government to their own devices. It was useless their remaining there wasting valuable time. He thought that House should take a firm stand, and show the Government that it was in earnest in this matter, and that it was determined to make its voice heard. He really could not see why, simply because the Secretary of State chose to suggest that it would be inadvisable for the colony to enter upon any large scheme of public works, in the present state of the constitutional question—he could not see why the whole colony was to be allowed to stagnate, and that they were to “let things rip” (as the Yankees said). He thought that House would assume a very undignified position if it were to be content to take this altogether secondary position, as regards the affairs of the colony. He believed, when they came to examine this scheme, it would be found that it would be most advisable, in the interests of the colony at large, that it should be undertaken, in view of the present depression and stagnation, when people were leaving the colony by hundreds, simply through the want of work. If this line were undertaken at the present juncture it would stop this exodus, which was draining the colony of its very life-blood, and enable us to tide over the present period of depression. The interests of the country imperatively demanded that some such useful and productive work should be commenced as soon as possible. It would probably be two years, and perhaps three, before this constitutional question was definitively settled; and he hoped the House was not going to allow the country to go to the dogs altogether, meanwhile. He thought it would be wise policy on their part to give this scheme their most serious consideration. There was much in its favor. It obviated the necessity of our going to the loan market, for one thing, and the price at which the company offered to do the work was, apparently, very low indeed. The company,

having their own timber station, were in an exceptionally favorable position to undertake the work at a low rate. Altogether, it appeared to him a most advantageous and reasonable scheme, and he thought it would be a very hard case indeed if, the House having expressed a strong opinion in favor of this scheme, the Government could not stretch a point and recommend its adoption. If they would not recommend anything which that House desired, but ignored the wishes of the House in every matter, and the colony was to stagnate and decay, simply because the Secretary of State had suggested we should refrain from entering the loan market at the present juncture, all he could say was, the colony was in a very bad way, and they had arrived at a lamentable state of affairs.

Mr. RANDELL said he had previously opposed the other scheme, and he was entirely opposed to undertaking this work at the present time. He was glad to find that the Government had at last exhibited some backbone. He was glad they had at last realised, what they ought to have realised long ago, that they were responsible for the finances, and the financial position, of the colony, and not that House. The Government were responsible to the country, and under present circumstances to the Imperial authorities, for the right and proper management of the public finances; and he was glad to see that they were at last determined to take a firm stand. The views expressed by the hon. member for the North reminded him of the persuasive arguments sometimes used by dealers who were anxious to push their wares upon unwilling customers, "Oh, you can afford it; we don't want your money to-day;" or, of the man who persuaded you to accept a bargain by saying, "I don't want your money; I am quite willing to take your acceptance." The day of reckoning must come, sooner or later, whatever might be the nature of the transaction. So it would be with this railway proposal. It was all very well to say the company did not want our money at present, that they would take our bonds; but, sooner or later, the country would have to pay. He submitted that those who were in favor of the project being undertaken were bound to show where the ways and means

were to come from to provide the interest payable to the contractors. Not only would we have to provide this interest, we should also have to provide the deficit between the returns and the working expenses, which he was afraid would amount to a considerable sum annually. We had already some very costly departments, entailing a serious charge upon the revenue, especially the Postal and the Railway Departments; and he did not think the colony could afford to go on increasing these burdens. As to people leaving the colony for want of work, he did not think these were exactly the class of people that we wanted; we did not want navvies and pick-and-shovel men so much as men who would settle upon the land and cultivate it. He thought the colony had benefited but very little from its public works expenditure of late years. They had spent what for this colony was a very large amount of money, with the result that we were now saddled with a heavy burden in the shape of interest, which would continue for many years to come. He did not altogether agree with the Commissioner of Railways that the country which this line would traverse was the best part of the colony. He (Mr. Randell) did not know all the country through which it would pass, but he knew some of it, and, amongst it, there was some of the worst country in the colony, and the number of the population likely to settle along the line would be exceedingly small. He regarded the scheme as one of those schemes got up for the purpose of enriching speculators, rather than for the good of the colony. He should oppose both the motion and the amendment. He need not refer to what had been said by the leader of the Government, that it would be impossible for the Government to entertain the proposal now. The Government, as he had already said, were responsible for the finances of the colony, and if they could not see their way clear to provide the interest which would accrue in the event of this project being undertaken, it was incumbent upon those who wished to have it carried out to show where the money was to come from, or submit to the inevitable, and let the matter rest. He thought we had a sufficient number of irons in the fire already (to use a homely

expression), and that by adding to their number we would be running a greater risk of some of them at any rate getting burnt. He thought the time had come when the colony should be allowed to rest for a while, and see the result of its past enterprises, in the shape of railways and other works; and that it behoved us to adopt a cautious and careful and discriminating policy, in dealing with the finances of the colony. He did not advocate a timid policy, but he was afraid there were some members in that House who were inclined to advocate a speculative policy, resting on no solid foundation.

Mr. A. FORREST said that last year he spoke very strongly in support of a similar scheme, and he now rose to support the present proposal. As to what the hon. member, Mr. Randell, said about the quality of the land through which the line would go, the hon. member could not know much about the Southern districts, because the land between here and the Vasse, taken on the whole, was capable of maintaining a large population. The rainfall was good, and the land was fairly good, and already about one-eighth of the whole population of the colony were settled in these Southern districts. He thought the Government would be doing wrong in opposing this work. He thought the Government had no right to be placing the colony in the position in which they were now placing it. They took refuge behind the Secretary of State's despatch, in which they said they had been told that everything in the shape of public works must stand still until the question of the constitution had been settled. He disputed this altogether. If the Colonial Secretary wished that the whole of the machinery of the Government should remain at a standstill until we had a change in the constitution, all he could say was the colony would suffer injury which it would take years to make good. Some years ago the colony was financially and otherwise in a good position; but now it was quite the reverse, and, if the present state of things were to continue for the next two years, the Government would have something to answer for, which it would take a long time to rub out. Was this large colony, representing nearly one-third of the Australian continent, to be

ruled by one man, and that man to take his dictum from a paragraph in the Secretary of State's despatch. He thought it was ridiculous. If the Government would only sell some of their waste lands, they need not be hard up, and the colony would be placed in a financial position that would astonish them. Let them offer to sell half a million of acres in the Kimberley district, and they would be able to pay all their debts. Instead of that, they would do nothing at all, it appeared to him. They said to the House, "As you have brought in this question of Responsible Government, we will do nothing for you." Why should the colony be made to suffer? They were crying out for public works in all directions, and hundreds of people were leaving the colony, rather than starve. Why did not the Government find them work, when they had a chance of doing so? He considered this scheme would be a fair charge upon the revenue of the colony. [The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Where are you going to get the money from?] The Government could get the money in five minutes, if they wanted it. Let them do what he had told them. Moreover, we should not want any money for interest upon this work, for the next two years or so. The contractors did not want to be paid in money for the work they did; they were prepared to take our bonds. He usually entertained a great respect for his hon. friend the Colonial Secretary, but he could not respect him in the position which he now occupied, for he was simply retarding the progress of the colony. He hoped the House would show its sense of the gravity of the situation, and vote unanimously in favor of the prosecution of this work, so as to show the Government that the people were not going to stand the present state of affairs any longer. If hon. members did not agree to the whole of the line being undertaken now, let them agree to have the first section, as far as the 29-mile, constructed.

CAPTAIN FAWCETT said he was entirely in favor of the proposal, himself, and he could not understand this obstruction on the part of the Government. Was the colony to stand absolutely still? Was nothing to be done to forward its interests? Were they to let it go to the dogs altogether? This was a most

promising line. It would go through very good land indeed, where lots of small farms might be established,—land which, with irrigation, would grow almost anything. He believed it would be the most profitable line in the whole colony. These people, if they got this contract, would resume operations at their timber station, and find employment for at least 300 men, besides a large number of navies. He could not understand upon what ground the Government could refuse to entertain the proposal. He hoped it would be supported by a large majority,—in fact, he did not see how it could be otherwise. Why should the Government oppose everything the House brought forward, and do nothing themselves? It appeared to him it was only waste of time for the elected members to come there to be lectured by the Government like a lot of boys. If this railway scheme were not carried, by a large majority of the House, he would join with anyone to fight against the Government—in the language of the Yankee—until hell itself was frozen over, and, then, if he could get anyone to join him, would fight it out, on the ice outside.

MR. MARMION said it was not his intention to address himself to the merits of the scheme, but he would suggest that, whatever might be the ultimate result, the proper course now to adopt was to refer the proposal to a select committee, if they hoped to get any practical result. If the advocates of the scheme were not anxious to consign it to the waste-paper basket they would accept the proposal to refer it to a select committee. There were many reasons why the scheme should be considered, especially in view of the reduction in the price offered. With reference to the opposition shown by the Government, it was well known that the same opposition was shown on a former occasion. He thought it was most desirable that something should be done to put an end to the present state of depression. If the Government could not realise the gravity of affairs, it would be through no fault of his own, or others in that House, who had more than once pointed out the necessity of inaugurating some public works of a useful and productive character. Whether the colony was in a transition state or not, it was their duty to prevent it becoming a

transition from a period of comparative prosperity to one of utter ruin. The Governor when he advocated the proposed change in the constitution never told them that this period of transition was likely to last for some years, and that in the meantime, while despatches were going backwards and forwards, all progressive works were to be stopped. Those who supported the proposed change, had they been assured of this fact by the Government, as they were by some members on his side of the House, would have hesitated in taking the fatal step which they did—he said fatal, because of the distressing position of affairs it had brought about.

MR. PARKER said he understood the Colonial Secretary to say that the Government took up this position: that in our present financial condition we were not in a position to go into the money market, and that this was the reason why the Government were unable to support a proposal of this character—that it was not so much the political or constitutional position, as the financial position that precluded the Government from supporting the project now before the House. As to entering the money market, he would not have supported the scheme himself if it entailed the necessity of our doing so; but the great recommendation of the scheme, to his mind, was that we should not be obliged to enter the money market. The promoters offered to find the money themselves, and to build this railway for us, as fast as we like, section by section. His own idea would be in favor of the first two sections being taken in hand at once, which would carry the line as far as Pinjarrah. This, it was estimated, would cost £100,000, which would entail an annual charge of £4,800 upon the revenues of the colony. [MR. RICHARDSON: There would be no charge at all for the next eighteen months.] He understood that. The House, however, was not now asked to ratify or to reject the scheme, but simply to refer it to a select committee, to report upon its feasibility. He thought if only out of common courtesy and fairness to the promoters they ought to do that. He could not see what object the Government could have had in presenting the proposal to the House and printing it, unless it was intended they should

take it into consideration. If the select committee reported that it considered it advisable, in the interests of the colony, that the scheme should be carried out, and the House should be of the same opinion, let the Government take the responsibility of refusing to give effect to the wish of the House, if they liked.

Mr. HENSMAN could not understand what possible objection there could be to the motion of the hon. member for Perth, or, if so, to the amendment. The question was being discussed as if they were called upon to decide it that evening; whereas the only question now was whether the proposal should be referred to a select committee or a committee of the whole House. He did think it would be a strange thing indeed if, when a proposal of this kind was made, which several members were of opinion was a good and a *bona fide* one at all events, and when the proposal had been put into print, and presented to the Council by the Government—it did seem strange that they should now be told they should not consider it. He did not think that would be fair to those who made the offer, nor fair to the people of this colony. It was a curious way of doing things, for the Government to have the proposal printed and laid before the House, and then, because the Colonial Secretary got up and suggested they should not consider it, that the whole thing was to be cast aside. He agreed with those who had spoken and said that the House was getting into a very peculiar position. It appeared we were in a period of transition, but how long it was going to last no one seemed to know, and meanwhile the Government recommended a policy of “masterly inactivity.” Although they might be in a somewhat curious position, that House had still some power left in its hands, and he hoped it would not show itself unwilling to exercise it, if the necessity for exercising it arose. Why should they not discuss this proposal? Because they were told by the Government that they did not approve of the scheme being taken up at present. He should support the original proposition because it appeared to him that in a select committee, if the committee got to work at once, and got all the facts before them, their report would be of

great assistance to the House in coming to a decision upon the subject.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. C. N. Warton) said he was always loth to interpose in a debate, but he thought that on this occasion, as the Government had been attacked, he might be allowed to say a word or two. They all knew there was nothing which Englishmen admired more than fair play, and they had heard a good deal about it in the course of this debate. One hon. member said it would only be fair to the promoters that their scheme should be considered; another hon. member said it would only be fair to the people of the colony. He wished to use the word fair, himself, not in reference to Messrs. McNeil & Co., nor with reference to the present Government—he did not much care whether the Government got fair play or not; but he wished to act fairly towards those who would have to carry out the new Constitution. Was it fair towards the new Constitution which was about to be inaugurated, to saddle those who would have to work it, with the burden of a number of fresh financial undertakings? This change might not take place as rapidly as its most impatient advocates would like. Every courtship was not terminated in the course of a few months, and sometimes they had to wait a long time before the lady of their choice gave her consent; and it might be that, however earnestly they might woo the desired change in the constitution, it would be some time before the happy day was definitely fixed. But whenever it came about it was only fair that those who would be called upon to work it should not be saddled by heavy financial burdens, not of their own creation. He would point out that the members of the present House were not necessarily those upon whom that responsibility would rest. Was it right, whoever they might be, that the burden of a number of costly undertakings—the Hampton Plains undertaking, one moment, and this Busselton railway now—should be cast upon them, whether they wished it or not. These were the people for whom he wanted fairness shown.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said he had only one word to say, and that was with reference to what had

fallen from the Attorney General. The hon. gentleman spoke of what was fair to our successors; he (Sir Thomas) thought the fairest thing towards our successors would be to do that which we thought was best for the colony. It was perfectly absurd that because we were going to carry on the Government by-and-bye under some different system, but with the same people, we should ruin the colony in the meantime by stopping everything of a progressive character. He had never heard a more ridiculous argument in his life. If we wanted to be fair towards those who will succeed us, we ought to try and do the best we could for the colony now, while we had the opportunity. If it could be shown that the proposal now under consideration would be a good thing for the colony in its present crisis, it was their duty to press it, and not to let the opportunity slip by simply because we were on the eve of a change in the constitution. He hoped the leader of the Government would not press this foolish fad any further.

MR. E. R. BROCKMAN said that the hon. member for Perth in advocating this scheme laid great stress upon the fact that we should not have to go into the loan market to get the money. But it seemed to him it was a distinction without a difference, whether we borrowed the money ourselves or it was found for us by the promoters—we should have to pay the interest just the same. With regard to the scheme itself, he should most certainly vote against it, so long as the section already constructed from Bunbury to Boyanup—in his opinion a more desirable line—was at a standstill, for the want of funds to carry it on. He considered it was very much more desirable to run a line of railway from a port of shipment into producing districts than to connect any two particular ports.

The amendment upon being put was negatived, and the motion to refer the proposal to a select committee was agreed to, upon a division, the numbers being—

Ayes ...	16
Noes ...	5
Majority for ...	11

AYES.
 Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart.
 Mr. Congdon
 Captain Fawcett
 Mr. A. Forrest
 Mr. Harper
 Mr. Hensman
 Mr. Layman
 Mr. Marmion
 Mr. Morrison
 Mr. Pearse
 Mr. Richardson
 Mr. Scott
 Mr. Shenton
 Mr. Sholl
 Mr. Venn
 Mr. Parker (Teller.)

NOES.
 Mr. E. R. Brockman
 Mr. Randell
 Hon. C. N. Warton
 Hon. J. A. Wright
 Hon. Sir M. Fraser
 (Teller.)

Question—That such committee consist of the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Marmion, Mr. Venn, and the mover.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) moved that the election be by ballot.

Members having delivered to the Clerk the list of those they wished to serve on such committee, the Speaker reported the following members as having the greatest number of votes:—Mr. Marmion, Mr. Parker, Mr. Venn, Mr. Richardson, and Sir T. C. Campbell; with power to call for persons and papers.

ESTIMATES (REVISED), 1888.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of the Estimates for 1888.

Ecclesiastical Grant, £3,543 (adjourned debate):

MR. A. FORREST said he was in error in asking for the reduction that he did in this vote the other evening, as the full amount of the vote for the first quarter of the current year had been paid. He now moved that the item be reduced by £1,328 12s. 6d.

MR. MARMION could not think the hon. member was in earnest. This grant was of the greatest assistance to these ecclesiastical bodies, and enabled them to carry their work into remote parts of the colony where they would otherwise be unable to extend their labors.

MR. LAYMAN said he did not intend to support a reduction in this vote, but he would like to set the hon. member for Fremantle right, as to the vote being of any assistance to remote districts. He could assure the hon. member he was wrong in that, and he must say he thought the mode of distribution was unfair.

MR. CONGDON would oppose any reduction in this vote, simply because he thought it was money well spent, and that did good wherever it was spent.

MR. SHENTON said if the hon. member for Kimberley had proposed to take away the grant from Perth and Fremantle, and let it be applied to the outlying districts, he would have been prepared to have supported him; for he thought the time had arrived when the various religious bodies in Perth and Fremantle might well do without State aid. They were wealthy enough to support their own ministers. He thought the vote should be confined to outlying districts, which could ill afford to do so; and, if an arrangement to that effect were proposed next year, he would support it.

MR. RICHARDSON thought this was a vote that ought not to appear on the Colonial Estimates. He thought it would be a good thing for us to recognise the fact that it dealt with a Kingdom with the management of which we were not concerned. He thought there were inconsistencies and incongruities connected with such a vote which, if carried to their logical conclusion, would land us in absurdities. The State, apparently, was not in a position to decide which of the various religious sects which it supported was the right one, so it picked out some of the most prominent ones, and assisted them out of public funds. Nothing was said about the claims of the respectable minority, who from conscientious motives could not accept any State aid, although this minority were compelled to contribute towards the support of other religious denominations. It did appear inconsistent to say to the Protestant that the State expected him to contribute towards the promulgation of the religious doctrines of the Roman Catholic—doctrines which he did not believe in; and it was equally incongruous to compel Roman Catholics to submit to be taxed in support of the dissemination of Protestant doctrines, which, in their opinion, only led to the destruction of souls. He maintained that this Ecclesiastical Grant was simply the remnant of that religious persecution which raged among the darkness and intolerance of the Middle Ages. In effect it came to this: the Protestant, as he had already suggested, was forced

to pay out of his own pocket towards the support of a Church in whose tenets he did not believe; and in the same way Catholics were forced to pay out of their own pockets towards the support of a religion which they had no faith in; and if these opposite sects were compelled, instead of doing this indirectly through the general revenue, to pay a direct tax towards the support of the rival creeds, we should soon have the cry of religious persecution revived. He thought the grant was a blot upon our statute book, in this nineteenth century, when, notwithstanding all our parade of religious liberty and religious tolerance, we continued to support this remnant of the dark days of persecution. Hon. members might rest assured that the Head of that Kingdom in whose behalf this vote from the State coffers was granted was quite able to do without it; His Kingdom was safe enough in His own hands, without this paltry assistance, and it would suffer nothing by being left alone, without any interference on the part of worldly rulers. The teaching of religion was quite a different thing from the inculcation of the ordinary laws of morality. It was the duty of the State to do all in its power to preserve the morality of a well-ordered community, but when it came to charge itself with the care of men's souls, it went beyond its province altogether. He thought this vote for a Kingdom with the management of which we were not concerned was altogether out of place among the departmental votes of the public service.

MR. MORRISON said that to a certain extent he went with the hon. member for Kimberley, but he could not support the somewhat startling propositions ventilated by the hon. member for the North. He thought this grant was either too small or too large. He did not think it did a great deal of good as it stood. Speaking as a Churchman he could certainly say this: that the amount of money that went out of this vote towards a chaplain's stipend was not sufficient to keep body and soul together; it certainly would not keep a clergyman in the way any ordinary Christian would like to see his clergyman kept; while, on the other hand, it served as an excuse for some people not to contribute, as they ought to

do, and as perhaps they would do if State aid were abolished altogether, towards the support of their church. He should be sorry to vote for the suppression of the grant now, without some notice being given to the various denominations concerned, but he should be prepared—after say three years notice—to support a motion for its discontinuance, which he thought would probably bring congregations to a proper sense of their responsibilities in these matters.

MR. HENSMAN said the subject was one with regard to which a principle of considerable importance was involved. If this vote were now placed on the Estimates for the first time, he did not suppose it would be carried. He agreed with the tone of the remarks of the hon. member for the North, that it was not the business of the State to concern itself with the teaching of religious views. Of course this vote was not so bad as if the whole of it were given to one particular sect at the expense of the other sects,—though in some respects it was more illogical, for it was spending money in the propagation of a variety of doctrines which might be said to be in conflict on many important points. After all, the item had been on the Estimates for many years, and the money was devoted to a good purpose, and he would suggest to the hon. member for Kimberley that, after the discussion that had taken place, he might withdraw his motion. Of course this vote could not go on for ever, and no harm could be done if the suggestion of the hon. member, Mr. Morrison, were acted upon. But he should not be in favor of withdrawing the grant at once, which might inflict hardship upon the religious bodies concerned.

MR. VENN said this was not the first time the propriety of striking out this item had been discussed in that House. He himself had taken part in several divisions, and he thought there had been, indirectly, a considerable amount of warning given to the various denominations that sooner or later the vote would disappear from the Estimates. He would not support the proposition that only a part of it be struck out; but, if the hon. member would move to strike out the whole vote, he would support him. There was a growing feeling in the House in favor of the withdrawal of

State aid, and he hoped to see the day when they would have a majority.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) explained that the grant was given in lieu of the salaries which, up to the end of 1871, were paid to the ministers of religion who officiated as chaplains to the prisoners. Although it was never intended that the grant should be in perpetuity, he thought it would be unfair to strike it out without giving lengthy notice.

MR. FORREST said he quite believed that it was for the individual and not for the State to pay for that individual's clergyman. He complained that he had never seen a return showing how the money was distributed. (Several members said they had seen the returns.)

The motion upon being put was negatived, and the vote passed as printed.

Literary, Scientific, and Agricultural Grant, £1,130:

MR. A. FORREST said he noticed a new item, "Gascoyne Jubilee Library and Reading Room, £125." Was it intended to be an annual vote? Why should the Gascoyne be picked out for a Jubilee Library any more than any other district?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the vote was not intended to be an annual one. It was simply a grant to assist the Carnarvon people in establishing an institution, which no doubt would do a deal of good. No other district had initiated a similar movement, nor asked for assistance; and that was the only reason why Gascoyne was the only district that got it.

MR. SHOLL said the vote had been asked for to supplement private subscriptions raised in the district for a reading room, which it was proposed to call the Jubilee Library. It was simply following what had been done in other districts, when these institutions were first established there, and he thought it was money well spent.

MR. MARMION asked why the item "Gratuity to Rev. C. G. Nicolay, £50," had been omitted?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said it was never intended that this should be an annual vote, but a gratuity.

MR. MARMION hoped there was no intention to throw cold water on the work

upon which this gentleman was engaged for the State, and though in one sense it might be a labor of love, still they could not expect to have his services for nothing. He thought it was a piece of petty economy to strike out this small gratuity, which was well deserved.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said there was no desire to throw any cold water on this gentleman's efforts, which were fully appreciated. But it must be recollected that he undertook the care of the geological collection at Fremantle voluntarily, and the Government could not undertake to make this vote an annual payment.

MR. PEARSE was very sorry indeed to find this small gratuity struck off. Anyone who visited the museum at Fremantle would see the care displayed, and that there was a considerable amount of labor involved. He thought Mr. Nicolay well deserved this slight acknowledgment of his services.

MR. CONGDON said he fully endorsed what had been said as to the value of this gentleman's services, and he did not see how they could expect him to give his services for nothing. He had himself expected to see the vote increased rather than struck off, and he hoped the Government would see their way clear to replace it on the next Estimates.

The vote was then put and passed.

Pensions, £2,624 18s. 8d. :

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said that since the Estimates had been framed two officers drawing small pensions had died, which would reduce the vote to £2,591 1s. 4d.

The reduced item was agreed to.

Revenue Services, North-West Coast, £2,000 :

MR. A. FORREST asked why this vote was increased from £1,200 to £2,000 ?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the new vessel employed was a far superior vessel to the old one, and, the crew being more numerous, its upkeep had increased. The total estimate for the year, for all requirements, was about £1,990, but of course there was a difficulty in fixing the exact amount, this being the first year under the new arrangement.

The vote was confirmed.

Central Board of Health, £315 :

MR. SCOTT could not understand what the "Secretary and Chief Inspector of Nuisances" had to do for a salary of £200. The Public Health Act was virtually a dead letter.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said the Central Board was a body of that Council's own creation, and an application had been made by the Board to have this sum placed on the Estimates. Up to this time the salary drawn by the secretary was £100, but the Board proposed to increase it to £200.

MR. MARMION: What are his duties ?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): Similar to those of the duties of any other secretary. He conducts the correspondence of the Central Board with all the District Boards, and he has a great deal to do as chief inspector of nuisances.

MR. SCOTT said he was unable to see that this officer could have much to do in either capacity, and, until the Act was brought into more active operation than it was now, he should move that the item be reduced by £100.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) thought that in deference to the recommendations of the Central Board they ought to give their executive officer such salary as the Board considered he was entitled to. It would be treating the Board with scant courtesy to reduce the vote by one-half.

MR. PARKER: Does this officer come under the Civil Service Regulations as regards pensions ?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser): I take it that being an officer appointed by a Board he does not. The Secretary of the Board of Immigration and of the Aborigines Protection Board does not.

MR. MARMION: Does he devote the whole of his time to the duties connected with the Board of Health ?

MR. SCOTT: Not at all.

MR. PARKER said it was only a temporary appointment, and as it was clearly understood that his services might be dispensed with at any time, or his salary reduced, if he did not perform his duties to the satisfaction of the Board, perhaps the committee might pass the vote this year.

MR. MARMION: How often does the Central Board sit?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): Once a month.

The motion to reduce the vote was agreed to, and a sum not exceeding £215 granted to the Board.

Refunds, £662 10s.; Immigration, £5,820; Geological Survey, £1,048 7s. 9d.:

Agreed to.

Miscellaneous, £26,076:

MR. LAYMAN moved that the item "Queen's Plates, Perth and Roebourne, £200," be struck out. He did not think the colony could afford to continue these grants, nor did he see the necessity for doing so. The turf appeared to be a very flourishing institution at present, which was more than could be said of the public finances. When the vote was first granted, the local clubs were in a poor position, and horse-breeding required encouraging. But things were different now. If the votes for Perth and Roebourne were to be continued, why should not the Southern districts have their Queen's Plate as well?

MR. A. FORREST was more than surprised that the hon. member should have had the audacity to ask the House to strike off this vote, which he believed was the most popular vote on the Estimates. He did not suppose it would affect racing to a very great extent, but it was a very old institution, this Queen's Plate. It had existed in Perth about forty years and in Roebourne a good many years; and, surely if the colony could afford it forty years ago, it could afford it now. It had done a great amount of good in improving the breed of horses, and provided a large amount of amusement to the public. He was sure the good sense of the House would be opposed to a withdrawal of this vote.

MR. PARKER pointed out that, so far as Perth was concerned, the Queen's Plate had been run for and won, this year. They couldn't very well strike that out.

MR. RICHARDSON said although this vote might do a problematical amount of good—and the good done certainly was problematical—it at the same time created a considerable amount of jealousy among other districts of the

colony that did not participate in it, and, he failed to see, if the vote was to be continued, why it should be confined to the premier club of the colony—a powerful and wealthy institution—and to the Roebourne Club.

MR. HENSMAN said if the opposition to this vote were carried to a division he should feel bound to support the motion to strike it out. But so far as he could make out, it was not intended to carry the opposition to any practical result. He should support the proposal to strike it out, not because the particular district which he represented did not participate in it, but for this reason: although he was most anxious to see a good breed of horses introduced into the colony, he was against that low betting and gambling which, he believed, attached to the race-course in this colony—and he should not shrink from saying so when the time arrived. It appeared to him very doubtful whether this £100 of State aid to the turf improved the breed of horses at all. He could not see how the country was benefited by one person winning £100 and another losing it.

The amendment (to strike out the vote) was negatived.

MR. SHOLL said he noticed the item "Stationery for Public Offices" was increased from £1,800 to £2,400. This was a large expenditure upon stationery.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) said it was estimated it would be required for the year, and he believed it had been indented for. The stock of stationery had been allowed to get extremely low, and it was found necessary to replenish it.

MR. HENSMAN thought £2,400 was an immense sum of money to spend upon stationery, and he thought they ought to oppose it until it were shown that this extra vote was really necessary.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) explained that, as a matter of fact, they were going to expend less this year than last year, only that it was necessary to meet certain requisitions which had been made. Of the vote for last year £900 lapsed, with the result that the stock of stationery got very low, and they only now asked for £600 extra.

MR. HENSMAN moved that the item be reduced by £400. He did not think

the explanation of the Colonial Secretary at all satisfactory.

MR. RICHARDSON moved that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at midnight.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Tuesday, 27th March, 1888.

Loan Estimates, 1888—Municipal Footpaths Bill: first reading—Estimates (Revised), 1888: further considered in committee; re-committed—Beverley-Albany Railway Contract Confirmation Bill: second reading—Repairs to Police Barracks: Adjourned debate—Victoria Public Library Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1888.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser), in moving the House into committee for the consideration of the Loan Estimates for 1888, said it was not necessary that he should make any general statement; the various items would be discussed, *seriatim*, in committee, and his hon. friend the Director of Public Works would explain each item, in detail, if necessary.

IN COMMITTEE.

Harbor Works and Jetties, £10,151 17s. 5d.:

MR. SHOLL asked what it was proposed to be done with the £16,282 10s. 6d. standing to the credit of "Harbor Works, Fremantle?"

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. A. Wright): Nothing at present. There's the motion of the hon. member for Toodyay to expend it in extending the jetty.

MR. SHENTON said as these Loan Estimates had only been placed on the table last night, there had been no opportunity for members to consider them. There were some large items involved, and some of them would require considerable explanation, and probably give rise to a great deal of discussion. He would move that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

Agreed to.

Progress reported.

MUNICIPAL FOOTPATHS BILL.

MR. SHENTON, in accordance with notice, moved for leave to introduce a bill to extend the powers of Municipal Councils, and to promote the paving of footpaths in Municipalities, and for other purposes.

Leave given.

Bill read a first time.

ESTIMATES (REVISED), 1888.

The House went into committee for the further consideration of these Estimates.

Miscellaneous, £26,076 (adjourned debate):

MR. HENSMAN, resuming the discussion on the item "Stationery for Public Offices, £2,400"—which he had moved to reduce by £400—said the explanation given them the other night was that the stock of stationery had been allowed to get so low that this large vote was necessary to replenish it. If it was allowed to go so low, why was £900 out of the vote for last year allowed to lapse, instead of being spent? He thought in these days of retrenchment it seemed strange that they should be asked to increase this vote by £600. If stationery was wanted, why could it not be supplied in a little more moderate way?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. Sir M. Fraser) again explained the necessity which had arisen for the vote now asked for. The requisitions for stationery did not necessarily go home in the year for which a vote was taken, and last year a sum of £900 was allowed to lapse. Instead of asking for this £900 to be added to this year's vote, the Government only asked for £600 extra. The Government Storekeeper was satisfied that the amount now asked for would be required to meet the requisitions that