

journey by railway at the usual time before the starting of the train was a traveller within the meaning of the Act. Persons arriving by train at a railway station distant a mile from the town in which they resided, and persons resident in the town who went to the station for the purpose of meeting the train were travellers. These were the definitions of travellers which had been decided by the court. These decisions had been given in England. In no instance within his knowledge—and he had a pretty good memory of the cases which had been decided—had the court set aside a conviction of a magistrate for Sunday trading. In cases of selling without a license the court had upset convictions, but in no instance had the Supreme Court set aside a conviction for Sunday trading within his knowledge. If the Committee proposed to limit the distance and made the distance three miles for a *bona fide* traveller, then the Committee ought to open the hotels during certain hours.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Nothing of a beneficial character would come from Sunday trading. He agreed with the remarks of the Colonial Secretary with regard to drinking on Sunday. Sunday was a day of rest; and it should be a day of rest to the publican and all his employees, who required as much rest and relaxation as anybody else. Therefore we should be wrong in allowing the publican to sell on Sunday.

HON. F. T. CROWDER: It was impossible to give the publican rest.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: If the publican was not compelled to open on Sunday he would have rest.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: What about his boarders?

HON. F. M. STONE said he was willing to accept the amendment proposed by Mr. Kidson.

Amendment (Mr. Kidson's) put and passed.

New clause as amended put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	5
				—
Majority for	...	...	...	2

*Ayes.*

Hon. H. Briggs  
 Hon. F. T. Crowder  
 Hon. R. S. Haynes  
 Hon. A. B. Kidson  
 Hon. F. M. Stone  
 Hon. F. Whitcombe  
 Hon. W. Spencer  
 (Teller)

*Noes.*

Hon. C. E. Dempster  
 Hon. W. T. Lotoa  
 Hon. C. A. Piesse  
 Hon. E. McLarty  
 Hon. G. Randell  
 (Teller)

Question thus passed, and the clause added to the Bill.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

## ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.50 p.m. until the next day.

*Legislative Assembly,*

*Tuesday, 6th September, 1898.*

Papers presented—Question: Gold Export and Divulging of Information—Question: Fremantle Harbour Works, Dredging—Question: Peak Hill Goldfields Company, Charge against Warden—Reappropriation of Loan Moneys Bill, in Committee (resumed); Third Schedule, Division on item, Mount Leonora Railway Survey; progress reported—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Perth Public Hospital, Report for 1897-8.

Ordered to lie on the table.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: Kingsley Hall Reward Gold Mine, Papers *re* Non-forfeiture. The MINISTER stated that these papers, being required by the Department, should be returned at an early date.

THE SPEAKER said hon. members might inspect the papers, but that they need not be formally laid on the table,

as in such case they must remain in charge of the House till the end of the session.

Papers submitted for inspection, accordingly.

**QUESTION: GOLD EXPORT AND DIVULGING OF INFORMATION.**

MR. KENNY asked the Minister of Mines, Whether a warden had authority to divulge the amount of gold which had been declared at his office for a special escort, immediately after it had been, in confidence, declared to him, as required by the department, previous to its being escorted, when by so doing the result was published in the press four days after the crushing was completed, and before it was possible for the directors or shareholders of the company to receive the information?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied that a warden had no authority to divulge information which had not become public property, and which it was desired should be kept confidential.

**QUESTION: FREMANTLE HARBOUR WORKS, DREDGING.**

MR. GEORGE asked the Director of Public Works—1, How the quantity of sand now being dredged in connection with the Fremantle harbour works was arrived at; whether by net actual dredge contents or by soundings and calculations therefrom? 2, To what point up the river the scheme provided for dredging, and to what depth?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied: 1, By dredge contents. 2, To road bridge, but not to full width. Depth 30 feet below Admiralty low water (*vide* copy map P.W.D., W.A., 1427, laid on table of House in December, 1891). It is not intended to carry dredging above Railway Bridge; but, on the other hand, the basin below that bridge will be dredged to two feet greater depth than originally intended, so as to be 30 feet below what has been ascertained to be the lowest known low water, which is three feet below Admiralty low water.

**QUESTION: PEAK HILL GOLDFIELDS COMPANY, CHARGE AGAINST WARDEN.**

MR. KENNY asked the Minister of Mines, Whether the charge made by the manager of the Peak Hill Goldfields Company, Limited, against the warden of Peak Hill, on the second day of July last, had been inquired into; and, if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) replied that the matter was still under inquiry.

**REAPPROPRIATION OF LOAN MONEYS BILL.**

**IN COMMITTEE.**

Consideration resumed, Third Schedule, railways.

Item, Donnybrook-Bridgetown railway, £70,000:

MR. LEAKE asked the Commissioner of Railways whether this amount of £70,000 was a final claim.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): Yes; it would cover all claims.

MR. LEAKE: Extras and everything?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes.

MR. LEAKE: To what amount, approximately, did this bring up the total sum? About £200,000 was it not?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The amount expended to the end of June, 1897, was £40,202; to the end of June, 1898, £58,421; a total of £98,623 up to date. A further sum of £34,380 was required to complete, making a gross total of £133,033. The sum of £35,620 was advanced last year, and £34,380 was required for payments this year, making up £70,000 now asked for by reappropriation.

MR. LEAKE: Then the claim for extras had to come in, and that would be £30,000 or £40,000.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The claims might be, but the Government were not likely to pay anything like that amount.

MR. GEORGE: What was the amount of the contract?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: £85,996 was the amount of the contract, and the total sum would be £133,003, which, of course, included the rails and other things.

Item passed.

Item, Collie Coalfield railway, £6,000.

MR. GEORGE: In regard to the Collie coalfield railway, he would like similar questions to be answered.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There was an extra cost in relation to various works which were necessary to be carried out. It was necessary to make some additional connections, including that with the Brunswick station, and there had also been extra work in regard to the Collie coalfield line. These things entailed an expenditure of something like £6,000, so that the amount which that railway had cost over and above the sum arrived at last year was very small.

MR. GEORGE: Did that sum cover the claims as well?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: Was it the same with regard to the Manzies railway?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes.

Item passed.

Item, Manzies railway, £25,000—agreed to.

Item, Greenhills Railway, £20,000:

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the item be struck out. When the Bill for constructing this railway was submitted to Parliament, it was distinctly stated that the line was to be built out of revenue. He had no hesitation in saying that £52,000 for the Greenhills railway, a length of 12 miles—

THE PREMIER: The hon. member should not extend it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would the Premier state the accurate length?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The length was 14 miles.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was £4,000 a mile. The construction of this railway was one of the grossest political jobs ever perpetrated in this colony.

THE PREMIER: The member for Central Murchison should not say that. How was it a job? Who got anything out of it?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: £20,000 ought not to have been allowed for deviation to take it into York. It was a gross political job, and a bribe to a constituency.

THE PREMIER: The York deviation did not cost so much as that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But it was a political job, all the same.

THE PREMIER: The member for Central Murchison knew he ought not to say these things.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Whether these things ought to be said or not, he was going to say them. He was not in the habit of saying things which he ought not to say, but occasionally he might be allowed latitude as well as the right hon. gentleman.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member should not say these things. Unkind things might be said about him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier might say what he liked.

THE PREMIER: A good deal might be said.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier could say all he was able to say, in that way. It was distinctly understood that this railway was to be built out of revenue, and now we were asked to saddle the country with £20,000 of loan money. It was bad enough to take the money out of revenue. Here was one of those cockspur railways, 14 miles long, as the Commissioner had said, though it was nearer 12; but taking it at 14 miles, this railway would never pay for axle grease. It was made through the Hardey estate, and the Government afterwards bought that estate.

THE PREMIER: Terrible! Terrible!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was a majority in this House who, of course, would support the Premier in this kind of thing.

MR. A. FORREST: The member for Central Murchison voted for the construction of this railway.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No.

THE PREMIER: People who lived in glass houses ought not to throw stones.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Where did the reference to glass houses come in? He would allow the Premier to throw at any glass house as long as he liked, provided the Premier confined himself to the truth.

THE PREMIER: That was what was required of the member for Central Murchison.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was distinctly understood by this House that the

Greenhills railway was to be built out of revenue. This railway would not pay interest on the cost.

**THE PREMIER :** According to the opinion of the hon. member, we had lots of these railways in the colony. The Bunbury railway was formerly spoken of by the hon. member in that way.

**MR. GEORGE :** The member for Central Murchison did not say that. It was a Government supporter who did so.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** The Bunbury railway was built before he (Mr. Illingworth) was a member of this House ; so he did not see where that came in.

**THE PREMIER :** The Cue railway.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** That railway should have been built by private enterprise.

**THE PREMIER :** Then private people would not have got the worth of the axle-grease.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** It would not have been an injury to the country.

**THE PREMIER :** There was no objection to the hon. member moving in this way, but when he cast aspersions on the Government, they must be resented. The hon. member told us that the Government built this railway to serve some political ends, and that the property was bought by the State in order to cover up what had been done. He did not like to say anything nasty of any member, but the statement of the member for Central Murchison was absolutely without foundation, and was also unworthy of him. The hon. member knew perfectly well that he (the Premier) would not say anything with regard to him that would reflect upon his personal honour.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH** said he was talking politics.

**THE PREMIER :** The hon. member could not get away from the position, by saying he was talking politics. If he (the Premier) acted dishonourably as a politician, he acted dishonourably as a man.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH** said he was not referring to the Premier personally, and what the right hon. gentleman said did not apply.

**THE PREMIER :** An accusation had been made that the Government dishonourably built a political railway, and then bought land to cover up the transaction.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH :** The Mount Hardey estate was purchased by the Government, after it had been improved by making a railway through it.

**THE PREMIER :** Having taken no part himself in the purchase of this estate, he could only say that it was purchased at £1 an acre, after having been improved, fenced in, and a railway running through it ; and if an estate which had been improved for the last 50 years, fenced in, part of it cultivated, and the whole of it ringbarked, and with a railway running through it, was dear at £1 an acre, the hon. member must have a poor opinion of the value of land in this colony. If this improved land was not worth what the Government gave for it, then it was a very poor advertisement for Western Australia. The statement made by the hon. member was absolutely without foundation. This land came into the market in an unexpected manner, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands availed himself of the opportunity of purchasing it, and in doing so made a very good bargain. The estate was situated within two miles of York, and was fit for agriculture, and besides having this railway running through it, the estate was close to the Beverley railway. Therefore, if an estate of that character was not worth £1 an acre, after all these years of cultivation, and after £3,000 or £4,000 had been spent on it by the last owner in ringbarking and further improving it, then the hon. member must have a poor opinion of the value of land in this colony. The hon. member was not in a position to throw stones at him (the Premier), and it was a dishonourable insinuation, as the hon. member knew, to say that the purchase of this estate was a political job. He resented the insinuation, because it was against his (the Premier's) personal honour.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH** said he did not want to touch the Premier's personal honour. He knew it was impregnable.

**THE PREMIER** said he hoped that was was so. With regard to the Greenhills railway, it had been commenced with the intention of constructing it out of revenue, and £32,000 had been expended on it out of revenue ; but the railway was now completed, and taken over, and the Government proposed to pay what remained due out of loan to the amount of

£20,000 stated in the schedule, rather than increase the deficit. by paying the remainder of revenue. Having spent £32,000 out of revenue, he did not see why the remaining £20,000 should necessarily be spent out of revenue, too. As to the amount of the year's deficit, to which the hon. member had referred, it was not so much as one month's revenue of the colony, though the hon. member wanted to pile it up and make it appear very large. He hoped this item would be allowed to stand in the schedule.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Premier had completely mistaken the position. The Assembly had been asked to pass an agricultural railway on the understanding that it was to be built out of revenue; and what he was protesting against was that the Assembly should first be asked to pass a railway upon one line of policy, and then be asked afterwards, as the Committee were now, to alter the line of policy and pay the remainder of the cost in another way. It was his conviction that, if the Government had in the first instance asked that the Greenhills railway should be built out of loan money, it never would have been passed. (MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.) The only reason why it was consented to by himself and others was on the clear understanding that this railway was to be built out of revenue, and that it was not to be a permanent charge on the colony. What he was objecting to, and must protest against, was the change of policy in regard to this railway; and it was no use for the Premier to attempt to hide it by making a personal attack on him. That railway would never have been passed by the Assembly if the proposal, in the first instance, were to build it out of loan money for £52,000.

THE PREMIER said he believed it would.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was a pure question of opinion. The Government had no right to come in with one line of policy, and then, when the work was partly done, come in with an entire change of policy. Where was this to end? The Committee were now asked to load posterity with a charge of £20,000 upon the Railway Department for interest and sinking fund. These cockspur lines, built at £4,000 a mile, as in this case, were the things which had wrecked the

Victorian railways and left that colony eleven millions in debt; and this sort of thing would crush the main railway system of this colony, if it went on.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member said the Government had been buying land as a job.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What was said was that the railway was a job, a political job, and the Premier had not resented that.

THE PREMIER said he understood the hon. member applied that term also to the purchase of the land.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was an entire misunderstanding. He said that the land had been purchased after the railway had been projected.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member insinuated that the Government bought land as a job, too.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What was said and what he protested against was that, as an inducement to have a cockspur railway, this line was to be built out of revenue; and Parliament consented to it on the understanding that it was to cost £30,000, and the money was to come out of revenue; whereas £52,000 were now found to have been expended, and, the railway being now completed, the Committee were asked to transfer the remaining £20,000 to loan account. He objected to that principle.

MR. MONGER: Having complimented the hon. member previously on the mildness and moderation of his speeches, he was surprised to hear the hon. member on this occasion charging the Government with having perpetrated a political job. That must refer to himself (Mr. Monger), as representative of the district, and it implied that the political job was done to purchase his support for the Government.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not at all. They had the hon. member before.

MR. MONGER: The political job meant that they were purchasing his support.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member was bound to the Government.

MR. MONGER: No more bound than any member of the House. He had never had anything from the Government. The hon. member had received far more than he had for his district.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: What had the Government given to him?

MR. MONGER: Everything the hon. member had asked for. When the hon. member made these nasty, dirty remarks in the House, and especially when they were made applicable to himself (Mr. Illingworth), and when the Government were accused of having consented to the construction of this railway as a gross political job, he must say the hon. member was stating that which he knew to be absolutely untrue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was true, and the hon. member knew it.

MR. MONGER said he would like to give the hon. member the lie direct, but, being in the House, he could not do so. The hon. member had characterised this small line of railway as a political job. It was at first thought the revenue of the country would be sufficient for the construction of this and other lines, or cock-pours, as the hon. member called them; and he (Mr. Monger) represented the district which happened to have been fortunate in having the first of such railways constructed in it. Owing to the slight financial depression, the other lines of agricultural railway, though surveyed, had not yet been started. Perhaps it was fortunate they had not been started; but the line in the York district was commenced when the Government were in affluent circumstances; and it was for the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) and his friends to show that the future would not prove the Government to have been right in constructing this line. The hon. member said the line would not pay for axle-grease. It was as easy to make such statements; but hon. members would recollect that every railway proposal of the Government in the past had been received with similar disparaging remarks from the Opposition side of the House. For this line, which had been taken over only a few days ago by the Government, and had not yet been worked by the State for a whole week, to be criticised in such a manner was most unfair. As to the purchase of a property near the railway since its construction, that was one of the finest properties ever purchased by the Government; and if the hon. member had called for a return of

the sales of land and the settlement on that estate—

MR. A. FORREST: Such return was on the table of the House.

MR. MONGER: Well, it would show that the Government had made a fair investment in the purchase of this property. The Committee should not agree to strike out the item. It was regrettable that this short line of railway had cost so much; but the hon. member had no justification for saying the Government had been a party to a gross political job. The action of the Government in granting such a slight concession to the York district had not in any way carried him nearer to the Government side than he was before.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was not possible for the hon. member to be nearer.

MR. MONGER: As regarded that, he was quite as independent as the hon. member. He wanted nothing from the Government; though what he had asked for in moderation had always been granted, and he presumed the hon. member must say the same with regard to the Central Murchison. He trusted the hon. member would never again accuse the Government of having attempted to bribe him.

MR. A. FORREST asked the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) to withdraw the amendment. Some two years ago the House had passed this railway, to be built out of revenue; but now it was found there was not sufficient money to the credit of the general revenue to pay for the remaining portion, and hence the proposal to pay the remaining £20,000 out of loan. This money had already been practically expended, and it was necessary to pay the public creditor.

THE PREMIER: The public creditor had been paid.

MR. A. FORREST: If the proposal were not agreed to, the liability would still remain, and it was far better to pay this at once out of loan. As an illustration, if a business man commenced by always paying cash down, he would find himself, after a certain time, in financial difficulties and would have to get money outside. This was a similar case. The Government, when the line was proposed, had plenty of money, and said they would build it out of revenue. They now found they had not sufficient

money, and were adopting the proper course by proposing to pay the balance out of loan. He would say nothing in respect of the remarks concerning political jobs. Those who made them must take care of themselves. He knew this railway would tap a good country, and that the land purchased by the Government would be a valuable asset, and of great benefit to the colony.

MR. GEORGE: No doubt the money would have to be found for this particular item, but the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) evidently wished to dwell more upon the general principle of such expenditure than upon the particular item.

THE PREMIER: A principle might sometimes be run to death.

MR. GEORGE: That was so; and when it was dead it could be buried. The principle the hon. member wished to bring before the Committee was that if members were to sit as representatives of the people, the questions submitted by the Government for their decision should have truth for their basis. He was not impugning the veracity of the Premier; but the Government had asked this House, in the first instance, to pass this railway at an estimated cost, exclusive of rolling stock, of £30,000. No doubt the Minister who introduced the proposal thought the estimate correct; but now £30,000 had been spent and £20,000 more was wanted; so that this House should originally have been asked for £50,000 instead of £30,000. Hon. members wanted explanation why that liability of £20,000 had been incurred over and above the original vote—whether it represented works decided upon after the estimate was given, or whether it meant that those responsible for the estimate were at fault. Frequently he had occasion to draw the attention of the House to estimates which had been largely exceeded. Would such things be tolerated in any private business?

THE PREMIER: It must be remembered that there were lots of underdrafts also.

MR. GEORGE: The right hon. gentleman could not be persuaded to look at such matters from a commercial man's point of view.

THE PREMIER: What made a commercial man?

MR. GEORGE: A commercial man was one who had a systematic training and had to spend his own money instead of other people's.

MR. A. FORREST: Where could such a man be found?

MR. GEORGE: Certainly there were not many in this place. No doubt you had all tried to spend other people's money, but everyone had not been as successful as the hon. member. Either the estimate in this case was purposefully kept down—

THE PREMIER: The estimate was made before the survey.

MR. GEORGE: Whoever made the estimate did not understand his business and was unfit to be entrusted with the making of future estimates, such as those on which the Committee would have to vote in the course of next week. The Commissioner of Railways should certainly give some explanation of how a mistake of £20,000 was made in a £30,000 job.

THE PREMIER: The estimate was made before the survey.

MR. GEORGE: Then it should not have been placed before the House at all. No railway should be estimated before being surveyed. From what we knew of the engineering staff, he could not believe that such had been done—could not believe they had been such fools. There must be some other explanation.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): The estimate placed before the House when the vote was taken last year was only an assumed one, and the tender exceeded it by something like £17,000. The first proposal was to construct a railway from a point four miles on the Beverley side of York, but the soil in the district through which the line now ran was better for its whole length than that of the route originally intended. Moreover, if the junction had been at a point four miles on the Beverley side of York, it would have necessitated the erection of a junction station, and an officer in charge which would have entailed extra expense; and the saving effected by the course adopted would much more than compensate for the £5,000 or £6,000 which was the extra cost of bringing

the line to York. Besides, representations were made by the York people that it would be to the advantage of persons in that district, and in Greenhills also, to have the line brought into the town. By the arrangements in existence to-day, the Government were running three trains a week to Greenhills. The train which came from Beverley, arriving some time after four p.m., was detained for a sufficient time to enable the engine to run out to Greenhills, and in this way the cost was not increased much. In his opinion, the present service would meet all the demands likely to be made upon the Railway Department for some time in connection with the carriage of goods to and from Greenhills; and, by the course adopted, the expense was lessened in every way possible, whilst the Government were meeting the wishes of the people by carrying their goods, and also by conveying passengers to and fro.

MR. GEORGE: It seemed that the £30,000 put before the House previously was an assumed estimate. Therefore, at that time the Government knew they had not counted the cost. That being so, they had no right to ask the House to pass this item for £20,000 more. A session or two ago, he (Mr. George) referred to the Government House ball-room, and that vote was cut down to £15,000. In regard to the new asylum, a sum of £2,000 was first put on the Estimates, but nothing was done in the year in which it appeared. Then the amount grew until it got to about £15,000, subsequently increasing to £30,000, and still nothing was done. The last year in which that work appeared on the Estimates, the amount was £55,000. If members were going to sit in this House as reasonable men and as representatives of the country, the truth should be placed before them.

MR. LEAKE: The member for Central Fife (Mr. Murchison) was perfectly right in drawing the attention of the House to the fact that this was a railway which was pressed on the ground that it was to be built out of revenue. Had it not been so, it never would have been mentioned, and would not have been passed.

THE PREMIER: It was mentioned many times.

MR. LEAKE: Because the Government were booming their revenue at the time, they thought they could be extravagant. This was one of the extravagances that had brought the Government to their present state of depression. Had it not been understood that this railway was to be built out of revenue, we never should have heard of it; and it was absurd for Ministers to say they were justified in asking for the railway to be paid for out of loan money. It was difficult to know whether the error arose from ignorance or design; but he was inclined to think the former, because we had overwhelming evidence of the ignorance of the Works Department on questions of great public moment.

THE PREMIER: The estimate was made by himself.

MR. LEAKE: Well, it was crass ignorance. The right hon. gentleman's ignorance was even more profound than that of his colleague. The Premier led the House to believe that the Donnybrook-to-Bridgetown railway was going to cost about £100,000.

THE PREMIER: Such was not the case. He denied that absolutely. The records of the House would show it. The £100,000 was for a railway towards Bridgetown.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier knew perfectly well at the time that it would cost about £150,000. At any rate, through somebody's ignorance, a vote of £30,000 for the Greenhills railway passed through this House; and this was only one of many mistakes of this kind, and now we had to bear the burden of it. In regard to the Second Schedule, we had been asked to reappropriate £100,000 for works which were started on the idea that the money would be paid out of revenue—he referred to public batteries and works on the goldfields. There was good reason to complain. It would be noticed, too, that in the next part of this schedule we were asked to vote £30,000 for the Bunbury harbor works. All along it was understood that this work would be completed out of revenue. We were back on the old ground again; for we had no revenue, and therefore must complete the work out of loan. In fact, the position the Government took was that we must pass these reappropriations, no matter how the Ministry had misled the House, and



that we must do this to get them out of the difficulty. Yet we were asked to pat these gentlemen on the back, and say what admirable and excellent administrators they were! When this railway was first proposed, it was opposed by the member for Beverley, who generally estimated things at a pretty fair value.

THE PREMIER: That was a question of route.

MR. LEAKE: No doubt this railway was one of the many political jobs that the Government had been guilty of; and he was glad to think the Ministry did not resent the assertion that it was a job, and that they left it to the member for York to do so. He supposed no one in the House would deny that it was one of the many jobs perpetrated by means of which the Government had been able to keep in power; but it would be far better if hon. gentlemen were more jealous of the country's interests than of their own personal honour. It was not in the interests of the country that we should be committed, in one session, to works which were to be constructed out of revenue, and afterwards find ourselves led blindly by the Ministry into a difficulty from which there was no escape except by voting loan moneys for the purpose. It was not as if the Ministry said, "We have made a mistake, but this shall not occur again." They repeated the mistake over and over again, and defied this (the Opposition) side of the House, knowing they could command the votes of members on the other side. This question was growing into a constitutional scandal, and he must ask hon. members to say whether they would allow it to continue for ever. This might be the first, but it would not be the last, case of the kind. The Government had muddled up the finances, and got them into such a terrible bungle that they did not know how they stood, and were obliged to borrow to pay their debts.

Amendment (Mr. Illingworth's) put and negatived.

Item passed.

Item, Survey of Railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora, £4,000:

MR. VOSPER moved that the item be struck out. It was not necessary to argue this question at length, for it was well known that this railway was not to be constructed for some indefinite

term; and this amount might be devoted to some more useful purpose. The survey simply meant the opening of a country, obtaining certain information and laying down pegs, which might be left there for a long time. Other questions were involved, but he would not touch on them at present. To spend £9,000 on two surveys under these circumstances would be a wilful and extravagant waste of public money.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir Forrest): The motion itself did not surprise him, but he was surprised at the member who moved it; for, while he could well understand that members representing parts of the country which felt no particular interest in this line might be indifferent to it, he could not understand that a member representing a goldfield should move to strike the item out. Such action showed either that the hon. member had a patriotic feeling animating him, or that he represented a high-minded and generous constituency, which did not want any money spent in the colony, even to benefit the constituency, unless the expenditure was fully justified. He (the Premier) was not prepared to give the hon. member or his constituency credit for that high feeling, for he believed that, as a rule, members and their constituents were imbued with the ordinary feelings of humanity, and were not generally likely to oppose what was for their own benefit.

MR. VOSPER: That was the lowest feeling.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member and his constituency were, he assumed, animated by the ordinary feelings, and not by the lowest. Members would know, as practical men, that if a measure were brought forward for the interest and advantage of a constituency, the constituency would seldom or never oppose such a measure.

MR. VOSPER said he had opposed the Coolgardie water scheme, at the time it was standing for election.

THE PREMIER: Yes; the hon. member opposed it for newspaper purposes—that was all. For no other reason whatever. Yet he had changed his opinion on that question since he came into this House, because it suited him to do so. The goldfields newspaper

which the hon. member formerly edited was run for the purpose of making it pay, and for no other purpose.

MR. VOSPER: It did pay, too.

THE PREMIER said he did not think it did.

MR. VOSPER: It got into the hands of the Official Receiver, afterwards.

THE PREMIER: That newspaper, when it was edited by the hon. member, did an immense amount of harm to the goldfields of the colony, and polluted the atmosphere of those goldfields.

MR. MORAN: That was the general opinion.

THE PREMIER: Having this opinion of the hon. member's action, he was glad to say it publicly that his action while editing that paper polluted the atmosphere of those goldfields. But the question before the Committee was a serious one, and he wished to deal with it calmly and moderately. The question was whether it was advisable, in the interests of the country, that a survey should be made from Menzies *via* Niagara as far as Mount Leonora, a distance of 70 miles. It went without saying that, when a Government proposed a survey for a railway, the proposal implied that the Government were in favour of the construction of the line. No one was more opposed than he to making surveys for railways in order to serve the purpose of the moment, and give satisfaction to people who were bringing pressure to bear on the Government for a particular work, unless there was a real intention of building the railway. It was absolutely mischievous to make a survey, unless the Government proposing it had a serious intention of constructing that railway. It only meant that the proposal would deceive people, by leading them to believe that a railway was to be made, when there was no intention of making it. But that was not the present case, for the Government fully believed that a railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora was one which ought to be constructed at the earliest moment; they believed it was a railway which would pay; they believed it would open up one of the best auriferous areas in the colony; and they believed it would be altogether in the interest of the colony, as well as in the

interest of the goldfield, to construct that railway. [MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear.] When the Government first proposed to build this railway, they did not see as far as some other people had seen since. They did not see—although perhaps they ought to have seen—that there would be a hornet's nest rising from Geraldton, from Mount Magnet, from Cue, from Nannine, from Northampton, from the Greenough—he could not say it had yet got as far as Dongarra—from all those places a hornet's nest had been rising, which seemed to show that the people in those localities believed they were to be injured by the proposal of the Government to build this railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora, and that to do so was attacking the interests of their particular constituencies. He could assure hon. members and assure the people of the colony that, when he first considered this question and determined to recommend to Parliament the construction of this line, the fact that the people of these districts would consider their interests injuriously affected never entered his mind. Perhaps it ought to have done, but it seemed to him so absurd that to extend a railway which was already in existence 70 miles farther to a valuable auriferous country and to places which already used Menzies as their distributing centre, would be construed as an attack on the interests of these other places. If this railway were never to be built, the people of Mount Leonora, Mount Margaret, Mount Samuel, Mount Ida, and even Lawlers would go to Menzies as their nearest distributing centre, as sure as the night followed the day; and those people were not likely to go the longer distance of 250 or 270 miles to Mount Magnet as the railway station most convenient for them, when they could reach a railway at Menzies only 70 or 80 miles distant. Therefore those persons who were raising political complications in regard to tapping the traffic by making this railway, and injuring, as they said, the interests of other districts, were only beating the air; for it could not happen that the traffic of those north-east districts, leaving out Lawlers—though he thought even the Lawlers traffic would eventually go to Menzies—could ever go to Mount Magnet when it could go a shorter dis-

tance to a railway at Menzies. No one had any desire, and certainly he had not, to divert traffic from any place out of its natural course. Traffic would go along such routes as best suited it. A railway having been made to Menzies, we might depend upon it that all the traffic within 140 miles of that station would go there, and that no inducement which could be offered to draw that traffic 250 or 300 miles in another direction would have that effect. It went without saying that, in building railways in one direction, the effect was to bring traffic in that direction, although such traffic might not have gone in that direction before. He believed, however, the Mount Leonora traffic had always gone in the Menzies direction, and not in the direction of Mount Magnet. He had never heard of traffic going from Mount Leonora to Mount Magnet, but he knew the Lawlers traffic had always gone in that direction.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was nearer to a port

THE PREMIER: People who were travelling far away from the sea-board did not care about a port, for they wanted a railway station. He knew that, when travelling 200 or 300 miles in the bush, and when he reached a railway station, he felt that his journey was practically finished, because the rest of the run by rail homeward was a mere bagatelle. It was the same with the people of those goldfields, for they wanted to get to the nearest railway station in the shortest possible time, as they knew they could then do the rest of the journey quickly.

MR. MORAN: And they often wanted to stop at the big centres, *en route*.

THE PREMIER: Yes. Surely the people in Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Broad Arrow, Menzies, and all the eastern goldfields, would find it advantageous to be connected with the Mount Leonora district. How could it be a disadvantage to them? If they had any interests there, they could visit the locality. If there were any trade worth having in those parts, they could get a share of it. Apparently, the hon. member who had moved this amendment (Mr. Vosper) not only did not want a share of that traffic, but would like to drive it away from the place he represented. If there were any traffic at Mount Leonora that

would be valuable to Kanowna or Broad Arrow, if there were any people in Kanowna or Broad Arrow who would like to have something to do with Mount Leonora or Mount Margaret, the hon. member would say to them: "If you want to go there, you shall go by road, and, however anxious the Government may be to give you facilities to travel by rail, I will take care you shall not do so because I shall strike out even the provision that a railway survey be made. That was the meaning of the hon. member's proposal, and that was what his constituents ought to consider, if they considered the matter at all, that the Government were trying to help them by giving means of communication to the goldfields—trying to weld together all the different interests in those goldfields."

MR. LEAKE: Why not build the railway?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Would not that apply to the other side as well as to this? Why not build the railway to Lawlers?

THE PREMIER: Because it was to far—200 miles! The Government were now trying to deal with the Leonora district—one of the best and most promising districts in the colony, as far as could be seen. The hon. member would have us build a line 200 miles to Lawlers and 270 miles more to Mount Leonora, and would doubtless support a proposal to start it from Mount Magnet in the Murchison district. The hon. member dared not refuse to do so as member for Central Murchison. He (the Premier) had never seen the hon. member vote against the Central Murchison yet. The hon. member dare not refuse his support to that proposal, but would vote for a railway 270 miles long, while he would not vote for a railway 70 miles long from Menzies to Mount Leonora, which would give the same facilities. The hon. member would not even vote for a survey of the 70 miles. He (the Premier) would not say he was indifferent to the wishes of his own constituents. He was anxious to please them; but he would not go on all-fours and grovel to his constituents. He would tell them as he had told them before, that what they wanted something he did not consider was in the interests of the country.

he was not prepared to support it. But the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) was not prepared to say that to his constituents, nor was the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), who would go on all-fours to his constituents and grovel to them.

MR. VOSPER said he would not grovel to the Premier, at any rate.

THE PREMIER said he did not want the hon. member to do so. He would consider he was doing something wrong, if the hon. member grovelled to him. He wanted the hon. member to know that he did not care for his frowns or his good opinion.

MR. VOSPER: The feeling was mutual.

THE PREMIER: That was all right.

MR. LEAKE: What about the survey?

THE PREMIER said he wanted to show to those people who had taken up the idea that the Government, in respect of this proposal, were trying to injure one part of the colony at the expense of another, that such idea never entered his head, and that his only desire, in proposing this railway, was to give facilities of transit to a promising goldfield, and to afford to the whole of the eastern goldfields the advantages of communication with that promising district. Take the East Murchison goldfield, which of course the Leonora line would tap, and what was its position? The returns from the East Murchison goldfield were included in the Murchison returns until very recently; therefore, there was no means of ascertaining the exact output of gold up to the 1st August, 1897. But for the remaining five months of 1897, after the separate goldfield was declared and separate returns were made, gold was exported from that district to the value of £35,924, and from the 1st January to the 31st August in the present year, 8 months, there had been £56,912 worth exported; so that hon. members could see that for 8 months the return was about the same for the last year and this, there being £7,000 worth of gold a month exported from this far-famed East Murchison goldfield which the Government were accused of desiring to tap, and that the same quantity of gold had been exported in this year, about £7,000 worth a month. For the month of July £9,000 worth was ob-

tained; and for the month of August £11,000 worth. He believed in the near future the East Murchison district would be a most promising part of the country; but his object was to show that it was not booming and jumping ahead at a tremendous rate at the present time, and that the Government, in their desire to give facilities of transit not only to it, but also to the Mount Margaret district, would not be unduly influenced by any great development that had taken place in that part of the country. He believed, also, that the Lawlers, Mount Samuel and Lake Way districts would progress at a rapid rate in the near future. In regard to the Mount Margaret goldfield, he found that it began to keep separate returns on the 1st of August in last year, and for the remaining five months of 1897 the export was £33,006 worth of gold, and for the 8 months of 1898 the export was £97,732 worth. There had been a good movement there, and that goldfield was showing itself to be progressive. For the first six months in 1898 £69,135 worth of gold was exported; for July £11,418 worth was exported, and for August £17,179 worth: so that it appeared to be on the up-grade, and was likely to prove a very important field. Considering the short time it had been in existence as a gold producer, and the very short time batteries had been at work there, the returns were altogether satisfactory, especially during the last 8 months; showing, as they did, an output of nearly £100,000 worth of gold. These two goldfields, although separate, having different wardens and distinct names, were identically the same district. The same auriferous country ran through both, and both were a continuation northward of the Coolgardie goldfields going from Menzies to Niagara, from Niagara to Lawlers, to Mount Samuel, and to Lake Way; in fact, all the way from Dundas in the south to Lake Way in the north, it was the same auriferous country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How far west was Lawlers from Leonora?

THE PREMIER: It was north-north-west or north-west. It was certainly a good deal from the westward of north.

A MEMBER: About north-north-west.

**THE PREMIER:** About north-north-west 90 miles from Mount Leonora to Lawlers; so that it was all one auriferous belt of country, and country that had been developed under great difficulties, being so distant from railway communication. It was not long since railway communication had been given to Mount Magnet and to Menzies, so that hon. members could realise at once the difficulties in the face of which the developments in that part of the country had proceeded; and, seeing that those two districts had, during this year, exported £160,000 worth of gold, it showed that there was something being done there, and that there was good hope for the future. He would have liked these observations to be made by some member who knew more of the district than he, for, strange to say, since that district had become gold-producing, he had not visited it. He had travelled through the country in 1869, but had no opportunity of seeing it since. He hoped, however, as soon as he could find time, to take occasion to visit those districts and see the developments which were taking place. The Leonora and Mount Margaret district, together with Lawlers and Mount Samuel, were among the most promising of the outlying goldfields of this colony. He would go further, and say to the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) and the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), that whatever might be the result of their endeavours to prevent the survey of this railway, only a short time would elapse before we would see both those hon. members voting, not only for the survey, but for the construction of the railway. It could not be kept back, unless we were ready to maintain that the gold in those districts was going to give out. We had seen enough already, with the limited means the inhabitants had at their disposal, of what those districts were capable of producing; and to say that the time was not near at hand when the railway would run to Mount Leonora and on to Lawlers, and he hoped to Mount Magnet too, thus completing the circle, was to say they had little faith in the development of that part of the country. It was only a question of a short time when that railway would have to be constructed, and he had no doubt whatever that the first

section that would be constructed would be a railway from Menzies to Leonora.

**MR. LEAKE:** It could not be done within three years, at any rate.

**THE PREMIER:** Why? He did not know why it should not.

**MR. LEAKE:** Because the Government had only got their loans authorized at two millions a year.

**THE PREMIER:** Another two millions could be got, if necessary; and he would perhaps have the felicity of seeing the hon. member introducing the measure for the construction of these lines.

**MR. LEAKE:** Let the Government get out of debt first.

**THE PREMIER:** The Niagara district, about 30 miles from Menzies, which could not be described as very successful yet, had suffered for want of capital and want of knowledge, being too far away.

**MR. GREGORY:** It was doing well now.

**THE PREMIER:** It was wonderful that any people with money were willing to go to such places as Niagara, Mount Leonora, Lawlers, and Mount Samuel. It spoke volumes for the energy and enterprise of our race that they were willing to invest capital in such places; and the best thing the House could do was for all hon. members to band themselves together to visit those places personally, and, when they came back, they would be in a better position to judge what was going on in this colony, and form a better opinion of the proposals they were now asked to support. But many hon. members would not go, and those who would not go, would not believe the assurances of those who had gone. He had brought forward this proposal for a survey in order to keep faith with the districts in question, and to encourage them and give confidence to those people who were trying to develop the outlying portions of our goldfields. The proposal was unquestionably in the interests of the gold-producers of this colony, and there was no constituency in the goldfields, certainly none on the eastern goldfields, to which the proposed railway would not be an advantage. It must be an advantage to all the Coolgardie goldfields to be connected with the auriferous country to the northward; and that being his belief, and being thoroughly determined to carry out this

railway as soon as possible, he was only doing his duty in asking members to agree to have a survey made. This was not done with a view of postponing the matter for an indefinite time. As members knew, he fully intended asking for a vote to carry out this work, being convinced that it would be to the advantage of the colony. If we carried out the survey, no great harm would result from a little delay, and when we met 12 months hence we would know what our position was. Some hon. members might think the position would not be as good as at present. We had listened to their croakings for many a long day, but had taken no notice of them; and we had raised this country from a place of insignificance to one of importance, not through the croaking of members, but with an absolute indifference to such opinion, and a thorough confidence in the future prosperity of the colony. He hoped the amendment would be negatived, and the item be passed.

MR. EWING: The great trouble that had arisen in connection with the Greenhills railway was due to the fact that before an estimate was submitted to this House, there was no proper survey, and members had not the information at hand to enable them to say whether the amount of money should be spent or not. It was always desirable, before a railway was constructed, that money should be spent in the proper investigation of the country, so that members of the Legislature might be able to see when a proposition was before them whether money required to carry out the project should be spent or not. He did not mean to say for one moment that he was binding himself to both those railways when they came before us; but members ought to have the best information possible, so as to be enabled to give an intelligent vote on the question; otherwise railways might be erected at a cost which, if it had been known beforehand, would have prevented members from authorising their construction.

MR. MORAN: When these items were before the House in the Governor's Speech, he had said that if there was one railway on which he would not give a decided opinion, it was that from Merzies to Leonora. Events had led him to

believe that perhaps there were still greater reasons for having a survey made in conjunction with the survey for a fresh-water feeder for the railways, which he hoped the Government would carry out at the present time. It was not beyond the region of possibility that we might have to wait a considerable time for the completion of the Coolgardie water scheme; and if we could not get that scheme in a reasonable time, it would be necessary to extend a feeder into the fresh-water country. It was necessary that we should take every possible step to secure a good water supply, and we ought to place ourselves in a position to secure it in the event of either failure or success of the Coolgardie water scheme. If we stretched out an arm into the fresh-water country, we should have two sources to depend on. If there was one railway we looked upon with doubt, it was the Murchison line, which was built to serve 5,000 people, and was the most costly line, in proportion to population, in this colony. We had extended the railway to the heart of the Murchison goldfields, where there were comparatively few people; and he had never seen a more ridiculous proposal than that which was made by a Murchison member to spend £1,000,000 for continuing that railway through a wilderness to a little goldfield still further away. The building of 70 miles of railway, so far as Leonora was concerned, was a different thing, with a prospect of getting a full supply of fresh water and opening up a goldfield around which there were possibly eight or nine others.

At 6.30 p.m. the CHAIRMAN left the chair.

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

MR. GREGORY: The motion to strike out this item was to be regretted, particularly because it came from a goldfields member. But the House would be able to judge as to the object with which it was moved, and he felt sure the result would be that the motion would be rejected and the item passed. Only some eight or nine months ago the mover of this motion (Mr. Vosper) was

desirous that a railway should be constructed in his electorate to Bulong; but no argument which could be produced in favour of that line would weigh against the arguments which were in favour of the line to Mount Leonora. The discussion in regard to the Greenhills railway had been opportune, in showing that it was unwise to sanction the construction of a line upon an incomplete estimate such as was evidently made in that case; and that the proper course should be to have a survey and a complete estimate as to the cost of a line, before its construction should be authorised. The cost of the proposed survey to Mount Leonora, £4,000, was not a large item, and if it did no other good it would at least enable a complete inquiry and report to be made as to the sources of a fresh-water supply in the Leonora district for railway purposes; and if that district, as he believed, would yield such a fresh-water supply as would greatly relieve the present cost of carrying water over the railways through dry country, the survey would be beneficial and of great service in that way. The distance from Menzies to Mount Leonora was only 70 miles, and it would go through auriferous country the whole length. There was a large auriferous belt at Niagara, and a railway would tap all the mines to the eastward in that direction; going further north it would tap Tamna, Mount Malcolm, and several other mining districts. Best of all was the Leonora district, and to the north of that, some 22 miles distant, were a number of good mines, the Diorite King and others, all in process of development. The Premier had shown, by statistics given this evening, that the district through which this survey would go was advancing with giant strides: for the gold return of the Leonora district in the last month was 4,800 ounces, and during the last eight months £97,000 worth of gold was got from the Mount Malcolm district in the Mount Margaret goldfield. The yield had been progressing so rapidly that, while in the five months previously the yield was only £32,000 worth, yet in last month the yield of Leonora district alone was 4,800 ounces. At Niagara, where there was no battery 12 months ago, there was now 250 heads of stamps:

also 20 head at Tampa; and at Mount Malcolm machinery was in process of erection. At Leonora several mines were turning out gold in large quantities, and there was no doubt that was going to be a great goldfield, with permanent reefs, and that goldfield would be heard of when most of the other fields were matters of history. He believed that was going to be an immense gold-producing district. One great question which should impress members was the existence of a plentiful supply of fresh water on those northern goldfields: and the great expense to which the Railway Department had been put in carrying water would be relieved by this supply to the northward being made available for the railway. Knowing something of that district, he felt confident a good supply would be obtained there; and he hoped this item would be passed by the Committee.

MR. VOSPER: In submitting the motion to strike out this item, his intention was to open the subject for a thorough discussion: but he was sorry to see that the mere fact of his having dared to propose a motion which embodied his opinions had subjected him to a flow of insult from a quarter whence it should be least expected. It had been stated that, in connection with his private business, and while editing a newspaper on the goldfields, the effect had been to pollute the atmosphere of those goldfields. He desired to say that to make such a remark in this House or out of it was to be guilty of a wanton, foul, deliberate, and untruthful insult. The words were not only insulting, but were absolutely and utterly false.

THE PREMIER: Absolutely true.

MR. VOSPER: Absolutely false; and the only excuse was that the right hon. gentleman had simply confounded a daily newspaper which he had edited on the goldfields, with a weekly newspaper edited by a man in the same town.

THE PREMIER said he meant the *Coolgardie Miner*.

MR. VOSPER: Then he must give that statement an absolute denial. The whole file of the *Coolgardie Miner* was still in the Colonial Secretary's office, and let the right hon. gentleman show a single paragraph which could be called indecent or

foul, or which could pollute the atmosphere of any district. One would think, in listening to the Premier, that he (Mr. Vosper) had been guilty of publishing an obscene newspaper; and the right hon. gentleman, well knowing that his utterances would be telegraphed all over the country, did not hesitate to inflict an injury upon him in his private capacity. He had had some evidence before of the right hon. gentleman's personal animosity towards himself; but he would tell the Premier that he was degrading the tone of debate, dishonouring his high position, lowering himself in the eyes of the country, and behaving in a manner totally inconsistent with the dignity of the high office he held. For the right hon. gentleman to come into this House and set an example of insult and contumely towards other members was one of the worst things that a man could possibly be guilty of. It would be a crime in a private member, and it was one of the most abominable offences the Premier could possibly commit. He (Mr. Vosper) had never indulged in acrimonious discussion. Hon. members might search the pages of *Hansard* for anything he had said in the nature of personalities.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did it every Saturday, instead.

MR. VOSPER: Certainly he had indulged in invective, in satire, in allusions that were perhaps not of the most pleasant character; but he had not indulged in personalities. Of all persons in this House, he had least deserved this treatment at the hands of the Premier, which was the more abominable because it was utterly unprovoked. He protested against it, not only on behalf of himself as having been so unjustly traduced and insulted by a man who ought to know better, but also on behalf of the House, because he contended that the remarks made were degrading to every person in it. Coming to the question itself, the proposed expenditure was a waste of money; and the only argument of any value in favour of that expenditure was that because the Greenhills line was constructed without survey, it had cost the country more than it otherwise would have done. There was something in an argument of that kind; but he submitted that the deferring of this survey

could not possibly compare with a survey that had never been made. We were face to face with the important fact that the colony was admitted to be short of money. This line was not an immediate necessity; and, even if it were, it could not now be constructed. It might be postponed till 12 months or two years hence; yet here we had £9,000 set down for this and another survey, which expenditure would be absolutely unproductive and useless for some time. The money could be put to a more useful purpose. Of course his motives had been challenged in the gentlemanly manner which was gradually pervading debate, and of which the Premier himself set such a noble and splendid example. But if he (Mr. Vosper) were to be guided by his own personal interests, he would vote for the construction of this line. He had his own reasons for urging it on, having personal interests in the district.

MR. GREGORY: That showed the hon. member believed in the district.

MR. VOSPER: Certainly it did. He had more faith in it than perhaps the hon. member; but what he had not faith in was the elasticity of the country's revenue and the stable position of the finances; and to squander money in putting a row of pegs through a desert at the present time would be wanton extravagance, and a wasteful expenditure of public money. He was sorry to have occupied the attention of the Committee with the protest he made in his opening remarks; but could only say that he was not the kind of man to suffer insult in silence, and that no man had yet insulted him with impunity. In making these remarks, he had not been governed by any personal feeling except an honest indignation; and his sole desire was to see that the affairs of this House were conducted in a more dignified manner than they had been hitherto.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When passing through the second-reading debate on the question, he had intimated what would be his course of action in reference to these two votes for railway surveys. His reasons then were the same as now, that he thought it wrong for this Parliament to create hopes and expectations which there were no reasonable prospects of fulfilling.



**THE PREMIER:** Why?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** If this Parliament were going to deal justly with its financial position and sets its house in order, as it ought to do, we could not undertake any further expenditure on railways, or anything of that kind, for several years to come. The one cause which had brought the country to its present condition was the policy the Government had advanced on all occasions, that a certain work was necessary and that the work would pay. He maintained that there was one work necessary at present and that it would pay. The necessary work was to erect a complete set of mining, quartz, or gold-saving apparatus and a thousand head of stampers at the Collie River, somewhere close to water or coal, and to connect all the mines with the existing railway system, and to have the very best appliances of the kind at that place. That scheme was necessary and would pay. But was that a reason why he should advocate that such a scheme could be carried out at the present time? The country had been too much worked on the principle that a certain thing was necessary and that it would pay. To answer that question satisfactorily would require one hundred millions of money. Further, we had gone as far in the borrowing market as it was wise to go, until sure that our population was going to be larger than at present. Victoria, in the first three years of its existence as a gold-producing country, exported forty million pounds worth of gold. This colony had exported eight millions, or one-fifth of that sum. Victoria at that time had a population of 220,000 people, and its national debt was £808,000, or less than a million of money. The national debt of Western Australia exceeded ten millions now, and there were authorisations which would bring it close to twelve millions of money, due by a population of 171,000 people.

**THE PREMIER:** It did not exceed ten millions.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The statement he had made was correct; but say eight millions or six.

**THE PREMIER:** Why not say one million less, rather than one million more?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Because he believed the amount he had given was correct.

**THE PREMIER:** Accuracy was what he wanted.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The Premier was a little unfair. For though he (the Premier) was constantly handling these figures, it was exceedingly difficult for hon. members to get the exact figures, and therefore he (Mr. Illingworth) was in the habit of speaking of them in round numbers.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member always exaggerated.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Take the national debt at nine millions—in this he was accurate, if the figures given in the published books were correct—the present debt of this colony, now raised, was £59 per head of its population; and when the authorisations were complete—

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member was including the million just borrowed.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** When the authorisations were complete, it would be close on £70 per head. But taking it at £65, it must be admitted that we had reached the margin line in borrowing which we should not pass, however important the work, and however certain we were that it would pay. The colony had been taught most important lessons on the London market, and it would be foolhardy to despise those lessons, and practically commit ourselves to a large expenditure upon these two railways. The Premier had revealed the fact that it was the intention of the Government to build these railways at the earliest possible moment, and had argued that therefore his action in asking for the surveys at the present time was justifiable. He (Mr. Illingworth) objected to the expenditure on surveys, because he did not believe there was any reasonable prospect of being able to construct the lines. He objected because the surveys would build up the hope of a railway, which there was no prospect of fulfilling for years to come. It had been suggested by the Premier that no wise set of people would go so many miles out of their way, if they could get to a railway at a nearer point; but the distance from Geraldton to Lawlers was 336 miles, and the distance from Fremantle to Lawlers was 636 miles.

**THE PREMIER:** It was over 400 miles.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Say 436 miles—that was a sufficient margin. What was involved, as far as Lawlers was concerned, was the carrying of the goods 200 miles further round, and compelling the people to buy at Fremantle in preference to Geraldton. The Premier had argued that the building of this railway in this particular way would lead to the people getting the use of a railway at the nearest point. It was doubtless true that if people could get to a railway within 70 miles, they would not go 200 miles to a railway in a different direction; but there was no necessity whatever to build a railway over those 70 miles to take the trade away. There was no necessity to build a railway of 70 miles to take the trade that way, when there were good reasons for building it in another direction. He had refused to support the proposal for a railway from Mount Magnet to Lawlers—he did not want it then, and did not want it now, because we were not in a position to build it. He told the Premier so just before the last election.

**THE PREMIER:** It was not in the electorate of the member for Central Murchison, and the hon. member did not lose any votes then.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The proposal met with his opposition, anyhow.

**MR. MORAN:** Supposing we had money, would the member for Central Murchison oppose it?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The people were told by him the reason he objected to the railway from Mount Magnet to Lawlers was that he understood there was a blank country between the two places, and that it was no good to ask the Government to build a railway through absolutely barren land. To-day we had the East Magnet and Black Range, and had reason to believe gold ran through the whole district. Still, he was not pleading for a railway from Lawlers to Mount Magnet; and if the Government were to alter the wording and propose such a railway, he would not vote for it, because we were not in a position to build it, however wise and necessary it might be under other circumstances. He was not considering his constituents, and did not care whether they or any other constituency returned him, for he had no ambition to be in this House.

**MR. GEORGE:** The member for Central Murchison was all right.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Whisky was against him, and he did not know that he was all right. From Geraldton to Mount Leonora the distance was 461 miles, but *via* Fremantle it was 541. Why not take the traffic from Geraldton to Leonora, if it was only a question of distance?

**THE PREMIER:** All the people were the other way.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The only reason that could be urged for making this railway at the present was that there was water at the other end which would help the general railway system of the goldfields; but that had not been proved, there being no evidence before us of that kind. The Nannine railway was one which had been authorised, and why was not the work carried out? It was simply because we had not the money to do it. It was not sufficient to say that a railway was necessary and that it would pay. He did not know whether the proposed railway would pay, but he did know something about the financial condition of the country, and we would not be warranted in further expenditure at the present time. If there was no reasonable prospect of building that line—and he submitted there was none—consider the injury and ruin that would be done to the districts concerned by holding out an expectation that it would be built!

**A MEMBER:** When the money was available, it would be spent on the object contemplated.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** There was no reasonable prospect of building this railway in the near future. If it was a question of dealing with the eastern goldfields, the route proposed was not necessarily the best, though he would not argue that question, because if we could find water there might be reason why we should go 200 miles out of the way; but if we did carry out the plan suggested, we would inevitably have to build a railway from Lawlers to Mount Magnet to connect this system.

**THE PREMIER:** Railways must be taken where the people were on the goldfields. There were no people between Lawlers and Mount Magnet.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** There were some, and there would be more if railway

accommodation were afforded. He hoped the Committee would strike out the two amounts for surveys; and if the Government wanted to do a really genuine thing for the benefit of the country, they could appropriate the sums to public batteries.

Mr. RASON: To draw comparisons between one goldfield district and another was the last course which should be pursued by a goldfields member; but he might be allowed to say, without disparaging any other district, that the Murchison at all events turned out per head of men employed an amount of gold second only to Kaigoorlie. He represented an immense district. People at Lawlers and other places wished to be connected with a railway at the earliest possible moment, and he saw no reason why he should sacrifice their chance of getting a line at the earliest possible moment. If we were to wait for the building of a railway from Mount Magnet to Lawlers we should, he thought, looking at the present circumstances of the colony, have to wait a very long time; but there did seem a reasonable prospect of a railway being built soon from Menzies to Mount Leonora, and subsequently being extended to Lawlers, and he trusted afterwards to Mount Magnet; therefore he would support the item.

Mr. KINGSMILL: The North Coolgardie goldfield was going to be one of the most prominent in Western Australia, and he believed that it richly deserved a railway; but he knew that, unfortunately, at the present time it could not get one. If the Premier had stated he would be able to see his way to give that field a railway next year, he would have supported the item; but he did not think the right hon. gentleman could give that assurance. The railway could not be obtained for three years, and why should we spend £4,000 on a survey when it might advantageously be spent in other directions? The district he represented had had two surveys, if not three, in the course of four years, and unfortunately surveys were all they had; but the people lived in hope. He did not wish to raise any question about the advisability of the route from Menzies to Leonora, for that route appeared to him to be most reasonable, and according to his personal experience it would traverse a region

of gold-bearing country thickly dotted with gold-mining centres, there being one every six or ten miles. But he was afraid the financial straits of the colony precluded the possibility of a railway for two or three years. It had been argued that a survey might be the means of ascertaining the truth or otherwise of the existence of fresh water supplies upon the route: but that investigation could be carried on as a corollary of the works performed by officers of the Water Supply Department as part of their ordinary work, and without extra expense. The Premier had said this survey would be a guarantee to the district that the Government would act in good faith towards it. Judging from the experience the people of Western Australia had of the right hon. gentleman, he did not think that, after the Premier had passed his word to undertake a work when sufficient funds were available, any constituency would exact such a guarantee from him; and, that being so, a survey was not required as a guarantee.

Mr. MORGANS: It was a matter for regret that the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) had brought forward this amendment. Members were straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel; for the items already passed included £40,000 for the erection of public batteries, £18,000 for the eastern goldfields, whatever that might be, and £15,000 for the Murchison and Peak Hill goldfields; also £5,000 for the Pilbarra goldfield, and £7,000 for other goldfields, including boring for coal and so on. Here was a question of a railway survey, the amount involved being £4,000; yet some members objected to this small expenditure for ascertaining the most desirable route for a line to certainly one of the best goldfields in the colony. It was said this railway was not going to be built at once; but his opinion was that it ought to be built at once, and that the Government should make an effort, even now, to do it. The Premier's figures as to the output of gold in this district had shown that the total for last year was considerable, and that it was calculated the total for this year would be 150,000 ounces. His own opinion was that this estimate would be greatly exceeded. The objection to this survey made by the mover (Mr. Vosper) re-

minded him that, when it was proposed to construct a railway from Kalgoorlie to Kanowna, in that member's electorate, and even when that line was commenced, the output of gold in Kanowna did not amount to one-third of the output of the Mount Margaret goldfield. That goldfield, including Leonora, was the most important goldfield in the colony next to Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie; and within five years from the present time the output would be three or four times greater than at present. There were mines in that district which would bear favourable comparison with the very best mines in Kalgoorlie to-day. The Sons of Gwalia, the West Australian Mount Morgan, and other good mines in the locality were on a dividend-paying basis, and that district was going to be one of the most important gold-producing centres in the colony. Notwithstanding the financial position of the colony, which was in no way dangerous or unsatisfactory, and having in view the importance of this goldfield, and not only the possibility, but the absolute certainty of finding fresh water there available for railway purposes, was there any sound reason for opposing the expenditure of £4,000 on a survey for this railway? The survey must be made, because the railway had to be constructed before long; and whatever opposition might be brought to bear in this House against this railway proposal, the importance of that goldfield would shortly demand the construction of the railway, and as the survey was a necessary preliminary to the construction, it ought to be undertaken. He looked for strong support in favour of this survey from Fremantle and coastal members generally, having regard to the large extent of works which had been proposed and sanctioned for coastal districts; and, if the whole question was to be one of economising in expenditure, then it would be necessary, while striking out this item, to strike out other items of expenditure for works in coastal districts; but, on the contrary, these reductions were not necessary, and this important survey should be made. As to trade going by way of Mount Magnet, he was looking forward confidently to the time when a railway would be constructed for connecting all these goldfields, so that one might get

into a railway carriage at Perth, be conveyed through the eastern goldfields, and return to the coast by way of Mount Magnet and Geraldton.

MR. MITCHELL: Start the work at both ends.

MR. MORGANS: If that could be done he would be glad. Geraldton had a right to a share in the goldfields trade; but, while it was a right policy to open up these great goldfields by means of a railway, all the work could not be done at once. As to the objection made by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), he must say the hon. member opposed everything. He did not remember hearing the hon. member support any single matter proposed in this House.

MR. GEORGE: He supported temperance.

MR. MORGANS had not heard him support even that, though he might have done so. The hon. member's flowing eloquence was always heard in opposition to what was proposed. Railways in all parts of the world, when proposed by Governments, were opposed in the first instance. The great scheme for connecting British Columbia and Canada by a railway from Vancouver was opposed on both sides in Parliament during many years; and the late Sir John MacDonald fought for that scheme against tremendous opposition, and eventually carried it; and although it was said that railway would ruin the country, the effect of making it had been to bring the greatest amount of prosperity to British Columbia and to Canada.

MR. LEAKE: That was done by private enterprise.

MR. MORGANS: No. The Government guaranteed the money.

THE PREMIER: They also gave a subsidy of several millions.

MR. MORGANS: As to the example of Victoria, which the member for Central Murchison so often neld before the House for imitation—(MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; to be avoided)—that example, instead of being followed, was one to be avoided in railway policy as well as in some other things. It was a mistake to oppose this small outlay of £4,000 for making this survey of a railway, which must shortly be constructed to a goldfield which was now turning out at the rate of £250,000

worth of gold per annum. No railway had ever been surveyed in this colony with such good prospects as this one. As to the means of constructing it, if it could be shown that the Government could borrow money and invest it profitably in reproductive works within the colony, that operation was justifiable. The banks did the same thing. The return of the working of the railways in this colony last year showed a profit of 9 per cent. on the capital invested; and surely, if the Government could borrow at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and invest the money to earn 9 per cent., that was a profitable transaction! To talk about the public debt per head of population did not apply to young countries, for the question with them was whether the Government could borrow money and invest it profitably; and, if the Government could invest it profitably, as in this case, and did not do it, they were failing in their duty.

MR. WILSON: The policy advocated by the member who had just spoken was one which had brought many a private concern to ruin, for he had said that if the Government could borrow money with prospects of making a profit, they should go on borrowing because they could profitably employ the money.

MR. MORGANS: That was not what he had said.

MR. WILSON: That was what it amounted to; and he (Mr. Wilson) considered it a most dangerous policy, for it was the policy which the Forrest Ministry had adopted in the past; and he was afraid they intended to continue it in the future until they came to a stop. He hoped hon. members would set their faces against expending money on a survey for railways which they did not intend to carry out. The survey of a railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora and the survey of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman should not be sanctioned by the Committee, because the colony was not in a position to undertake the construction of these lines. He agreed that they would have ultimately to be constructed, but the Premier had himself said that he abandoned these railways for this year.

THE PREMIER: No. Postponed them.

MR. WILSON: Then where was the sense of spending money on surveys for these railways, when they could not be

constructed? We did not want to know what these lines would cost, because we were not in a position to construct them. It was admitted on all sides that the colony would not be in a position in the near future to carry out these works, and therefore we were not justified in spending money on surveys. The survey of a railway to Marradong (Williams district) had been commenced, but there was not the slightest chance of that railway being carried out for the next three years.

MR. GEORGE: Then out would go the Government.

MR. WILSON: The Government were by that survey misleading the British investors—the people whose confidence we wanted to gain, so that they might invest money in this colony, and help in its development. We were misleading them by these surveys, and were acting wrongly in so doing.

MR. GEORGE: It was the official report that misled the investing public, in that case.

MR. WILSON: Once it had been decided to commence these railways, it would be easy to have the surveys made, and it would not take two years to make a survey of 70 miles through easy country, but could be done within six months. Some of the arguments of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) were forcible enough; but in comparing the construction of harbour works at Fremantle and Bunbury with the proposed surveys of these railways, the hon. member got completely out of his depth.

MR. MORGANS: No; we could go without the harbour works also, if necessity compelled retrenchment.

MR. WILSON: The cases were not parallel in any respect. The harbour works at Fremantle and Bunbury were partially constructed—almost nine-tenths constructed, and no hon. member would advocate leaving these works incomplete. Had the proposed line from Menzies to Mount Leonora been constructed up to the 60-mile peg, hardly anyone would have advocated the suspension of the work at this stage, but would have supported a proposal to spend the small balance required to build the railway, so that the country might get the benefit of its working. That was the position of the harbour works. But the Premier admitted

that these two railways could not be commenced; therefore why spend £9,000 on surveys? At the end of the financial year the Forrest Ministry would be some hundreds of thousands of pounds to the bad.

MR. MORGANS: Knock off £100,000 from the Fremantle harbour works.

MR. WILSON: That was a national work—a work which would serve the whole of the country.

MR. MORGANS: So was this railway.

MR. WILSON: The railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora could not be called a national work to the same extent as the harbour works, which were to serve the whole colony, and which were almost complete. He might be permitted to refer to the strong remarks made by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) during this discussion. He (Mr. Wilson) was not in the House when the Premier indulged in the language attributed to him by the hon. member, and which was not denied. Having listened to the hon. member with very great regret, he felt exceedingly sorry the hon. member had been called upon to make such a defence as that which he evidently found necessary. The House should endeavor to carry on its debates so as to uphold its own dignity. Every hon. member must feel depressed at hearing such language used by the Premier.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member has just stated that he had not heard it.

MR. WILSON: But the Premier did not deny having used it. The charge was fully proved, because the right hon. gentleman did not deny it. In fact, the Premier emphasised it by repeating it.

MR. GEORGE: Some hon. member would have to compile a vocabulary which it would be possible for everyone to use, without getting out of order or offending the susceptibilities of other members. He had listened with regret to both the attack and defence, and it was a great pity that the Premier had attacked the hon. member so strongly. The item in the schedule for a survey should be passed; for he had been over the ground, and the proposed railway would serve a district which would be as big a gold-mining area as Kalgoorlie. It supported the class of people who were mostly working their own claims, and

sticking to them. Moreover, this railway could be constructed at very small expense, if the Commissioner of Railways would see that it was not overloaded with ornate structures, in the shape of cottages with 16 in. stone walls, and goods-sheds two or three hundred feet long, where fifty feet would be sufficient. The Minister should curb the extravagance of his officers, and make them understand that people only wanted their goods carried, and fair protection from the weather. This Menzies-Leonora railway would have to be constructed, if only to get water from Niagara for the engines, because there was practically no water between Kalgoorlie and Menzies fit to use in a locomotive. The contractors had to condense nearly all the water they used on their own engines; and surely the department would not carry water from Northam through Kalgoorlie to Menzies for a similar purpose. If this railway were not built, a pipe line would have to be constructed to bring water down, or the cost of running engines on that line would be astounding.

MR. MITCHELL: Wait till the Coolgardie water scheme was finished.

MR. GEORGE: Life was too short to wait for that. The saving to be effected by procuring water at Niagara would be almost sufficient in itself to cover the cost of the railway, which would serve a district daily increasing in importance, and which bid fair to realise the most sanguine hopes of its well-wishers.

MR. OLDHAM: This question did not entail a belief in the country. Hon. members who were opposed to particular items had as thorough a belief in the future of the colony as could be entertained by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), who had accused the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) of opposing everything brought forward in the House. It was noticeable also that the member for Coolgardie never did anything but support propositions brought forward by other members. This was doubtless exceedingly good policy; but it was simply a "goldfields grab" policy. The hon. member had accused his opponents of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel; but ever since the Forrest Ministry had been in office, the House had been swallowing camels; and in the in-

terests of the hon. member's (Mr. Morgan's) constituency, in the face of a deficit, in the face of a Financial Statement wherein the Premier practically admitted that next year we would be in a similar, if not in a worse, position than at present, the Committee were asked to consent to the survey of two railways which there was not the slightest possibility of carrying out. This was the latest "camel" we were called upon to swallow. If there was the slightest prospect of being able to construct these railways within a reasonable time, he would support the surveys; but was there any prospect?

MR. A. FORREST: Yes.

MR. OLDHAM: As the sixth Minister said so, that was presumably the dictum of the Government. But from his (Mr. Oldham's) point of view, the finances of the country required extreme caution.

MR. GREGORY: Would we not be better able to judge next year, if the survey were made this year?

MR. OLDHAM: Did the hon. member mean to say that it would take the surveyors twelve months to cover 70 miles of railway?

MR. GREGORY: No; but if the survey were made, the report would be before the House.

MR. OLDHAM: Perhaps, after all, the survey was necessary, in view of the fact that the water-supply survey party had got about 25 miles along the line of route; and if the Government commenced to lay their pipes about 18 months hence, it was quite certain that the construction would overtake the survey before it reached Coolgardie. At that rate, if this railway were to be built, the survey should certainly be commenced immediately.

MR. GREGORY: The object was to have a report next session.

MR. OLDHAM: Before any survey was undertaken, the Committee should see whether the Government were prepared to build the railway. Once Parliament was committed to its construction, then would be the time to make the survey, and not before. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), notwithstanding the financial position of the country, appealed to the coastal members, including those from Fremantle, to support this line. All the coastal members knew the

great desire of that hon. member to advance the interests of Fremantle. The hon. member's desire was first of all to construct the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, and then from Norseman to Esperance.

MR. VOSPER: Such was his (Mr. Vosper's) desire also.

MR. OLDHAM: And it was doubtless the desire of all the goldfields members. But why then should they appeal to members for the Perth and Fremantle constituencies, seeing their intention was at the earliest possible moment to destroy the port of Fremantle, to do away with the trade of Perth, and give it to South Australia through the port of Esperance?

MR. CONOLLY: No, no.

MR. OLDHAM said he would oppose the item.

MR. LEAKE: This item appeared to be a miserable attempt to redeem a shattered promise made on behalf of the Premier not long ago. In the Governor's Speech a great parade was made of what the Government were going to do in regard to railways to Mount Leonora and to Norseman. Subsequently, circumstances prevented the Government from placing these proposals before the House and, indeed, only a few days ago the Premier found himself in the humiliating position of being obliged to abandon his railway policy. It was a miserable attempt now to redeem this shattered promise by bringing in so small an item as the survey of a railway from Menzies to Mount Leonora, followed by a similar vote for a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman; and if the first vote were carried it must be followed by the second, therefore the same set of arguments applicable to both items. Seeing that the Government had been compelled to abandon their railway policy as announced in the Speech, how could they have the effrontery to ask the Committee to vote £9,000 for the survey of the very railways they had been obliged to abandon? But the Government would dare almost anything in this Legislature, and perhaps too much surprise ought not to be expressed at finding the Government in a position of such abject humiliation. If survey was made at all, it should only be, as the Premier had said, after a decision to construct the railway. There had

been no determination to construct the railway, and even the proposal had been abandoned. Unless this railway were within measurable distance, the survey would not be justified in the slightest degree. The Government acknowledged that their ability to borrow was limited at the outside to £2,000,000 per annum. We had about £2,000,000 to borrow on the Coolgardie water scheme, and no doubt we were nearly £2,000,000 in debt. To say we should make a survey of a short line like this, 70 miles in length, over easy country, two or three years before there was a prospect of a railway being constructed, seemed utterly absurd, and the proposition was a monstrous one to put before the House. If there was a pressing necessity for a survey, it might well be met out of revenue. This was merely an attempt to redeem a shattered promise. The policy of the Government at the present day was one of broken promises, and he was not astonished that now and again the Premier and his colleagues attempted to patch up those little promises they had failed to keep. Surely the survey would not take more than a few weeks.

THE PREMIER: Oh!

MR. LEAKE: How long?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: It would take 12 months to complete the plans.

MR. LEAKE: If the estimate were to be judged by those of the past, we might take it for granted that the sum of £9,000 would not anything like cover the amount necessary for these surveys.

THE CHAIRMAN: The sum before the Committee was £4,000.

MR. LEAKE: That was true, but it was so difficult to separate the arguments which seemed to him to apply to both this item and the following one.

THE PREMIER: The member for Albany would have an opportunity of speaking on the following item.

MR. LEAKE said he did not want to speak twice.

THE PREMIER: That was very satisfactory.

MR. LEAKE: No doubt the right hon. gentleman did not care to listen to him.

THE PREMIER: Not much.

MR. LEAKE: In the observations he desired to make, he never tried to please

the right hon. gentleman. Two or three years ago we had surveys for railways to Marradong (Williams) and Goomalling (Northan), which it was proposed to construct, but they had not been built. Moreover, they had not even been commenced, but had practically been abandoned.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Postponed.

MR. LEAKE: Yet we were asked to waste £4,000 on the survey of this line. Again he would remind members that what was proposed was reappropriation of loan money, and there was no necessity to put this in the Loan Bill. One argument urged by members of the Government and Government supporters was that each item should be supported by every member who got a little sop.

THE PREMIER: Who advocated that?

MR. LEAKE: The Premier himself advocated it. The right hon. gentleman had told the member for North-East Coolgardie that he was astonished the hon. member should move in the direction he did, because what was proposed meant an expenditure in his district. The policy the Government went on was, he supposed, that if a little temporary assistance was given to a member's constituency, that representative must abandon every other political thought, and vote for the Government.

MR. A. FORREST: If it were something proposed for Albany, the member for Albany would vote for it.

MR. LEAKE: Nothing of the kind. He should place the interests of the country first, and those of Albany second. The member for West Kimberley placed his personal interests before everything.

MR. A. FORREST: That was the opinion of the member for Albany.

MR. LEAKE: What he said was founded on his knowledge of the hon. member. The Premier called members of the Opposition side of the House "croakers," and so forth; and he (Mr. Leake) was sorry the member for North-East Coolgardie was not in his place, because he was going to mildly reprove him for lightly taking to task the great statesman who led this country, who ruled not only the destinies of this House, but could take credit for everything that was good and forget all that was bad; a Premier who could drive his supporters with a



mailed fist and ride rough-shod over his colleagues; this being the same great statesman who, after eight years of unqualified prosperity, had been able to land this country in the difficulties in which we now found ourselves.

MR. MITCHELL: Without entering into the merits or demerits of this particular survey, the matter might well be delayed until the Government could say they had the money, or could name the time when the railways could be undertaken. Some two years ago, a railway survey was made from Cue to Nannine, and what was the result? Whenever it was decided to build that railway, it would be necessary to have another survey. He intended to vote for the amendment.

MR. A. FORREST: It was a matter for surprise that the member for the Murchison (Mr. Mitchell) was dictated to by a newspaper printed in Geraldton, which contained columns upon columns of abuse heaped on him. It might be thought that, after such abuse, the hon. member would come out in his proper colours, and say he intended to be independent, and vote which way he thought proper.

MR. GEORGE: The member for the Murchison was going to give them the other cheek.

MR. A. FORREST: The question of the survey for a railway between Menzies and Leonora was important, and would have a great effect upon the prosperity of this country, because if a survey was made and a plan laid before this House in the next session of Parliament, it would be no trouble to the Government, if they were in a position to do so, to bring in a Bill, and have tenders called forthwith. Not only was a railway required for the mines in that district, but it was an absolute necessity for increasing the water supply required for the railway service. The Government ought to have brought in a Bill to build a railway as far as Niagara, where they could have obtained an ample supply of water, which could be brought towards Kalgoorlie. Members on the Opposition side of the House were frightened of their lives because a little depression existed at the present time. They had been frightened, to his certain knowledge, for the last eight years, for they

had voted against every public work that was initiated; and they would continue to act in that way until they got off the Government benches, when they would make a different tune, and would have to advocate progress. What justification was there for saying that the colony was going back?

MR. LEAKE: The Government had ruined it.

MR. A. FORREST: Was not the position of every member in this House as good as it was eight years ago? It was ten times better.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; and the Government were ruining it.

MR. A. FORREST: The proper course to adopt was to build up the country, and not to pull it down. The member for Albany had said he represented the country first and his constituency afterwards. That member's first consideration was self, secondly his constituents, and thirdly the country. That opinion of the hon. member was based on many years' intimate knowledge. He was sorry to see members—especially his fellow councillor, the member for North Perth, because that member had good ideas if he would bring them into force—joining in this croaking business.

MR. GEORGE: What about the members for the Canning? Had not he good ideas?

MR. A. FORREST: Yes; but he was led by the member for Albany. The question of survey of these railways was important because we were getting a tremendous lack of information. We should have knowledge of the mines we were working, and of the supply of water, and we should know whether it would be necessary to deviate the railway afterwards. All the information would be forthcoming, and members would not be asked to authorise the building of the railway without knowing where it was going to. The survey would be worth the £4,000, even if the railway was never built. The time would come when the goldfields would be a new work of railways, and the sooner the better.

MR. MITCHELL: It was a matter for regret that the member for West Kin

berley had taken him to task for the few words he had spoken. He would not be dictated to by him, nor by the *Victorian Express*. He voted independently, and if he thought it right to vote on the Government side of the House he would do so, and if, on the other hand, he considered he ought to support the Opposition on any question, he would adopt that course. It was well known he was not in favour of these railways; and if not in favour of them, how could he be in favour of the surveys? It would be well to let the question stand over for a time; and, as he had said, when the Government could say they had the money and could commence the work, and complete the railway within a certain time, that would be soon enough to go on with the survey.

MR. SOLOMON: A great principle was involved in the passing of this item for survey, because to pass the item practically affirmed the intention of this Assembly to build the particular railway. The Government ought to wait until they were financially in a position to undertake the construction, before asking that the survey should be sanctioned. That, at least, was the course which a prudent business man would take in his own affairs. As to the amount of public expenditure on harbour works at Fremantle, the total amount which had been taken from those works by reappropriation during this and the last sessions was £130,000.

THE PREMIER: They had got it all back by being revoted for those works.

MR. SOLOMON: The works were of a national character, and if they were stopped, not only would Fremantle suffer, but every district in the colony would suffer. The construction of the harbour at Fremantle had done harm in some ways, while doing good in others, for it had interfered with some kinds of labour.

THE PREMIER: A few men engaged in the lightering trade affected, perhaps.

MR. SOLOMON: Yes. Men who had formerly plenty of work were now waiting about, and could not get work. He must vote against the item for this survey, because it would pledge the House to the making of the railway; and the colony was not in a position to undertake it.

MR. LOCKE: It was to be hoped the member who moved the striking out of this item would consent to withdraw the motion, after what had been said. This railway would have to be built, and the sooner the survey was made the better. Whether the line should start from Mount Magnet or Menzies was a question for the future; but by getting a survey, so much definite information would be obtained to assist members in coming to a conclusion.

MR. HOLMES: When speaking on the Reappropriation Bill, he had intimated that he would oppose the construction of these railways; and it was now his intention to vote against the item for surveys, because he had heard nothing in the meantime to alter his opinion. All were agreed that the two railways in the schedule should be constructed when money was available; but as that could not be done at present, the surveys ought not to be undertaken. If it could be shown, as the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) had said, that this line would tap country which would provide a good supply of fresh water for the railways, and so reduce the cost of working the railways, he would vote for it on that account alone; but this would be on the condition that the Coolgardie water supply scheme should be abandoned, because the colony was not at present able to carry it out. By taking that course, the financial position would be so improved that there would be means available for undertaking these railways. The item for this survey was small, but a number of small items totted up to a large total. As to cutting off money from the Fremantle harbour works, that could not be done, because those were national works which must go on. It was necessary to put the peg in somewhere, and he would vote for striking out this item.

Amendment for striking out the item put, and division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes ... .. 14

Noes ... .. 20

Majority against ... .. 6

*Ayes.*

Mr. Higham  
Mr. Holmes  
Mr. Hooley  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. Kenny  
Mr. Kingsmill  
Mr. Leake  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. Oldham  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Wallace  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Vosper

(Teller)

*Noes.*

Hon. S. Burt  
Mr. Conolly  
Mr. Connor  
Mr. Doherty  
Mr. Ewing  
Sir John Forrest  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Mr. George  
Mr. Gregory  
Mr. Hall  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Locke  
Mr. Moran  
Mr. Morgans  
Mr. Pennefather  
Mr. Piessie  
Mr. Rason  
Hon. H. W. Venn  
Mr. Wood  
Mr. Hubble

(Teller)

Amendment thus negatived, and the item passed.

Item, Railway Survey, Coolgardie to Norseman, £5,000:

MR. LEAKE (Albany) moved that the item be struck out. He said a number of members who were inclined to favour the Mount Leonora railway survey as a possible work would be altogether opposed to the Norseman line as an impossible work. The argument that would be made use of in two or three years' time would be that, when this question of a survey was before the Assembly, certain members voted for it in 1898, and thereby pledged themselves to the construction of the railway. That was only a Parliamentary trick, which perhaps some members opposite had not yet learned. This item was just the shred of a policy which involved the expenditure of something like £500,000 for railways, as set forth in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the session.

THE PREMIER: The only objection the hon. member had at the time was as to the starting point, which he had said should be from Esperance. The hon. member gave notice to move that the starting point should be from Norseman.

MR. LEAKE: Really, the interruptions of the right hon. gentleman were so irrelevant and so utterly useless that they almost annoyed one. The item of £5,000, together with the item of £4,000 which had just been passed, were all that remained of this tremendous policy involving the expenditure of £500,000:

and in the Governor's Speech of some 32 paragraphs, the one relating to these railways was practically the only one containing any policy, and it had now dwindled down to this item of £5,000.

THE PREMIER: Listening to the hon. member for Albany, if he had not known him, he would have been astonished at this amendment; but, knowing him, he was not astonished. Only a few weeks ago, when discussing the Address-in-Reply, the hon. member gave notice of a motion of censure on the Government for not proposing to construct the railway from Esperance instead of from Coolgardie. Then, a few days having elapsed, the hon. member abandoned his intended amendment, and substituted another. Whatever his opinion might be at the present time, it was clear at the time he spoke on the Address-in-Reply, the hon. member was in favour of a railway to connect Norseman and Esperance.

MR. LEAKE said he was in favour of that now. He was in favour of a survey from Esperance to Norseman.

THE PREMIER said he was glad to hear that admission, because the hon. member had also told the Committee that it was no use making surveys unless the Committee were prepared to carry out the works; so it followed that the hon. member was prepared to borrow money for building a railway from Esperance to Norseman. He was glad to hear it.

MR. LEAKE: The right hon. gentleman was very clever.

THE PREMIER: That, at any rate, showed the hon. member had not a very bad opinion of the financial position of the colony, seeing that he was willing to borrow a quarter of a million to build a railway from Esperance to Norseman. Whatever might be said of the present Government, they were not willing to do that at the present time—they were not quite so regardless of the country's interests as the hon. member would make out. Before proceeding further with the subject, he would like to refer to some observations made by members opposite in reference to some remarks which had fallen from him earlier in the evening. In saying that the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) had conducted a

newspaper which polluted the atmosphere of the goldfields, he never intended to insinuate that the hon. member issued an immoral sheet. What he intended to convey was that the newspaper at that time traduced the characters of honest men in this colony, and did its best to vilify everyone who was good in the colony; and that was what he believed now, and what he had always believed, and certainly would always adhere to. The hon. member was very thin-skinned, although he did not mind holding him (the Premier) up to ridicule and opprobrium week after week in his newspaper. He (the Premier) did not read that paper, and therefore could not speak from knowledge, but it was reported to him that the hon. member vilified, misrepresented, and traduced him in his journal; and yet, because he said a word or two in this House against the hon. member, he (Mr. Vosper) rose in honest indignation and took high moral ground. In reply, he would recommend the hon. member to practise what he preached. Let him try to treat honest men honestly and fairly, and then he would have no fault to find with anything he (the Premier) said in regard to him. That was all he had to say in reference to the hon. member.

MR. GEORGE: He had to sell his paper.

THE PREMIER: Yes; that was it—he had to sell his paper. Some newspapers lived by traducing and misrepresenting honest and decent people. He would now return to this important matter, the survey of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman; and we were certainly confronted with some opinions which were perplexing in the extreme. The leader of the Opposition asked the Committee to strike out the item, and at the same time said he was prepared to have a survey from Esperance to Norseman, and was in favour of a railway being constructed between those two places; so that, from the hon. member's point of view, it was not a question of the ability of the Government to construct the railway, so much as a question of the route the Government proposed that the line should take.

MR. LEAKE: Would the Premier allow him to add, "by private enterprise"? It would save such a lot of talk.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did not say that at the beginning of this debate, nor had he said so until now.

MR. LEAKE said he always advocated it.

THE PREMIER: Yes; no doubt. This Dundas goldfield, of which Norseman was the town, might be said to be a most promising one. It had not progressed very rapidly. It had many difficulties to encounter in regard to means of transit, and also to some extent on account of want of capital. It had not been an attractive place to the capitalist from England. It was isolated and out of the way; and therefore persons who came to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and even further north to the Murchison, had preferred settling at these places rather than go to Norseman. For that reason, the district had not been heard of so much; but the people of the district, from the very beginning, and before they turned out an ounce of gold, had always desired to have better communication with Esperance Bay. The people of Esperance Bay, too, from the first, and before an ounce of gold was extracted from the earth, were clamouring for a railway to Norseman. He would not go into the history of the matter, for it was well known. The people of Esperance, especially, had been petitioning the Government week after week and month after month; and at last they induced him to make a promise that he would visit the locality personally. He went there, and did his best to come to a conclusion. It was expected of him that he would make a promise to build a railway from Esperance Bay even before he had seen Norseman; at any rate, it was expected that he would promise to recommend to Parliament that the railway should be built: and because he did not feel justified in doing that, he incurred the displeasure of the people of Esperance Bay. He did not like to incur the displeasure of anyone, but when it came to the point, and he found he could not do a thing, and people tried to urge him to do it against his will, he could be even desperate, and could say "no," as well as anyone else. He certainly said now that he was not prepared to advocate, at the present time, the construction of a railway from Esperance Bay to Norseman, and he would give his reasons later on. The Norseman goldfield was worth looking

at. There were about 1,200 people there, and they had a very nice town. They were a good class of men, hard-working and respectable. They had a large quantity of machinery, and were turning out a fair amount of gold. It was in 1893 that the first gold was sent from Norseman—a very small quantity it was; but from that period to the end of August of the present year £162,978 worth of gold had been obtained and exported from Norseman. Better still, of that quantity £144,098 worth had been obtained and exported during the last 20 months; and, still better, during the first eight months of this year, up to the 31st August, gold to the value of £70,717 had been obtained, as against £73,381 for the whole of the year 1897, showing that the mines at Norseman were doing a good deal better this year than last. The year had four months more to run, and the output was almost equal—within £3,000—to the quantity obtained during the whole of last year. But the field suffered in many ways, as he had said. The means of communication with the nearest centres were by roads, and the roads were not very good there, especially that from Esperance. Thus the field was isolated from the rest of the colony; and, as he had said on several occasions, it might just as well be an island in the Indian Ocean, as far as this colony was concerned. In order to get to it, we had first to go to Albany by rail, then to take the steamer to Esperance, and go up a road 125 miles to Norseman; or, by the other route, we could go from here to Coolgardie, and go down the road 100 miles to Norseman. It suffered by reason of its isolation. But it was quite certain that before very long there would be a railway to Norseman. If the gold output continued, and he believed it would continue and increase, the railway would undoubtedly be constructed; and the conclusion he came to was that in the interests of this colony—and, after all, it was the colony we must consider, and not only the people of Norseman, but the people of the colony who were going to find the money to build that railway—in the interests of the people of the colony as well as those of Norseman, he considered we would do far better by extending a line from our railway system

at Coolgardie, a distance of 100 miles, rather than by building a railway from Esperance Bay to Norseman, which would leave us with 125 miles of isolated railway, having no connection with this part of the colony whatever, except by road, and where we would have to have independent workshops, independent rolling-stock, independent management, with the additional disadvantage that we would have to build wharves and jetties at considerable expense at Esperance. The Government would have to go to considerable expense, all of which would be saved by extending the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. And there was this other important consideration, that the country between Coolgardie and Norseman, a distance of 100 miles, was all auriferous. True, there were no rich mines there at the present time, but there were some on the way. The railway would pass the Londonderry; it would go, not far from Redhill; it would go through Widgemooltha, a place which, though now deserted, had supported 1,500 people a little while ago, and which, he believed, would revive again. And all the way from there to Norseman was gold-bearing country; and with means of transit, and of water supply on the road, the country would be thoroughly prospected, which it was very difficult to do now, owing to want of water. There were two immense tanks holding three million gallons of water, already erected, which would soon tell a tale by the aid which they would give to prospecting parties.

A MEMBER: Would they hold water?

THE PREMIER: They would not only hold water, but would be available for the railway when it came in that direction. It was necessary to look at the two claims—the railway from Esperance to Norseman, and that from Coolgardie to Norseman—from the point of view of the people of the colony, who had to find the money, and we should not give undue importance to the desires of the small number of people at Esperance Bay. There were not many, nor were there likely to be many.

MR. WILSON: The right hon. gentleman had driven them all away.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did not know as much about it as he. The fact was that the trade of the port was

not sufficient to support a large population. Looking at the matter from the standpoint of the people of the colony who had to find the money, we must come to the conclusion, unless unduly biassed, that to extend the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman was a far better plan than by building an isolated railway from Esperance to Norseman, which would be separated from the rest of the colony, and, in fact, be altogether independent of the colony—as he said, like an island in the ocean. Looking at it from the Norseman point of view, what advantage would such a railway be to the people of that town? Their freights might be slightly reduced, but not much, because the railway would not pay to start with, being isolated. Therefore, if it were to be made payable, freights must be very high, as everyone must recognise. Moreover, anyone in Norseman wishing to come to this part of the country would have to go 125 miles by rail to Esperance, would have to wait there till a ship came along to take him to King George's Sound; then he would have to take the train to Perth; and, if he wanted to go to Coolgardie, would have to make altogether a pilgrimage of about 1,000 miles; whereas, if the railway were from Norseman to Coolgardie, he could get from Norseman to Perth in a day, and could go to Menzies, or Kalgoorlie, or wherever his business called him. Capitalists visiting the eastern goldfields would go by train to Norseman. Men desiring employment would go backwards and forwards from Dundas in the south as far north as the railway would extend; and there would be railway communication between all the great centres of the goldfields. Surely, this was a great desideratum, rather than that we should spend money to build a railway from Esperance Bay, and thence to nowhere, unless people wanted to go to the eastern colonies; and, after all, surely everyone did not want to go to the eastern colonies whenever they travelled. What people wanted in this colony was to be able to travel backwards and forwards from one important centre to another: this they could do when the railway was extended from Coolgardie to Norseman. Again, looking at it from the Esperance point of view, he would say, and he had given this matter per-

haps more consideration than most people, that the trade of Norseman was not sufficient to maintain in Esperance any large population, unless Norseman were to increase in size very much indeed. The trade to Norseman now was very small. About half of it came from Esperance, and was generally a camel traffic, which did not give any great trade to the townspeople; and if there was a railway, there would not be any increase in trade, because it would come and go through Esperance and straight to Norseman. At any rate, as far as he was able to judge, he could say there was not sufficient trade at Norseman to support Esperance as a large place. If there were sufficient trade, Esperance would flourish now; but leaving out of consideration the advantages of Esperance as a sanatorium, the trade would not be sufficient to support a large population there. What would be the result? As soon as a line from Esperance to Norseman was started, large numbers of people would be kept going during the progress of the work, and the Esperance people could do good business while it was going on; but as soon as the work was finished, they could not continue to live there, and the clamour then would be ten times louder than it was now for carrying on that railway to tap the Coolgardie traffic. That would be the next move they would want.

MR. VOSPER: They would want that, in any case.

THE PREMIER: They might want it, but they would not have him to help them to get it, nor would the member for the Canning do anything to help them, even if it hurt his little finger. The hon. member had a good eye to the main chance, like many more of us.

MR. WILSON: Honestly, however.

THE PREMIER: Yes; honestly. He acquitted the hon. member of anything dishonourable. He only meant to say that we seldom found men acting deliberately against their own interests. Perhaps they honestly believed they were doing so, but such was seldom the case; therefore, it was useless for anyone to set himself up as a paragon of perfection, as one who was always acting against the interest of himself. We wanted to build railways where they would pay and do most good to the

colony, and to the people who had to find the money to pay for them. There was another thing, if we could for a moment get away from the "seventh heaven" and come down to mundane matters. By extending our railway system northwards and obtaining more traffic and trade on our railways we would make them pay better, and also be doing good to the producers in that part of the colony, who would be able to trade here instead of sending their produce to other colonies. He did not wish to push that too far, but he would much rather see this colony, even than our friends in South Australia, supplying Norseman. Surely if the people of the colony as a whole invested their money in building a railway to Norseman, they might fairly say it should be built in such a way that we could use it, and that our produce should travel over it, rather than be built in such a manner that we should never see a bit of our produce go over it. The member for North Perth was a gentleman who took a liberal view of things, but he always had a very good eye for his own constituents, and he was quite right, too, for he was sent to Parliament to protect their interests. Would it not be better for the people of Perth and Fremantle if the trade of Norseman came to them instead of going no one knew where? Would it not be better that machinery, flour, wheat, timber, chaff, and everything should go along our railways rather than come from other lands far away? Again, take the trading community, the mining community, and the business men, and those that dealt in stock and timber—take, in fact, the general community who travelled about our railways—if they wanted to go to Norseman and do a little business, they could, if there were a line to Norseman, leave here in the evening at 7 o'clock and go to Coolgardie, arriving next morning, so that in the afternoon they would be down at Norseman; and they would get back just as quickly as they went. Would it not be better to do that than to take a steamer to Esperance, spend another day, and then go 120 miles north by rail? For instance, people with cattle and sheep for the market could get into

the train here in the afternoon, and the next day reach Norseman. Could anyone say it was not better to have a network of railways joined together for the purpose of business and trade, than to have an isolated railway from Esperance to Norseman? He could not believe it would be in the interests of the colony at the present time to build a railway down in that direction, when the course advocated by the Government would be so much to our interest and so advantageous to everyone travelling on our railways, whether speculators or business men. Then, as to the expenditure, it was said the poor Norseman people would have to pay more for their goods because they would travel so many miles by rail instead of 125 miles from Esperance. He very much doubted that they would have to pay any more, because, as he had already stated, the freights must be greater in order to make the railway pay. But supposing that they had to pay more, how much would it amount to? He had taken the trouble to look into the matter, and found that the cost on a ton of chaff, flour, or potatoes sent to Norseman would not be more than 6s. a ton above what it was at present to Coolgardie. They would have to pay 6s. more, and the Norseman people would be in just the same position as the Menzies people. The Menzies people were, roughly speaking, 100 miles from Coolgardie, and Norseman people would be about the same distance, but we did not hear the member for North Coolgardie complain of the great disability his constituents were suffering from. On the contrary, they were delighted with the railway at Menzies. Those at Leonora would like to enjoy a railway and pay the extra freight, and so it would be with the people of Norseman. It would be unreasonable for the inhabitants of Norseman, who lived 125 miles from the sea, to complain, seeing that the whole of the people of the colony would be building them a railway in order that they should have the advantage of sending their goods at the lowest rates. They were getting a great benefit, and the rest of the people paying for it, and they should rejoice, as he was sure they did, because they would be able to communicate by rail with all parts of the colony, and to develop the resources of their district in a way

they would not be able to do if altogether separated from their fellow-colonists. Another thing he could not forget was that in an isolated place like that a community was built up without sympathy with the rest of the colony, and without knowledge of the people of the colony. People at Norseman knew nothing of what went on here, except through the papers, and had not had the opportunity of coming into contact with public men of West Australia and their fellow-colonists. They knew nothing of us, and so long as they were isolated they would never have that sympathy with the people of the colony which it was desirable they should, and would not feel they were engaged with us in one great work in trying to build up Western Australia. We knew at present they came from South Australia, and returned to that colony; they came without means, most of them being working men, and, having gathered together what they could, they took it back to South Australia. A Norseman miner had his eyes fixed on South Australia as Meccahomet used to fix his eyes on Mecca, and he looked forward to that day when he could return to his friends and relatives. As long as he lived, unless something was done in the way the Government proposed, we would never give him an opportunity, and he would live continually in an isolated place. The Government wished to give him an opportunity of being actually and really connected with the people of the colony. He (the Premier) had told his friends in Coolgardie over and over again that to construct a railway from Coolgardie to Esperance would be unreasonable, and that it would not be in their interests. People could get from South Australia to Fremantle for about half the price it would cost them to get to Esperance Bay. That argument held good both with regard to passage money and freight. Such would always be the case till the traffic was large. It was better for the people on the Coolgardie goldfields to come down here by the railway system, and take passage at Fremantle, than to travel to Esperance, and wait for a coaster to come along. It was not likely that boats belonging to the P. and O., the Orient, and the Messageries Companies would go to Esperance for the accommo-

dation of passengers. The thinking portion of the community knew very well that it was unreasonable to attempt to go to a place where there were none of the conveniences which would be enjoyed if people travelled to Fremantle. What was advocated by some hon. members was absolutely absurd, and unreasonable, and not, he thought, loyal to the people of this colony, who did not hesitate to embark everything that belonged to them, and to burden with debt everything they possessed, in order that they should open up—no doubt in their own interests, but still at their risk—this country. He would oppose the amendment to the utmost, whether he received support or not, and was determined to have nothing to do at present with connecting Esperance Bay and Coolgardie by railway. It was not required in the interests of anyone in this country, and certainly not by the people of Norseman. He would leave the proposal of throwing over this part of the colony and King George's Sound, as also the great work that was being done at Fremantle, and the railway construction from here to Coolgardie, to the hon. member opposite, and those who liked to support him. He would throw that responsibility on the hon. member (Mr. Leake), who could take it up whenever he chose.

MR. WILSON: Quite prepared to take the responsibility.

THE PREMIER: Yes. The member for the Canning was.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No chance of taking the responsibility.

THE PREMIER: In regard to the town of Esperance, it seemed to be thought that he gloried and delighted in doing it some injury; but how could it be to his interest to injure any part of the colony? When it came to a question of duty, and when he had to decide between the interests of a small community at Esperance and the whole of the people of the colony, he had no hesitation in saying that he must side with the interests of the whole people, as against the interests of the few. He considered he was acting in the interests of the whole colony in trying to bind the goldfields together, and making people feel as one community; and one means of doing this was to carry railways to every part of the goldfields deserving of railway communication. He was quite aware that



the construction of a railway from Norseman to Coolgardie would do a good deal of injury to Esperance, because that town was dependent, to a large extent, on the auriferous deposits of the Dundas goldfield. Putting into the balance the interests of the people of Esperance, on the one side, and the interests of the people of the whole colony on the other side, he believed no reasonable person would say that the Government were acting wrongly in the course they were taking on this railway question. The assistance which the Government had given to Esperance in building schools, making roads, and building jetties, was given at a time when the Government had no thought that a railway would be required for many a year in that part of the colony. But it had been brought home to them, by the people of Norseman, that railway communication had become necessary for the development of the Dundas goldfield; and, therefore, the Government decided that Norseman should be connected with the railway system of the colony, and this decision was arrived at in the interests not only of the people of Norseman, but of the whole colony. His own honest opinion, and he was sorry to say it, was that if the Government did not make any move in the next ten years in regard to building a railway from Norseman, the bulk of the trade would go from Coolgardie to Norseman, and that the Esperance people must languish, and certainly not increase, as a trading community. He had received kindness from the people of Esperance; he was fully aware that theirs was a nice township; that they had a good seaport, which was capable, with a little improvement, of being made an excellent harbour; but as a matter of business, as a matter of justice to the whole colony and not to the interests of a few, he had no hesitation in saying that the decision which the Government had arrived at was the only reasonable, wise, and just conclusion which any Government could arrive at, after due consideration of the interests of the whole people. This vote was asking only that a survey should be made at the present time; but his firm belief was that we should have to build the railway, and, as far as he was concerned, he was prepared to build it at the earliest opportunity. He had no fear of the future

of this colony. The croakings and wailings of members opposite really made one annoyed, and, if one were timid, would even make one afraid. There had been as much talk about this £5,000 for the survey of a railway, which everyone acknowledged the country required, as if the expenditure involved were half a million. He had been told that the policy he advocated had brought the colony into a position of insolvency. This was said after this colony had been built up by that policy, and from being a place of obscurity had become a place of importance, not only here, but throughout the world; and comparing its present position with what it was a few years ago, we must think that the people who talked like this had lost faith in the colony, even at the time they knew more gold was being turned out from Western Australia than from any other part of Australasia. To talk of the deficit, in these circumstances, was to ignore the real position of the colony, for the deficit did not amount to one month's revenue. The revenue at the present time was immense, and while the expenditure was somewhat high, still it could be brought within reasonable limits. The revenue of the colony at the present time was marvellous; and while the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) would say we ought to do this and we ought to do that, and that we ought to spend money here and there, yet when the money was spent he would say we ought not to have spent it. Hon. members opposite seemed to have lost confidence in the country; but he (the Premier) had not lost confidence in it, for there was every sign of progress and development at present; and he asked the people of the colony to take no notice of those croakings and wailings which came from irresponsible persons, who did all they could to make others believe that those in charge of the colony had no knowledge, and were unworthy of confidence.

MR. WILSON: It was difficult to know why the right hon. gentleman got into such indignation and bad temper at the proposal to strike out this item. He talked of croakings and wailings, but he (Mr. Wilson) was sick of the bullyings and blusterings of the right hon. gentleman. How could the Premier say that members

of the Opposition had lost faith in the country, when all they had was in the country? The right hon. gentleman talked about having reclaimed the credit of the country; but who had injured the credit of the colony? Certainly not the Opposition, but the Government. These items for railway surveys were put in the schedule to make people believe that the Government were not really abandoning these railways; but this was only a device to hoodwink the people of those districts. The opinion of the country, as expressed in many places, showed that this railway ought to go from Esperance to Norseman, and not from Coolgardie to Norseman. The Premier's argument was all in favour of centralisation, and he evidently thought that anything which would take a little from the trade of Perth and Fremantle must do an injury to the whole colony. But the trade of Norseman had always gone by way of Esperance, until the Government blocked it: The Premier's argument on that point would not hold water. Members of the Opposition were just as capable of carrying out their opinion as was the right hon. gentleman, who had the discourtesy to accuse him (Mr. Wilson) of being one who would not vote for a certain work if it would injure his own pocket. The Premier knew that was not treating him fairly.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member never treated him fairly.

MR. WILSON: The Premier knew that he (Mr. Wilson) had consistently advocated the starting of this railway from Esperance and not from Coolgardie; and yet he had the audacity to sling this accusation against him, that if it hurt his pocket he would vote against it. If the making of a railway from Esperance to Norseman would hurt any man in Perth, it would hurt him. It was impossible not to admire the Premier's pluck in speaking of the people of Esperance and of Norseman, as if they came here to make what they could, and then return to South Australia. Was it proper to speak in this style of an energetic and intelligent portion of the community? It was not good policy for the right hon. gentleman to speak in this way of the 1,200 people of Norseman, and the 1,500 or 2,000 at Esperance.

THE PREMIER: Two thousand?

MR. WILSON: There used to be that number, but the policy of the Government had driven them away.

THE PREMIER: There never were 2,000.

MR. WILSON: How many were there now—500?

THE PREMIER said he did not know. The hon. member knew all about it.

MR. WILSON: If Esperance could never be successful, if the trade of Norseman would never keep the population of the port, why did the Ministry spend £60,000 of Government money down there?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The hon. member was adding £10,000 to the amount actually spent.

MR. WILSON: Surely had administration must be responsible. The Government had better allow the item to be struck out until they were prepared to find the money to build the railway. If they were not in a position to do so, then let private enterprise construct the line. Give Esperance a chance to live. The Premier's argument that a railway from Esperance to Norseman would be absolutely isolated was a very strong argument in favour of its construction by private enterprise.

MR. VOSPER: In spite of all the Premier could say to the contrary, he (Mr. Vosper) remained a staunch advocate of a railway from Esperance to Coolgardie, and he would vote for the amendment. No railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, or from Esperance to Norseman, would ever satisfy him. He had to partly, and only partly, thank the Premier for the admission made with respect to certain personal observations made earlier in the evening. The Premier had explained that he did not accuse him of issuing an indecent or immoral print; and for that small grace or favour he thanked the right hon. gentleman, although, had he taken the trouble to explain that at the time, it would have come with more grace, and a false impression would not have been created.

THE PREMIER: Such an idea had never entered his mind.

MR. VOSPER: At the same time, the explanation placed the right hon. gentleman in a peculiarly ridiculous light, because he said that the newspaper pol-

luted the atmosphere by denouncing certain honest people. Now, the honest people who were denounced in Coolgardie were the promoters of "wild-cat" companies and the supporters of a "wild-cat" Government. Fortunately, he (Mr. Vosper) had still a printing press, and was nursing the same policy. The right hon. gentleman had finished by saying he did not read his (Mr. Vosper's) publication, but heard about it occasionally. Perhaps it would be better for him if he read it, for then he would not be betrayed into making untruthful statements with regard to its contents, and he might possibly learn better manners from a perusal of its pages.

THE PREMIER said he did not think so.

MR. VOSPER: It might have the effect of toning down that overweening egotism for which the right hon. gentleman was conspicuous. He ought to change his views and start reading that journal, which could be obtained at the rate of 3s. per quarter, payable strictly in advance.

THE PREMIER said he would have to get it for nothing, to induce him to read it.

MR. VOSPER said he might even make a concession on that point. Coming back to the railway question, the interests of the majority of the people of the colony could best be served by constructing a line from Esperance to Coolgardie. If we were but to consider the interests of the majority, everything would justify that railway, and there was nothing to support the dragging of the goldfields trade through an unnatural channel, first down to Perth, and then a thousand miles out of its way.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: All the trade did not come from the other colonies.

MR. VOSPER: The greater portion of our population and most of our trade came from the eastern colonies, and every ton of material taken to Coolgardie had to be dragged sixteen hundred miles out of the direct route, in present circumstances. There was no natural affinity between the people of the eastern goldfields and those on the western coast, or, at any rate, what little there was had been destroyed by the action of the Government.

MR. GREGORY: That was the hon. member's idea, but it was not correct.

MR. VOSPER said he was quite prepared to debate the question on the goldfields with the hon. member, even at Menzies.

MR. GREGORY said he would be happy to do so.

MR. VOSPER: The Coolgardie goldfields generally regarded Esperance as their natural port. It had, as the Premier admitted, a magnificent harbour, and it was not only suitable as an *entre pôt* for the Coolgardie fields, but had the advantage of being a sanatorium for the goldfields people who were living within 200 miles of the Southern Ocean.

THE PREMIER: It was not less than 230 miles.

MR. VOSPER: Taking it as the crow flies, it was less. The present road was tortuous, because of the necessity of deviating in order to strike water. The first time he went to Esperance from Coolgardie, he passed 27 loaded teams on the road between Norseman and Esperance. The last time he was over that road, the traffic had fallen off very considerably, simply because the Government had changed their policy, and had begun to encourage the Norseman-Coolgardie traffic.

THE PREMIER: That was very recently.

MR. VOSPER: The trade between Esperance and Norseman was increasing; but every attempt was made to foster the Norseman-Coolgardie trade at the expense of Esperance.

THE PREMIER: That was not true.

MR. VOSPER: It was a case of the artificial diversion of trade from its natural channel. It was a Machiavellian policy. In spite of all the sophistry preached in this House, the goldfields would ultimately have their natural outlet for trade, and Esperance would then get its due.

THE PREMIER: Had they not got an outlet now?

MR. VOSPER: They did not like the present outlet; and, speaking as a goldfields member, he would say that, if the goldfields population were to go into partnership with the people of the western coast, it must be a partnership on equal terms. The goldfields constituencies had not re-

ceived their fair share of the public money—not speaking of loans, but revenue, though, even as regarded loans, the people who formed the greater part of the population, and supplied the greater portion of the wealth, and afforded the greatest security for it, had not received their fair proportion. Would it have been possible to carry on the goldfields policy in past times, without the security given by the goldfields population?

THE PREMIER: Certainly not.

MR. VOSPER: Then, where was their share? His own district had never received 5 per cent. of the money contributed towards the coffers of the State. They had loan money, but not their fair share; and unless the Government got rid of the false doctrine of centralisation, and until they were prepared to give fair and equal electoral rights, and equal representation in this House, it was foolish and futile, and folly of the most extreme type, to talk about partnership. Goldfields representatives would have none of the Government partnership. People of the goldfields would be enemies of the Government, and enemies of those who supported the Government. The Government wanted a partnership, in which the people on the goldfields should do all the work and the Government should get all the profit.

THE PREMIER: The member for North-East Coolgardie did a lot of work.

MR. VOSPER: In his own line he did as much as the Premier did in his.

THE PREMIER: A good deal of harm.

MR. VOSPER: Whether he did harm or good, he did not know; but he endeavoured to do good.

THE PREMIER: The member for North-East Coolgardie sowed discord.

MR. VOSPER: Where there was ground for it, he was prepared to do so. Discord was one of the qualities that served to bring about progress, both politically and socially. It was one of the virtues, and while the right hon. gentleman set him the example of causing discontent, as he had done during the last six or eight months, he (Mr. Vosper) was prepared to maintain the attitude he was now taking. It was not the agitator who made the fuss, but the person who went wrong in the first place. The goldfields had never been properly treated by the Forrest

Ministry, and for the Forrest Ministry to talk about partnership when the partnership would be unequal, politically and financially, was simply sheer, unadulterated impudence. There was no other term to apply to it. It was very late in the day to ask people to talk about the fate of Esperance. It was reported in nearly every paper in the colony that the Premier led the people of Esperance to believe that something would be done for them, but they had simply been betrayed. The people of Dundas were to get a railway, but they, too, had been betrayed; for now, instead of the substance of a railway, they were to get the shadow of a survey. The harbour at Esperance had been neglected, and the Press of Perth, and some of the politicians of Perth, had never lost an opportunity of damaging it in the eyes of master mariners. If that place once had its rights, and assumed the prominent position which it was entitled to hold some day in Western Australia, it would become a central place. But, beside the question of rights and wrongs, there was this to be said, that the Government had abandoned their railway policy simply for the lack of funds. They had admitted that such was the case, and said they simply could not find the money to carry out the work. Why should we spend any money on survey at all? Why could we not wait till we had money in our possession? When we had funds it would be easy enough to make surveys and railways too, and he had no doubt the Government would then be just as willing to spend money as they had been in the past. Then would be the time for a railway Bill to be brought down, and a survey made; but to have a survey now would be to delude the people. It would seem to be holding out a continual menace to the people of Esperance that the railway would be from Coolgardie to Norseman, whatever happened, and would appear to destroy all hopes and put Esperance in a back seat to all eternity. We could leave the two places alone for the present. Esperance could manage to live on the traffic she now enjoyed. The people of Esperance belonged to Western Australia, and were entitled to a little consideration on the part of the Government. They had done no harm, but on the contrary had opened up a harbour which was

almost entirely undiscovered and practically unknown before, and they had made it a decent port, for which they were entitled to some credit. They had paid a lot of money for their land, and had contributed a considerable amount to the Treasury. The main thing for which a line to Norseman was wanted was that of getting machinery. Three-fourths of the quantity required had, however, now been obtained, so that the principal reason for beginning the railway was gone, so far as Norseman was concerned. He intended to vote for striking out the item.

MR. CONOLLY: The question naturally affected, in a great degree, the district he represented; and, while supporting the proposed survey, he would like to make a few remarks relative to some statements that had fallen from the Premier. He would support the item because this work would benefit the Norseman goldfield if the line were constructed, which was an open question. It was his duty, as representative of that goldfield, to support the survey. With reference to the Norseman goldfield, the Premier had dealt fairly, even modestly, with its capabilities. Last year the output of gold sprang from 5,000oz. in the previous year to 19,300oz., and he believed there was a probability that in the present year the output would rise to 30,000 or 36,000oz. The returns of the year, so far, gave excellent indications; and the lodes and reefs, which were permanent, appeared to improve as they went down. Norseman, although an isolated field, possessed one of the deepest shafts in the colony, about 500 feet. As to the area of the field, speaking roughly, there were 36 miles of country in course of development; and, what was more to the point, the mines were held chiefly by the original prospectors and working miners, who had the benefit of the gold returns. This was the nationalisation of the mining industry, so far as that field was concerned. As to Esperance and the intention of the leader of the Opposition, he (Mr. Conolly) understood that members on the Opposition side were in favour of a railway being constructed by private enterprise; and his own opinion was that this was the best course. The Premier had spoken as if Esperance were the only portion of the colony which would suffer by this line being constructed from Cool-

gardie to Norseman; but that could hardly be said, in view of the fact that the demonstrations throughout the colony had shown that the opinion was in favour of the line starting from Esperance. It was not Esperance alone which desired this; and the opinions and desires of people throughout the goldfields were surely worth considering. The Premier was not quite clear on the subject of the cost of opening up the Esperance harbour, for he said it would take miles of docks and wharves and jetties.

THE PREMIER: That was to make it as good as Fremantle.

MR. CONOLLY: But the Premier did not say that. In any case, the Committee should understand that, at the present moment, Esperance had a harbour which, in the opinion of any man who had ever visited it, was fully equal to Fremantle, with all the hundreds and thousands that had been spent at the latter place. Every work necessary for the successful transshipment of goods had already been carried out at Esperance, and it would not take £10,000 to complete that harbour, seeing that £60,000 had been spent on it already, mainly in giving shipping facilities. This statement of the expense of completing Esperance works was an absolute exaggeration. The Premier said goods for Norseman did not now go *via* Esperance, and would never do so, because the route from Coolgardie was more practicable. That was not the reason; but the road between Esperance and Norseman was a heavy, sandy road, while that from Coolgardie to Norseman was a good, hard, metal road the whole way.

THE PREMIER: What other reason had he given?

MR. CONOLLY: The Premier had said it was the most natural route for Norseman to get its goods from Coolgardie; and that, because Esperance did not now get the trade, it would never get it. There were two illogical arguments the Premier always used—one that the Norseman people should be satisfied with a railway from Coolgardie because the Menzies people were satisfied with similar communication; that the Norseman people should be satisfied because they were no worse off than the Menzies people; but, if the hon. gentleman were living at

Norseman, and had to indent his material, would he be satisfied with getting his goods from Coolgardie?

THE PREMIER: There were many other advantages to counter-balance that.

MR. CONOLLY: Granted there were, they did not compensate for it.

THE PREMIER: They more than compensated.

MR. CONOLLY: The Norseman people were not in the same position as the Menzies people.

THE PREMIER: Why? The Norseman people had suffered all these years from being isolated.

MR. CONOLLY: There was something in the isolation argument, but it did not compensate for the many other advantages which the line from Esperance would confer. He would like to place both sides of the question before the House. With a line from Coolgardie to Norseman, the Norseman people would have the advantage of being connected with the other mining centres of the eastern goldfields, with the capital of the colony, and with the railway system generally. Norseman was as nearly equidistant as possible from Coolgardie and Esperance, one place being about 110 miles from Norseman, and the other about 120, by road. If the line were constructed from Esperance to Norseman, it would give to Norseman not only the means of a cheaper supply, but also the means of treating refractory and other ores cheaply, in a way that Fremantle could never expect to do it. A line from Esperance would have a better chance of paying than a line from Coolgardie, because of the back-loading, though he granted that in the case of goods going to Norseman the Government would have the benefit of the extra freight over their lines.

THE PREMIER: Also the produce from this part of the country.

MR. CONOLLY: Although the Government would get that extra freight, it would come out of the pockets of the people, and it should be the object of the Government to enable people to live as cheaply as possible. Widgemooltha was the only mining district between Norseman and Coolgardie; and, in spite of the advantages it formerly had, that field was now deserted. Many persons

at Esperance were giving attention to the cultivation of the soil; and it was a mistaken prejudice on the part of members to assume that the soil on that side of the colony was barren. As to Esperance receiving its produce and supplies from South Australia, it should be remembered that every goldfield and every port in the colony received produce from the eastern colonies. He would like it placed on record that although this survey was now being granted, he did not believe the line was going to be constructed so soon as the Premier would have the House think. Even now he did not consider it too much to say he believed that when the line was ultimately constructed it would come from Esperance. In any case, however, he had much pleasure in supporting the survey from Coolgardie to Norseman.

On the motion of MR. LEAKE, progress was reported and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.21 p.m. until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 7th September, 1898.

Question: Foreign Companies and Share Registers—Imported Labour Registry Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Companies Act Amendment Bill, first reading (debate)—Bankruptcy Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Public Education Bill, third reading—Interpretation Bill, in Committee, reported—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

QUESTION: FOREIGN COMPANIES AND SHARE REGISTERS.

HON. A. P. MATHESON asked the Colonial Secretary: Are the Government