

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th September, 1900.

Question: Water Tanks at Kalgoorlie, how Leased—
 Question: Midland Railway, Negotiation for Purchase—
 Question: Midland Railway, Exemption from Taxation—
 Question: Rabbit Pest, Prevention—
 Cottesloe, etc., Electric Light and Power Bill (private): Select Committee, Extension—
 Federal House of Representatives W.A. Electorates Bill, Report of Select Committee—
 Coolgardie-Norseman Railway Bill, first reading—
 Papers: Criminal Libel Bills (motion withdrawn)—
 Papers: Railway Workshops at Midland Junction (adjourned)—
 Return ordered: Aborigine Prisoners Deserting from Service—
 Motion: General Elections on One Day—
 Paper presented—
 Motion: Perth Hospital Inquiry (postponed)—
 Motion: Pilbarra Goldfield Railway, Private Enterprise, Amendment passed—
 Motion: Wineries, to Assist (withdrawn)—
 Motion: Revenue for Works, to Allocate on Population Basis (negative)—
 Motion: Payment of Members, to Legislate immediately (adjourned)—
 Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—WATER TANKS AT KALGOORLIE, HOW LEASED.

MR. HOLMES asked the Director of Public Works, On what date was the tank at 42-Mile, Kalgoorlie District, leased to C. Jobson? What was the capacity of the tank, and the rental paid to the Government by the lessee?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (for the Director of Public Works) replied:—The tanks were leased on 13th December, 1899, and their combined capacity is 3,734,700 gallons. The rental is £15 per month, payable in advance. A copy of the lease was laid upon the table of the House on 30th May, 1900.

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY, NEGOTIATION FOR PURCHASE.

MR. PHILLIPS asked the Premier, Whether the Government have entered into any negotiations with the Midland Railway Company, with the view of purchasing the Midland Railway and Concessions; and, if so, whether there is any probability of such negotiations resulting satisfactorily.

THE PREMIER replied:—There has been some communication between the Agent General and the Company in London, but nothing satisfactory has thus far resulted.

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY, EXEMPTION FROM TAXATION.

MR. MORAN asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: 1, Whether there is a written agreement between the Government of this colony and the Midland Railway Company in reference to any exemptions, general or particular, from taxation on their landed estate in Western Australia. 2, If so, whether such arrangement is a part of the original agreement. 3, If not a part of the original agreement, when was it arranged, and for what reason. 4, Upon whose advice to the Government was this arrangement entered into.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—There is no such agreement, and the Midland Railway Company's lands are not exempt from taxation.

QUESTION—RABBIT PEST, PREVENTION.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands, What steps have been taken by the Government to stay the influx of rabbits into the settled portions of the colony?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—A bonus of 2s. 6d. per scalp of rabbits killed within a radius of 50 miles of Norseman and Kurnalpi has been offered, and the Inspector empowered to employ men to exterminate any new colonies of rabbits he may discover, and to adopt every other means he may deem desirable for checking the further inroads of the pest.

COTTESLOE, ETC., ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER BILL (PRIVATE).

SELECT COMMITTEE, EXTENSION.

On motion by MR. MONGER (for Mr. Moorhead), the time for bringing up the report of the select committee on this Bill extended until Thursday, 27th September; leave also given to sit during any adjournment of the House.

FEDERAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES W.A. ELECTORATES BILL.

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

SIR J. FORREST brought up the report of the select committee on this Bill.

Report received and read; ordered to be considered at the next sitting.

COOLGARDIE-NORSEMAN RAILWAY
BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER (as Acting Commissioner of Railways), and read a first time.

Plans showing route of railway were laid on the table by the PREMIER.

PAPERS—CRIMINAL LIBEL FIATS.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie) moved:

That all papers connected with the fiats recently issued by the Attorney General in the cases of Salinger v. Hugh Mahon (two fiats) and Gaze v. Mahon be laid on the table of the House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The cases being still *sub judice*, it would be better to postpone this motion.

MR. VOSPER: The original information upon which a fiat was issued by the Attorney General had been dismissed, and a second fiat had been issued. In the case of the second fiat, no affidavits, he was informed, had been filed, and the Attorney General issued the fiat without having been moved to do so in the ordinary way. According to legal authorities at one's command, the procedure was irregular. It was desirable therefore that the papers should be laid on the table. The motion was not moved with a desire to interfere with the proceedings now being taken in the Police Court, but to ascertain whether irregular proceedings had been taken.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): The court was engaged practically in hearing the cases; at any rate there was a committal for trial in one case to a superior court. Hon. members generally would agree that while cases were pending in the court, it was not desirable to pass motions of this kind and discuss the merits of the case.

MR. VOSPER: There was no wish to discuss the merits.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It could not be helped, as he would have to go thoroughly into the matter. He did not wish to say anything to prejudice the persons to be tried, for apparently the hon. member was moving in the interests of one of the parties; but in the interests of the parties themselves it would be better to let the matter rest until the cases had been decided. The House had strongly set its face against papers being

produced while cases were *sub judice*, and it was not wise to have papers produced in such event. When the trial was over the hon. member could move for the papers. The hon. member could be assured, so far as was known, nothing irregular had taken place. As to the charge which had been dismissed by the justice, it was shown that the case was dismissed on a technical objection and not on the merits of the case: that was the reason why the second fiat had been issued.

MR. VOSPER (in reply): The question was whether the fiat had been issued outside the usual course of law. If the Attorney General would give a denial, he would be satisfied.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The ordinary course had been followed.

MR. VOSPER: In that case, he asked leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

PAPERS—RAILWAY WORKSHOPS AT
MIDLAND JUNCTION.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle), for Mr. Higham, moved:

That all departmental and other reports referring to the proposed site for the Railway Workshops at Midland Junction, more especially those affecting the question of foundations for the heavy plant to be placed there, be laid on the table of this House.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member might give some intimation of what papers were required, as these departmental papers were not of much interest to members, and they were voluminous. Unless the originals could be placed on the table, which was not desirable, it would take a great deal of time to copy the papers. The hon. member might limit the motion to certain papers. As to the papers relating to the foundations, that portion of the motion could be easily complied with, as he was informed by the Engineer-in-Chief that there were none. There might be a paper or two, and he would ransack the department and see if there were papers relating to this matter which had not come under his notice. If the hon. member would give an idea of the papers required, he would be glad to supply them. The Engineer-in-Chief had written on the subject, saying really what he (the Premier) had told the House. As the question of the workshops being

removed would shortly be considered, he did not suppose he could place the papers on the table before that motion was discussed. He did not know what action members intended to take, but it might be well to defer this motion until the line of action in regard to the other motion was decided on.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): There was a report about—he did not know whether there was any ground for it—that there had been some correspondence between the Engineer-in-Chief and the head of the department in regard to the character of the ground for the foundation for large machinery at Midland Junction. It was very desirable, if there were papers of that kind, that they should be placed on the table, so that members could refer to them when the discussion as to the removal of the workshops was taking place.

THE PREMIER: There was not much reason for that statement, because the report he had from the Engineer-in-Chief, dated 17th September, stated: "As to the reports on the subject of foundations for heavy plant, I do not know of any such, and I know of no reason for such, because the foundations are unimpeachable."

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): In the absence of the member in charge of the motion (Mr. Higham), perhaps it would be well to postpone the discussion, as the hon. member might have some facts which members were not aware of, and might have some reasons to bring forward in regard to the motion. He moved that the debate be adjourned until to-morrow.

Motion for adjournment passed.

RETURN—ABORIGINE PRISONERS DESERTING FROM SERVICE.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie) moved:

That a return be laid upon the table of the House, showing the number of aborigine prisoners now imprisoned for deserting from their hired service, together with a list of names and the respective sentences imposed.

During the present session he intended to move the House in regard to the indenture system, and he required the papers for this purpose.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—GENERAL ELECTIONS ON ONE DAY.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is in the best interests of the country that in all future general elections the polls be taken on one day, and that day be made a public holiday.

He said: It is pretty well known that on the occasion of general elections there is a certain amount of excitement throughout the colony, and it would be far better to get that excitement over as soon as possible, more especially as under the Commonwealth there will be various elections throughout the year. To have the elections on one day, and to declare that day a public holiday, would enable everyone to record their votes. In New South Wales, I believe, the law goes further, and all hotels are closed during the hours of election, but I do not suggest anything of the kind for this colony. It is always desirable when the writs are issued for the whole of the Assembly, that it should be known when the day of election is to be for the colony generally. The motion if carried will minimise the effect of plural voting. Under the present arrangement, advantage to one party is anticipated to the disadvantage of another, and it is often found that candidates unsuccessful in one part of the colony go to another part, and there upset the arrangements of the electors. A candidate defeated in one part of the colony is not, as a rule, accepted in another part, and it is undesirable there should be the opportunity to move about in this way. It is not necessary to say any more on the matter, because from what I can learn there is no great opposition to the motion.

THE PREMIER (Right. Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am afraid the motion would not meet every case in this colony, though it would do very well for Perth and Fremantle, and perhaps East Coolgardie. The proposed arrangement would certainly not work in outlying districts, and it is already customary to have as many elections as possible on one day or within a very short period of each other, in the more closely settled parts of the colony. In Perth and Fremantle, for instance, there generally elapses only three or four days between nomination day and elec-

tion day ; but in the outlying parts, if there were only three or four days between, there would be no means of letting the people know there was more than one person contesting the election. Hitherto the custom in the northern parts of the colony, and similar places, has been to allow considerable time between nomination day and election day, in order that the people may have an opportunity of knowing there is a contest, and of voting. In the other colonies it is common to hold the elections on one day, but there the communities are more thickly and closely settled, and only in small areas would it be acceptable to have a public holiday declared and the elections carried out simultaneously. There is no reason why the elections in Perth and Fremantle, together with the Swan, Guildford, Albany, Kalgoorlie, and Coolgardie, should not be all on the same day with the greatest convenience ; but when it comes to Mount Margaret, Dundas, Pilbarra, and the northern parts of the colony, the plan we adopt now is more convenient. If the motion were made not to cover the whole of the colony, but only such places as I have indicated, there will be no objection ; but I feel certain if the motion be of general application, one of two things must happen : either the country districts must suffer, or a long time must be allowed between nomination day and election day in the more thinly populated parts of the colony.

MR. GREGORY : Why not issue writs a little earlier for those latter places ?

THE PREMIER : The writs are generally all issued on the same day.

MR. GREGORY : Why are they not issued earlier ?

THE PREMIER : I do not know ; but the proclamation dissolving Parliament and the issuing of the writs are generally one act.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Vary the nomination day.

THE PREMIER : We do now vary the nomination day.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Make it still earlier.

THE PREMIER : We might, but there is not much time between the issue of the writs and the nomination. However, if hon. members like to try the experiment they may do so ; but knowing as I do the

circumstances of the country, I am certain the proposal will not suit a great many places, though it may do very well in the more crowded centres.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison) : As the Premier is no doubt aware, a great plank in the Liberal platform all over Australia is the holding of general elections on one day, and I think the elections for the Commonwealth Parliament ought to and will be held simultaneously. I see no difficulties of the kind the Premier refers to ; because if it be necessary to give more time at Kimberley, that is easily done by fixing the date of the nomination earlier, not by making the day of election later.

THE PREMIER : You must allow some time to get the nominations up there.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : Granted ; but there is plenty of time for the purpose.

MR. DOHERTY : It is 11 days by sea to Kimberley.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The election day can be fixed, and the day of nomination is the only question affected by the suggestion of the Premier. If it be necessary to give a fortnight's notice to Kimberley, that can be done in reference to the nomination, and not in reference to the day of election. What we want is to have the results of the elections known on the one day, and to finish with all the excitement. This proposal bears very materially on another question, namely that of dual voting. The main object with which the proposal to have the elections on one day is put forward elsewhere, is to prevent a man voting in two or three different electorates, as he is able to do in this colony, where unfortunately we have absolutely a system of absentee voting ; and it is desirable to fix the elections, an existing holiday being selected for the purpose, or a special holiday proclaimed.

THE PREMIER : There will have to be a long time between the issue of the writs and the election.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : There is always plenty of time between the issue of the writ and the day of election, and it only requires the Government to fix the day of nomination, which might be the 21st of the month for Perth, and the 14th or the 7th for Kimberley and other places, the date of the elections being the 30th.

MR. DOHERTY: In Kimberley you have to travel 212 miles before you reach a polling place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That difficulty exists of course, but the point is the day of nomination, not the day of election. If sufficient time be given between nomination day and election day in outside districts, all that is required will be met, because there can still be fourteen or even thirty days between the day of nomination for Kimberley and the day of election, which may be the same day as in Perth.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): The reasons for advocating this principle of holding the elections on one day, that day being a public holiday, are, as I understand, fourfold. The fact of its being a public holiday gives an opportunity to vote. As things are at present it sometimes happens that men are deprived of the franchise by reason of the nature of their duties; and even if we do proclaim a holiday, a small number will still be so deprived: at all events, the number suffering that deprivation will be very considerably reduced. That is the first argument in favour of the motion, and the second argument is that we will get rid on the one day of the whole of the excitement and turmoil which arise out of general elections. That is a very desirable thing from a business point of view, because it enables people to settle down to their ordinary avocations as quickly as possible, instead of being in a state of ferment and agitation for three or four weeks at a stretch.

THE PREMIER: We have the elections nearly on one day now.

MR. VOSPER: But not quite. Then again, if having the elections on one day will not altogether abolish plural voting, it will, to a great extent, minimise that system. That has been the effect in the other colonies; but here we have the system of absent voting, which practically enables a man to remain in his office in Perth and vote for perhaps a dozen electorates, which would otherwise be beyond his reach; and I hope the day is not far distant when that kind of plural voting, at all events, will be abolished.

THE PREMIER: They have post voting in the other colonies.

MR. VOSPER: I hope it will be abolished, especially after the precedent

put before us by the Premier in the Federal Elections Bill. I do not see how the Premier can consistently defend plural voting in this State now, after imposing a penalty of no less than two years' imprisonment for voting plurally at elections for the Federal Parliament; and when we bring forward a motion in this House in favour of the total abolition of the plural vote, I am sure we shall find the Premier, with his well-known and almost famous consistency, an ardent supporter of such a motion.

THE PREMIER: The provision against plural voting is in the Commonwealth Act.

MR. VOSPER: Quite so. By that Act a precedent has been established. The abolition of this proxy system will have the effect of minimising plural voting to a great extent, because a man may be able to vote in the three or four different electorates in or near a town by driving round in a cab, but he will not be able to do so in the country. Lastly, the point we are aiming at is one that occurs in almost every country. No matter how unpopular a Ministry may be at a general election, the first two or three contests in that election generally result in the return of a Ministerial candidate. Ministers like to put their safe men forward first, and to get them elected first of all, because of the moral effect upon the electors.

MR. DOHERTY: You would do the same thing.

MR. VOSPER: But I want to deprive myself of the opportunity of doing wrong, otherwise, if a power of that kind were left in my hands, I should be very much tempted to use it. It is a notorious fact, too, and on the whole I cannot altogether blame Ministers for doing it, that they generally do arrange the elections so that the candidates for their safe seats are returned first; and that fact, to some extent, discourages the Opposition. Now, let us have a fair fight and no favour; and a fair fight and no favour can best be obtained by having the whole of these elections on one day. As far as the inconvenience to which the Premier has alluded is concerned, I think an appropriate remedy has been suggested by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth). We can get over all these

difficulties by making the date of nomination movable, while the date of election is fixed. I shall have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Motion put, and passed on the voices.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Report of Postmaster General for 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

MOTION—PERTH HOSPITAL INQUIRY. POSTPONEMENT.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: In the absence of the mover (Mr. Hall), I beg to move that the order be postponed till this day week.

THE SPEAKER: I should like to state that the proper course of procedure, where a member who has given notice of a motion is not present, is for that member to instruct some other member to move a postponement for him; and the member acting as deputy should be instructed to state that he is empowered to take up the question for the absent member.

MR. VOSPER: I should like to ask the Speaker whether the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) who has moved this postponement has received the instruction referred to. It is well that the forms of the House should be strictly adhered to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have not. I moved the postponement as a matter of courtesy.

THE SPEAKER: Then I think the motion must be dropped, and notice of motion given again if the hon. member (Mr. Hall) wishes to go on with it. I think members should be here when their notices of motion are read.

MOTION—PILBARRA GOLDFIELD RAILWAY, PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra) moved:

That in the best interests of the colony, and for the more effectual development of the Pilbarra goldfield, it is in the opinion of this House desirable that the Government should, failing immediate action on their own part, receive and consider offers from persons willing to construct by private enterprise a line of railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, upon terms and conditions to be laid before and approved by the Parliament of this colony. He said: The motion is one which, during the last few years, has been con-

sidered in various forms by this House. Before I came into this House I believe the subject now under discussion engaged at various times the attention of hon. members; and since I have had the honour of sitting here, during last session I proposed a motion somewhat similar, which had, unfortunately, a somewhat disastrous end. I hope this motion will meet with a better reception than the previous motion; and I have only to say that any reasons which were adduced then have, since that time, been increased fourfold in strength and cogency. I feel almost reluctant to enter upon a disquisition as to the merits of the Pilbarra field, having done so at considerable length, for me at all events, last session; but perhaps to review in not too great detail some of the features and prospects of that field will at present be not out of place, in case hon. members may have lost sight of it through its remoteness, and through its perhaps not being so much before the public as its more favoured neighbours in the southern parts of the colony. The Pilbarra field is distinguished by the characteristic of having practically supported itself from the initiation of gold-mining in that district, without the aid, or practically without the aid, of outside capital. It is a field which was first discovered about 1888 or 1889; since that time it has been steadily forging ahead, and its progression is due more to the individual efforts of the residents than to the influx of capital from outside sources. What capital there has been hitherto has been small in amount, and the objects upon which it has been spent have been somewhat undeserving. At present I believe there is every probability, and indeed I may say certainty, that the capital which is just now beginning to flow into the field for its further development will be expended in a more judicious manner and upon better objects than has hitherto been the case. With regard to the past performances of the field, I may say that the total gold production up to date amounts to 170,000 ounces—well over £600,000 worth. The gold yield last year was within three or four ounces of 20,000; and this year, with the opening up of new districts, the establishment of new crushing plants in the more outlying districts—due in some cases, I must

admit, to the action of the Government in granting bonuses for the erection of those batteries—the yield promises to be at least as good as, if not better than, that of the preceding year. I should like to draw the attention of hon. members to one important feature in connection with this gold yield. The average of all the stone crushed on the Pilbarra goldfield, of which returns have been sent to the Mines Department since these returns were initiated, amounts to 2ozs. 8dwts. per ton, which is a record for the colony of Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: A record for Australia, too.

MR. KINGSMILL: And I should like also to point out that this fact has a significance of which I should not like hon. members to lose sight. It means that hitherto only the high-grade ores in that district have been treated, and that those ores which will not return, say, two ounces to the ton are practically left alone until cheaper modes of treatment are obtainable, and until more money behind the people who are treating the ore is available. With regard to the other features of the field, it is rapidly taking its place as a producer of minerals other than gold. I regret to say that owing to the present system in vogue in the Mines Department, it is practically impossible to get official data regarding the yield of the baser metals, for the reason that such returns are optional and not compulsory; but I am informed on what I consider reliable authority that since the initiation of operations on the Marble Bar tinfield, situated within 10 miles of Marble Bar, something over £20,000 worth of tin has been exported; and this I claim is a most magnificent result when we recollect that this tinfield suffers from having to pay heavy cartage, and also from not being so thickly populated as the qualities of the field entitle it to be. Again, within the last few weeks, another tinfield, which I am informed equals in promise that I have already mentioned, has been discovered about 45 or 50 miles in a westerly direction from the Marble Bar tinfield. Again, it is well known that there are large deposits of copper in the district, which only await facilities of transit to prove highly remunerative. These two minerals, tin and copper, differ very

materially from gold. For the development of tin and copper mining, it is absolutely necessary, whether they be locally treated or exported for treatment, that easy and cheap modes of transit should be furnished them; and, too, with regard to the higher development of gold-mining, with regard to the development which brings I will not say low-grade ores, but ores of somewhat lower grade than those which have hitherto been treated on these fields, within the reach of practical and profitable mining, it is necessary that speedy and cheap modes of transit should be provided. For both these classes of mining it is absolutely necessary, in a country like the North-West, where timber and fuel for even the present small operations are scarce and hard to get, and where, for the larger operations I have hinted at, they are practically non-existent—it is I say necessary for the development of mining that some better mode of transit should be available. Hon. members, especially those who have any experience of mining, will realise what I mean by the difficulties under which mining is carried on, when I tell them that on the Pilbarra field the price of firewood varies from 35s. to £3 10s. per cord; and, it is extremely inferior fuel at that. I am sure I need say no more to those hon. members interested and having experience of mining, to show how difficult it is to mine profitably in this district; and timber for mining purposes runs at proportionate rates. I should have liked, if possible, to obtain data as to the amount of cargo and freight which would be likely to be carried by this proposed line. Unfortunately, it is only within the last few days that Port Hedland, the gateway of the Pilbarra goldfield, has been opened as a port of clearance. Hitherto it has been the custom to declare goods for Port Hedland, I think at Cossack when coming from the southward, or at Broome when coming from Singapore; and hence it is extremely difficult to get reliable data. However, I can point out that it is necessary to supply at present about 1,000 men, and I think in the future, if these facilities for which I ask be granted, three or four times at least that number, with the commodities of life and the means of carrying on their industry. Again, I

would point out that this district, in my opinion and I think in the opinion of some other hon. members of this House, compares more than favourably with other districts in this colony to which it is proposed to sanction the building of railways by the Government. I have not occupied the attention of the House very long; but I hope I have at all events proved to hon. members, as indeed I feel myself, that the railway is advisable and absolutely necessary for the future well-being of the field I have the honour to represent. Having done this, the next point which we have to consider is the means of getting that railway which we desire. Of course, the first question to which we must turn our attention is that of having the line constructed by the Government; and in the motion I have submitted I have made allowance for that, because I say that the Government should take immediate action on their own part. I may say I do not expect the Government will take immediate action on their own part, and I can say, too, that even if they did take immediate action—

THE PREMIER: You would prevent it.

MR. KINGSMILL: I should like the right hon. member not to put words into my mouth, because I was not about to say that, exactly. I wished to say that even if the Government did take immediate action, if they put a Bill through the House this session, I very much fear that this railway would share the fate of other proposed railways which have gone before it. It would perhaps be in the same position as the Nannine railway occupies to-day.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear. The money was available for that, too.

MR. KINGSMILL: If the money were voted, I do not think the Government would find it practicable to go on with the work for three or four years; and what I want is some immediate action if possible. Failing the Governmental construction of the line, we have perforce to turn our attention to its construction by private enterprise, to which I strongly object, and with regard to which I think my objections will be upheld by the House. We have had in this colony two examples of the construction of lines by private enterprise upon concessions of land. They are dying in this colony a lingering,

unhappy, and unregretted death, but still their evil effects are with us. I do not want anything of that sort to ensue from any action of mine in this House. I have given considerable attention to this subject, and consulted many authorities since I gave notice of the motion, and I find that comparing the railway systems of the world side by side, those countries are best served which have their lines constructed by private enterprise, and in which the lines are run under the supervision of the Government. It is somewhat hard, perhaps impossible, to get an altogether analogous case to that of Western Australia; but in the slight researches I have made I find the system which gives the most satisfaction, to me at any rate, and promises best, is the system of railways in vogue in India. I find that in India there are three railway systems: firstly a guarantee railway system, secondly a State railway system, thirdly an assisted railway system; and of these, the guarantee railway system possesses the best and longest lines, those of the widest gauge, and those showing the best running. The bulk of the lines of India have been constructed on the guarantee system; over 6,000 miles having been so constructed on the 5ft. 6in. gauge, built under Government supervision, and altogether under Government control. The Government guarantee to the persons or companies constructing these several lines a minimum interest of 5 per cent.

MR. MORAN: Three per cent.

MR. KINGSMILL: I differ from the hon. member, and I say a minimum of 5 per cent. In some cases, 6 per cent. has been guaranteed. These lines were constructed years ago, when money was not so cheap in the market as it is now; and I do not think the Government of this colony would consider any offer from persons who wish for a guarantee of 6 per cent.

MR. MORAN: They have a guarantee system in Queensland now.

MR. KINGSMILL: There is one point in connection with the railway guarantee system in India, and that is that the Government reap an immense benefit from the guarantee by receiving a portion of any excess which may be earned above the percentage guaranteed by the Government, such excess being equally

divided between the company and the Government. In this way the Government of India are now reaping a handsome revenue from the lines constructed under this system of guarantee. The principal lines there are paying at present between 8 and 9 per cent. interest on the capital invested; so that where 5 per cent. interest has been guaranteed, the Government of India are receiving 2 per cent. on the money invested by the company, and are getting it for absolutely nothing. With regard to the line which I have now under consideration, it will be remembered by those members who have been here for some years that a survey of the line was made about the year 1895, and I may say that survey proved that the line was easy and cheap of construction, and involved no great engineering difficulties. I have been told the deepest cutting on the line as surveyed, between Port Hedland and Marble Bar, would be five feet in depth, and through soft rock. Therefore, surely that does not constitute an engineering difficulty of which much can be made. This line offers exceptional advantages for construction by private enterprise, because that part of the country is isolated from the railway system of the rest of the colony, and there will be no trouble in regard to running rights over this line when constructed. Nor is it likely to form part of a trunk line running from the south towards the north, for a long period to come at any rate. Therefore, I say it is eminently suitable for construction by private enterprise. I would like to point out that if any offers are entertained, the rates to be fixed for the carriage of goods will be on agreement between the Government and the persons willing to construct the line; and herein lies a valuable safeguard against loss of revenue. I am certain that with the present high rates for cartage that obtain on the Pilbarra goldfield—

MR. MORAN: What are the rates?

MR. KINGSMILL: The rates per ton from Port Hedland to Marble Bar at present vary according to the season and according to the loading from £9 to £12 per ton.

MR. MORGANS: I am paying £20 a ton at present to Marble Bar.

MR. KINGSMILL: I am sorry to hear the hon. member is paying so much, though I thank him for the information

now given. The distance by road is roughly 120 miles, or 115 miles by the surveyed railway line. I feel certain that to obtain this line the people on the Pilbarra goldfield would be willing to pay considerably more than the normal rates now in vogue on railways in other parts of this colony, and even then their rate for carriage would be immeasurably cheaper than it is at present.

THE PREMIER: We have had that argument before, in regard to other lines that were wanted.

MR. KINGSMILL: It is an argument, and in this case I think the right hon. gentleman will find it to be a true one. These people are in worse straits than those on other goldfields in regard to railway convenience; although they have not been so much in the public eye and not been so clamorous, but have waited longer than the people on other fields have had to wait for the facilities they desire.

THE PREMIER: How many people are there?

MR. KINGSMILL: It is difficult to estimate the number exactly, but I should say roughly about a thousand people. With the present influx of capital, the population is likely to increase by "leaps and bounds," to use a phrase of the right hon. gentleman. In conclusion, I have only to say that, not using my own opinion alone, but using the opinion of men with whom I have conversed and who have seen the field, and in whose opinion I have every confidence, I beg to remind members that this field is likely to develop, with judicious and just treatment, into one of the foremost goldfields of Western Australia. And I ask hon. members not to pass over the claims of this field simply because the people there have been less clamorous, and have been trying to get on without those facilities which people in other parts of the colony have been able to obtain, but to give it that consideration which the present prosperity and the future prospects of the field so richly deserve.

MR. MORAN: Is the route subject to floods?

MR. KINGSMILL: On that point I may say the survey showed that only one bridge would have to be crossed, and that a low-level crossing there would meet all requirements. I have much pleasure

in commending the motion to the favourable consideration of the House, and hope hon. members will give it a fair measure of support.

MR. DARLOT (DeGrey): I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. I know only too well this is not only a great mineral field, but is also absolutely one of the most promising pastoral fields in Western Australia. It now has several of the largest sheep stations at the back of this port, which would be much served by the proposed railway; and it also has very large capabilities in producing cattle. A small number of 60,000 in one instance and I believe 65,000 in another instance was mentioned to me the other day casually by a man in the street. This part of the country is particularly well worth supporting, not only from a mineral point of view, but also from a pastoral point of view, because it is fortunate enough to have a good and sufficient rainfall, which has retarded our progress in a pastoral way throughout the central districts of the colony. Considering that the total output of gold from the Pilbarra field in the last ten years has amounted to £600,000 in value, surely a place that can produce such an amount of wealth is worthy of a railway line. Another point to be considered is that this particular locality is the only stopping place for prospectors. It was never a great goldfield. The prospectors I have met on the Murchison, and who came from the Pilbarra field after the first rush—I know some 500 or 600 men who came from Nullagine—frequently say that if they do not get better returns they will go back to Pilbarra, where they know there is a bit of gold. The field is rather a hard one for the working miner, because the gold is retained in a cement formation. In one case which I know of, firewood cost 35s. a ton, and in several other instances the cost is as high as £3 5s. and £3 10s. a ton at the different batteries. When we know it takes three cords of wood to equal one ton of coal, members of the House should consider whether it is desirable to construct this railway or not. As the member for Pilbarra has stated, no stone has been crushed on the Pilbarra field under an average of 2oz. 8dwts. Unless the stone was rich it would not pay for treatment, and where there is rich stone like that

there must be a quantity of stone of an inferior quality lying dormant. It has come to my knowledge that men are going round buying up the dumps of prospectors who cannot afford to crush their stone, and these men are going to crush the stone with the aid of oil for fuel instead of wood. As a tinfield, Pilbarra has been proved to be the most promising in the colony, and from recent developments it is proved there is a great deal of virgin country to be prospected. The copper prospects of the district are very great. The largest copper mine in the colony, and one of the oldest, is in that locality.

MR. MITCHELL: Not the oldest.

MR. DARLOT: I allude to the Whim Creek Copper Mine. I may be wrong, but that mine dates back sixteen to twenty years. That is only one of many similar mines that exist in this district. Ore cannot be treated without the use of a great deal of fuel. I hope hon. members will give this question their serious consideration, and see if they cannot allow a railway to be constructed by private enterprise on the guarantee system. That would be far better than to allow the valuable ores of the district to lie dormant.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): This motion brings us face to face with one of the greatest questions that this country will very shortly have to consider. When we know that to-night the House has given permission to the Premier to introduce a Bill for the construction of the railway to Dundas, and that this railway is to be constructed to a district that has not produced as much gold as the Pilbarra district—I think I am correct in saying that—which has not the prospects that this field has, it serves as an illustration of what I am going to say. It is not a question of the railway to Dundas; it is not a question of the railway to Pilbarra, or of a railway to half a dozen other places; it is not a question as to whether these lines will pay or ought to be constructed; but how we shall provide the means for construction is the question we shall have to face. That this country will have to be developed is certain; that it can be continuously developed on borrowed money is a question open for consideration; and if we are to make a trial in

regard to private enterprise in the construction of railway lines, we have here a suitable opportunity of putting the matter to the test. This line will be distinct, it will be separated from all others, it cannot be linked with the railway system of the colony.

THE PREMIER: Why not?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Of course it can if we like to construct 500 or 600 miles to connect it. But we must remember that Pilbarra is some little distance from any other railway in the colony.

A MEMBER: Cue.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is a long way off.

MR. A. FORREST: It is too far.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is too far, so we need not discuss that. Here is a district which is proved to be excellent, which has big prospects before it, and if this Parliament is put face to face with the question of going to the London money market to-morrow to borrow money for this railway, I think we shall have to say "no." Should the Pilbarra district remain without a railway for years, perhaps 20 years, because this Parliament cannot see its way to go to the London market for money? Less money would be required to construct the Pilbarra railway than to build the Dundas railway; and if we had to discuss to-night the desirability of constructing one of the two, and only one of the two lines, I have no hesitation in saying that the Pilbarra line is the better one to construct.

MR. D. FORREST: Does it suit your book?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It does not suit my book. I have no shares in either of the places; but looking at the returns and the public prospects as far as I have been able to gauge them, there is more reason for the construction of the railway to Pilbarra than to Dundas. There will be a good many other reasons to put forward, when the Dundas line comes up for consideration, why it should not be constructed at the present time. It would be wiser to put money into a Pilbarra railway than into a line to Dundas. Hon. members may disagree with me in that; still I have that opinion. I have no personal knowledge of one place or the other. The question which we will have to take into our considera-

tion before very long is whether some of these enterprises should not be undertaken by capital outside the Government; and if so, where could we better make a start? Here is a railway which will be disconnected from the railway system, and which a company could have entirely within its control. The Government can fix the terms on which this railway should be built. I believe many railways would be constructed in this country to-day for carriage only, for a certain term. Supposing a company is prepared to construct the railway, say for 15 years' carriage, and hand it over in good order to the Government at the end of that 15 years: surely there could be no objection to the construction of such a railway. I believe the Pilbarra railway could be constructed on lines similar to that.

THE PREMIER: You are a very sanguine man.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I should not have existed in the world if I had not been a sanguine man. I have met with so many difficulties that if I had not been sanguine I should not have been able to get through them. And there are many difficulties in this country which will have to be considered by sanguine men. We know we could have constructed the railway to Cue, and I advocated it at the time, on mere carriage alone; and the line could have been handed over to the Government free of debt to-day. We know the Coolgardie railway could have been constructed on similar terms, because the £68,000 which was paid to Wilkie Brothers was a mere bagatelle: the contractors made their money out of the carriage of goods. The same thing occurred in regard to Baxter and Prince's contract: they could not have constructed the railway for £64,000, and I was informed at the time that the laying of the sleepers on the job cost more than the money they received for the whole work. Where did they get the money from? I do not sympathise with the cry which has been raised, I did not sympathise with it at the time, nor should I sympathise with it again, that the railway was constructed and paid for by the people who went to those places. I know that in these cases I have mentioned the contractors made a considerable sum of money in carrying goods as they were constructing the line. The Govern-

ment could not have done that. By allowing Baxter and Prince and Wilkie Brothers to carry goods at a high rate, the Government saved a good deal of money. Here is a proposed line which will have nothing to do with the railway system; and the Government could say, "We are going to allow a company to construct this railway, and we are going to allow them to carry goods at, say, £6 a ton." We have been told that the carriage of goods costs £20 a ton; and if the carriage were raised to a moderate rate at the present time, there would be a saving to the people of the country, even if in ten or twenty years' time the railway had to be handed over in good condition, without a shilling cost to the country during that time. If that railway can be constructed and used for the carriage of goods, there will be a large saving, which is a matter worth considering. I would like to call attention to the fact that the tramway system in Melbourne was constructed on a time limit. There is a tramway system which cost millions of money, and according to agreement that system will be handed over to the various councils at the end of the term—I think 42 years. I think the true conditions for a railway of this kind is not how much money it will take to construct the railway: it is to provide the plans and say to the tenderers, "Give us a tender for the number of years of carriage you want." The man who will build the railway for the least number of years' carriage should get the right to construct the railway. I am certain that as this country opens there are many people interested in a district, first of all, and there are other people who will be willing to construct railways to these outside centres, and they will be glad so to construct them upon a basis of carriage alone. All the Government would have to do would be to watch over the railway to see that it was properly constructed, kept in repair, and handed over in sound condition, and that the rates fixed in the contract were not excessive. There would be no cost to the State, and we should find ourselves in a certain number of years, say twenty-one years, in the possession of a property the value of which will have increased in the meantime. I admit the difficulty that on a Government railway it would be hard to maintain separate

rates for carriage; but for a railway constructed by a private company under distinct conditions, the company could keep up the rates. In connection with the Government railway system, however, there would be a cry at once "Why should we pay more than the people at Coolgardie or Bunbury?" and that cry would have its effect in Parliament. But if this railway were constructed by a company under such conditions as I have indicated, and the carriage was fixed at a rate not exceeding £5 per ton—this is only an illustrative figure—

THE PREMIER: That is not a likely figure.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have just explained I am not using figures except as purely illustrative.

THE PREMIER: You had better keep near the mark.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: For argument's sake, it is not necessary to keep near the mark.

THE PREMIER: You would not charge £5 for 100 miles?

MR. KINGSMILL: Say £1 for a certain number of miles.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Say £1 a ton, if you like; but, for argument's sake, let us suppose the railway is constructed for £250,000, and carriage is fixed at a rate not exceeding £4 per ton, and, further, that the plans are approved by the Railway Department, the gauge the same as the Western Australian gauge, and that the line is to be maintained and handed over to the Government at the end of fourteen years, in good order and condition: then the railway could be built without any further burden on the State. This has been my conviction for some years.

THE PREMIER: The people would have to pay all the same.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The people who used the railway would have to pay all the same.

MR. A. FORREST: I understand it is desired the Government should give a guarantee.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am discussing the phase of the question at present in my mind, and I say this railway could be constructed on lines similar to those I have indicated. It seems to be suggested that the railway

should be constructed and the Government should guarantee a return.

MR. KINGSMILL: No.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member referred to some guarantee, but I see no guarantee is mentioned in the motion. What I understand the hon. member wants is a railway constructed in the best, safest, and speediest manner. What do such districts want? I suggest to the Premier that it is just as necessary to build a railway from Nannine to Peak Hill as to build half-a-dozen other railways he can mention; but it will not be within the power of this or any other Government to build any such railway.

THE PREMIER: There is a Nannine Railway Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We take it for granted the Government will carry the line to Nannine, because they are bound to do so, and they have the money to take it half the way, anyhow. If the Government had done what they ought to have done, they would have constructed this line as far as the money would go, and it has never been explained why they did not so use the money.

THE PREMIER: You never urged it forward, you know.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is absolutely incorrect, because Nannine has never been mentioned but what I have put in a claim for this money. The Premier knows very well that as soon as Baxter and Prince's tender was accepted, and it was probable there would be a surplus, I got a promise from the Premier that the money would not be taken away from the district. I am grateful for that promise, and it is in consequence of it that we have £42,000 remaining. There was also about £15,000 spent last year out of the vote in the district, and no objection was taken; but it would have been better if the Government had used this £24,000 and the £15,000 in the construction of a railway as far as Tuckarra.

THE PREMIER: You have opposed railway construction, anyhow.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said I would oppose that Nannine railway, or any of the railways. What I said was that it was unsuitable at the present time to go in for new construction, and I say the same still, and that it would be much

better to let the next Parliament deal with the matter. This is an exceptional case, where the Government have a Bill and have the money, and are simply keeping the money for reasons known only to themselves. Why they did not construct the railway as far as the money would take it, is beyond my comprehension. But this is getting away from the subject under discussion. The time is near, if it has not already come, when we shall have to consider whether we shall not have railways constructed on some satisfactory basis, which does not involve the State in borrowing money. Such a railway would, no doubt, in the aggregate cost more, because private enterprise cannot, as a rule, construct railways as cheaply as the State can.

MR. MORAN: I believe private enterprise does.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The actual cost of construction by the Government would be less; but of course people who go into these speculations do so for the purpose of making money, and if you have these railways, nearly all the extra profit is swallowed up by what goes on before the money is raised in London. In connection with the Midland Railway Company, £1,000,000 was raised, and about £640,000 odd spent on the railway; but I contend that the convenience to the people interested during the years they would be waiting far out-balances the extra cost. Even though the Government should build a railway ten years hence to Pilbarra, to carry goods at £1 a ton, it would be infinitely better for a company to build the railway now and charge £5 per ton, when at the end of the time we shall probably have a railway without any cost at all. Are we to wait for every public work, especially railways, until the condition of the country permits the Government to go to the London money market? We will have to face this question, and consider whether we cannot devise some means by which this kind of railway may be constructed, and I think the suggestion would be found workable if we gave it a trial. If we find we cannot do it we will be still as far on as now; but I am certain if the Government themselves were asked to build a railway to Pilbarra, and provide the funds, they

would say at once they could not do it. Let us experiment with this one railway, because it will not be a serious matter to get 125 miles constructed, and it will not cost the State anything. If the present rate of carriage can be reduced one-half by the construction of the railway, and the railway brought into the hands of the State within a number of years, the proposal is worthy of consideration. The member for Pilbarra has scarcely any hope of a railway if he asks the Government to provide the money, and consequently he asks the Government to consider whether it will not be possible to have a line by some form of private enterprise; and the least the Government can do is to consider the question earnestly and seriously, and see if some scheme cannot be worked out by which this railway, at any rate, may be the basis of other railways and public works constructed by private enterprise, and handed over to the Government after a certain number of years. Whether the term be seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years makes no difference to the principle; because the railway would be handed over to the Government in a given number of years, and in the meantime the people would save perhaps two-thirds of the present rate of carriage. Let us test the question as a principle for other railways and other public works, in the same way as tramways are constructed in this city and in Melbourne. The suggestion is worth consideration, and I hope the Government will see their way clear to heartily support the motion.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): The request of the member for Pilbarra seems very moderate, because all he asks for is, in the event of the Government not being willing to construct the railway, that offers from those who are willing to do it may be received. The simple fact of receiving offers does not bind the Government to anything, because if the offers are not satisfactory they need not be accepted. Inasmuch as the place proposed to be served is very remote from our railway system, I do not see why we should not allow an outsider to come in and build the railway, if we secure the Government and the country against loss. Speaking from a mineral point of view, I know something of the country, and I have no hesitation in saying this is a

great and good mineral district. The difficulty in forwarding timber for the mines is very great, and the charge for carting to the place where it is wanted is considerably more than any gold mine, even with 2½-ounce stone, would be able to afford. As to copper mines, I know something of them, as I happened to be one of the first who inspected and reported on a copper mine which has been mentioned to-night; and I have no doubt this will become a great mineral country when it is properly opened out by railways. If we wait to open the country first, and build the railways afterwards, railways will never be built. Let us push on with the railways if we can, and if private persons offer to build a railway, allow them to do so by all means, so long as the country is properly secured.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I think every member of the House must sympathise with the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) in the motion he has brought forward. No doubt the district is one which requires development, and requires a railway to enable it to develop as rapidly as possible. At the same time, I would like to utter a word of warning in regard to the proposal before the House, because no offers are so illusory as those which propose to give powers to private syndicates to construct railways. I should be very glad indeed to vote on a motion of this nature, if any hon. member in the House could point out to me a single instance in the Australian colonies where private railways have proved successful and satisfactory, from a public point of view. I do not think there is one.

MR. DARLOT: Deniliquin and Moama line.

MR. VOSPER: If that be successful it is the only one.

MR. DARLOT: And the Broken Hill tramway.

MR. VOSPER: If we come to some of the great lines built by private enterprise, we see the Midland Railway in New Zealand, the Midland and the Great Southern railways in Western Australia, the Tasmanian lines, and so on, and we find that in almost every case they have proved unsatisfactory to the people.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is because of the conditions.

MR. VOSPER: But no matter how the conditions are drawn out, the result seems to be always about the same. What happens in those cases? In the first place the promoters of a private railway project go to the London market for their money. It may be said, why cannot the Government do the same? There is this difference, that the syndicate have a very much smaller security to offer than the Government, and a speculative security at that. The Government go on the London market with the security not only of the prospective railway but with the whole security of the public revenue and of the country behind them as well; consequently, in the ordinary course of events one might reasonably suppose that the Government would be able to get the money cheaper than the private company; for the Government offer better security, and the company's security being worse, it would have to pay a higher interest, and the margin of profit would not be so great. Therefore, if the railway will pay the private company, it should pay the Government a great deal better. But the difficulty with which we are faced, owing to some occult and peculiar influence in the financial world, which I confess I do not understand, is that the Government, though possessing better security, and therefore a better chance of obtaining the money, cannot obtain it, while the company, with its small security and its speculative element so prominently developed, can.

MR. MORGAN: Supposing the syndicate themselves had the money?

MR. VOSPER: Supposing we have a syndicate prepared to build this line and to expend the necessary money, would it not be possible for us to avoid the difficulties and dangers attending private enterprise, and the disappointments and failures which have arisen from that system in the past, by taking a leaf out of the book of the Egyptian Government in connection with the greatest public work carried out in that country since the days of the Pharaohs. Hon. members may recollect that some time ago it was proposed to carry out a great scheme originally brought forward by the advisers of Ismail Pasha, the Khedive—the damming of the Nile and the irrigating of a large area of country. This matter was fully considered by the Khedive's Government,

and by the British and French representatives who, practically speaking, were then financing the country; and it was at first thought it would be well for Egypt to borrow the money and construct this great work, and all parties to it were thoroughly agreed as to its necessity and utility. Then, owing to some international jealousy, the French at the last moment objected to the money being borrowed, and under the terms of the treaties it was impossible to proceed with the loan. Then the great firm of which Sir John Aird is the representative came forward and offered the Khedival Government to construct the whole of the works in connection with this irrigation scheme, provided the Government of Egypt would issue bills equivalent to our Treasury notes, redeemable in a certain term and at fixed rates of interest; and the two great dams on the Nile are now being constructed on these terms, and the canals which are required for reticulating the water over that vast area of country are also being built at the present moment. Of course the liabilities of Egypt are increased by this process, but the company have first of all the security of their own works, and secondly the security of the revenue of the Egyptian Government and of the country generally. If there is in the case of the proposal before us to-night a syndicate in existence—and we are always told in these cases that there is a syndicate in existence—but if there be a syndicate in existence, will it not be possible to negotiate with them on these lines, that the railway shall from the beginning belong to the Government, that it shall be paid for by Treasury notes redeemable up to a certain term of years—

MR. MORAN: That is just the same as a loan.

MR. VOSPER: Exactly the same as a loan; but here the money is intended for a specific work, whereas in the case of the ordinary loans, although there may be a schedule of works intended to be constructed, these are not taken into much consideration by the lenders, and it is well known that we may afterwards vary the schedule; whilst, if we make a deliberate contract to construct a certain work with the money borrowed, the lenders have the security of the contract

in addition to the general security; and if all that the syndicate require is to get fair interest for their money and a guarantee from the Government for the interest, the best guarantee they can obtain is to get as security the whole of the assets of the colony, and to lend the money to the Government for the purpose of constructing the railway, or instead of lending the money to construct the line, let its construction be paid for in Government paper. What happens as a general rule in regard to these private railways? Some private individual gets a concession and hawks that concession all through London, Paris, and Berlin, and sells it to the highest bidder; and then the highest bidder sets to work, and a favourite stock exchange dodge is to have the stock of that company outrageously watered, and the concern has to pay interest on about four times the amount of capital which it requires. It starts handicapped with a huge mortgage, and afterwards, when the line is constructed or half-constructed, or perhaps when the work is scarcely commenced, a large number of people have gone to this district on the supposition that the line was about to be opened. They have, practically speaking, been bamboozled into investing their money in that neighbourhood. They bring pressure to bear upon the Government, and then the Government are obliged to guarantee interest on the amount of money, or to take over the entire responsibility of doing the work, while the bulk of the profits are to go to the syndicate. This has been the case with the Midland Railway, and with many other private railways in these colonies. I think this House will do well to confine the operations of private enterprise in matters of this sort to those works constructed for municipalities. The railways should be constructed upon national lines, and by the nation either directly or indirectly. If there are people willing to build this line on the bare security of the line itself, they will be more ready to build it on the security of this colony. I look forward with considerable anxiety to trying any further experiments in private railways here. We have had a very severe lesson from so doing in the past, and I think there is every reason to expect that lesson is going to be repeated. I regret,

for the sake of my friend the member for Pilbarra, that I am unable to support his motion. I should be glad to assist him, because I fully recognise that if there is any portion of this colony which is deserving of a railway for its development, it is certainly the Pilbarra goldfield; and I should be glad, if the finances were in a better condition, to give my support to the construction of that line out of loan, sooner perhaps than support some of the lines on the Government programme. But I would ask hon. members, as they have been asked by the member for the DeGrey (Mr. Darlôt), to take this proposal into serious consideration, and also to discuss the whole matter in the most solemn frame of mind possible; because it will be a very great misfortune for us if we commit any more blunders like those which have characterised the history of private railways in Australasia during the past few years.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie) : I have much pleasure in giving my strong support to this motion. I recently made a trip through this very important gold district, and although I was quite convinced before making that trip, I am now absolutely convinced that this railway is a necessity for the proper development of its valuable resources. If this House will bear with me, I should like to make a statement with regard to that goldfield, and not only as to its importance as a goldfield, but also its importance as a mineral field. So far as minerals are concerned, I think it is quite safe to say that there is no part of this colony which has prospects that can compare in any way with the prospects of that important district with regard to tin, copper, and lead mining. There is one mine which has been mentioned already in this discussion—the Whim Creek copper mine. At the time I was there, some two or three months ago, the company had just concluded the shipment of 2,000 tons in one parcel of copper ore from that mine; and since my return to Perth I have learnt the financial result of that shipment, and I can assure the House that the result was most gratifying, inasmuch as the owners of the mine got a return of between £30,000 and £40,000 for this 2,000 tons of copper ore. This of itself is only one instance of a mine which can produce within a

few months an enormous return in copper alone. It is quite true, as the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) says, that the Government statistics do not make quite clear the value of the exports of the baser minerals of this colony; but still we have some knowledge of their value. As another instance, there is a copper mine at Croydon which has also shipped about 300 tons of copper ore within the last few months, and that has really given a handsomer result than the shipments from the Whim Creek copper mine. The former shipments have resulted in a return of £20 per ton from the copper ore; and, so far as one is able to judge from the nature of these copper deposits, it is reasonable to expect that there will be an almost unlimited quantity of copper shipped from the district, and there is every reason to believe that the gross value of the copper ores shipped from the North-West goldfield will amount to an enormous sum of money within the next few years. I think it is quite probable that the shipments of copper alone will be worth £200,000 or £300,000 within a year from the present time. In addition to this, we shall have an enormous district through which copper is distributed in the North-West. Copper has been found and its existence has been traced over a distance of something like 200 miles. Starting at Roebourne, and going in the direction of Pilbarra, it is quite safe to say that the whole of that district is copper-bearing; and it is only within the last few months, owing no doubt to the high price of copper in the market, that any serious efforts have been made to develop these important deposits. Now this House has to consider, with regard to this particular metal, whether it is not a good thing for the interests of this country to develop such valuable resources as those great deposits of copper in the North-West. Western Australia is looked upon as a gold-mining country only. Excepting we who are directly or indirectly interested in the development of copper mines, nobody seems to have heard or to have taken any interest in the fact that this colony is not only a gold producer, but a valuable producer of base metals also; and regarding this particular metal (copper) I am convinced, from what I know of the particular deposits now under discussion, that in the most un-

favourable circumstances as to the price of copper in the market, given proper facilities for working the mines, I have no doubt copper could be produced in the North-West district of this colony at a price as low as in any part of the world. That being so, if there were no other consideration except the development of this very valuable base metal, I think this House should fairly take into consideration the importance of railway construction for the development of this copper alone.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. MORGANS (continuing) : Before the adjournment I was speaking in reference to the valuable mineral resources in the North-West, and I should like to add a few observations to those I have made. I suppose the House will remember, with regard to the value of the North-West district in reference to copper, that there are, in addition, very many valuable minerals in the North-West, and I particularly mention tin and lead. Some observations have been made in reference to the deposits of tin, and I can more than confirm what has been said with regard to them, judging from my recent visit to this very important mineral district. At the present moment the question of the exploitation of the deposits of tin in the North-West is being confined entirely to the alluvial deposits; and I may say that, from personal observation, I have never during the whole of my career as a mining man seen such rich alluvial deposits as those in the North-West. At the present moment there are a very large number of men working upon those alluvial deposits, and many of them are not only earning good wages, but securing for themselves a competency. Probably, if one compares the alluvial tin deposits in the North-West with those in the Straits Settlements, it will be found that they bear a very favourable comparison with them. It is well known that a large number of alluvial miners who are now working these deposits, in addition to some companies who are working upon them, are obtaining results for tin wash greater than have been known to exist, with the exception of a few instances in Tasmania

in regard to that great Mount Bischoff mine. When I was there, prospecting trials were being made, and it is quite common in some of these deposits in the district about twelve miles from Marble Bar, which has been referred to by the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill), for tin wash to contain from 1lb. to 3lb. of tin to the dish. As a matter of fact, taking the whole of the alluvial deposits of tin, we must admit that they are not extensive so far as present discoveries have gone; but, taking them as they are, I doubt very much whether any tin deposits in the world up to the present moment have shown better results in the way of alluvial tin per load than those obtained in the Pilbarra goldfield at the present time. This is a matter of vital and great importance to the mining industry in Western Australia, and it is well worth the while of members of this House to fix their attention upon this very important mining district, because it is an axiom, it is an undisputed fact, that where you find large alluvial deposits, whether those deposits be gold, tin, or any other metal, important lodes of the same metal always exist in the same district. In order to satisfy my own mind on this very important matter, I took the opportunity of visiting the mountain ranges surrounding this important tin-field near Marble Bar, and it was not difficult to trace the source of this enormous deposit of tin, because outcropping upon the sides of some of the mountains can be seen to-day some of the finest tin lodes that any mining man would wish to see. I have in my possession at the present time samples taken from these valuable tin deposits in this Pilbarra goldfield, and they are most valuable ores of tin, weighing from 5 to 7 and some of them up to 10 ounces per crystal. As a matter of fact, I have never in the course of my mining experience seen crystals of so fine a character as those I saw in the district I am now referring to; and it is safe to say that if this great Pilbarra district were connected with the coast by railway, there would be an enormous development of this great tin-mining industry, which would add greatly to the wealth and resources of the colony. In addition to this, we have the lead mines. We know the necessity for lead in this country; we

know what an enormous amount of money has been spent in the erection of those splendid smelting works at Fremantle; and it is depressing to me to realise that at the present moment the owners of those great smelting works (which certainly have proved, and will prove in the future, of great advantage to the mining industry of Western Australia) are obliged in these circumstances to import from the other colonies nearly the whole, if not the whole, of the lead ore they require for smelting in those furnaces. I do not hesitate to state that this colony possesses more than enough lead ore to keep a hundred such furnaces going as they have at Fremantle; and why is it that we in this colony are not able to supply products that are required for those smelting works?

MR. MITCHELL: The company charge too much for their smelting.

MR. MORGANS: No. My hon. friend (Mr. Mitchell) says it is because their charges are high for smelting. The fact remains that Western Australia possesses, I contend, all the necessary lead ore for use in those furnaces; and I go further, and repeat that if the country in which these lead ores are found is opened up properly, there will be enough lead to keep going a hundred such furnaces as we have at Fremantle.

MR. MITCHELL: I quite agree with you there.

MR. MORGANS: I am glad the hon. member agrees with me there. The hon. member is connected with a district which is producing lead ore—Northampton. Unfortunately the mines worked in that district have not been so successful as we may have wished, but it does not follow that because of their ill success in the past they are not valuable mines. At present they are not enjoying that measure of success we should wish. I agree with what the hon. member has said in the House, that it is only a question of the investment of capital at Northampton to ensure prosperity in the development of the lead mines there. When I come to deal with the question of the North-West, then I say you have an enormous asset in the large deposits of lead ore there also. I have seen splendid specimens of galena and other ores from various parts of the North-West; I have specimens in my

possession at present; and I know of deposits of this valuable metal which, with the existence of a railway, would be made to pay handsomely, not only to those who work the mines, but to the smelting furnaces in the colony—not only those at present erected, but those which may be erected at a later date. If there were no other reasons for building a railway to this district in the North-West than what I have said in regard to these important base metal mines, this would be quite sufficient to justify the Government in building a railway or granting a concession to a private company to do so. But we have other resources: there are the gold resources of the North-West; and when I come to this point, which is a most important one, I do not hesitate to say, and I am glad to have the opportunity of expressing this opinion in the House, that as a gold-producing district that particular section of the colony known as the Pilbarra goldfield will some day excel in its production of gold Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie put together. Why do I make this statement? It seems a bold statement to make, but I am basing that opinion on an experience of 30 years in gold-mining. I have gone through the whole of that district, I have examined it with great care, and I do not hesitate to tell the House, and through the House the country, that there is no district of the same area in this colony, so far as I know, that can compare with the Pilbarra gold-mining district as a gold-producing part of this colony. How is it that, in the face of these facts, this great and important district has done so little? The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) has told us that during the period since the discovery of gold in that part, the district has produced 170,000ozs. of gold. That is a large amount, but I do not hesitate to say that if that part of the colony, if that great goldfield, had had the same advantages in the way of railway communication that we have had in the Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie districts, that production would have been five times, if not ten times, greater than the amount stated to the House to-night. Geologically speaking, I have not seen in the whole of this colony any portion of the country which can compare with the Pilbarra goldfield. I have seen no part of the colony to compare with it in the prospects

for the future in the development of gold and gold-bearing fields. The whole of the district is a network of quartz veins traversing rocks which are most valuable to the production of gold; and it is quite sufficient to say that in no other district in Western Australia, as far as I know it, can such a large number of gold-bearing veins be seen in the same area as on the Pilbarra goldfield. Now as to the value of these veins: the member for Pilbarra told us that the average from that district was 2ozs. 8dwts. to the ton. I made a calculation myself, and I find the figures a little higher, but I am quite prepared to accept what the hon. member has said, and take it at 2ozs. 8dwts. to the ton. I say there is no part of the colony that can show such a result as that per ton of ore. If it is possible in ten years to produce 170,000ozs. of gold from one district which is deprived of the advantages of railway communication, which suffers to a large extent from a severe climate, which has absolutely no fuel or mining timber of any kind; if it is possible to produce such a magnificent result as that from a goldfield labouring under all these disadvantages, no other argument is required for hon. members than the one I am endeavouring to bring before their notice, of the absolute necessity of encouraging this great gold-mining industry in the North-West, by the building of a railway to encourage it. Much has been said with regard to this railway which it is proposed to build by private enterprise. I am not in favour of the construction of railways by private enterprise, provided the Government are prepared to build them themselves; but the experience of the world with regard to railway building has been, as far as I understand it, that as railway constructors and railway managers, Governments are not good as a rule. I would not for a moment desire to raise my voice with the object of saying one word against the railway administration of this colony, because I consider the railways of this colony have been most admirably administered: I consider that, so far as we have gone to the present, it would be difficult to improve on the management of the railways; so that I desire that the House should not misunderstand me when I say that I consider private companies as a rule can manage railways better than Governments can do. The

leader of the Opposition has referred to the question of private enterprise in the building of railways. I quite agree with what he said. I think the Premier somewhat misunderstood, I am sure not intentionally on his part, but I think he somewhat misunderstood the position taken up by the leader of the Opposition with regard to the examples he gave in connection with the railway under discussion. What the leader of the Opposition intended to show was that it would be better in all circumstances, even if the rates were high, to have a railway built rather than have no railway at all. I am with the hon. member in that also. We know quite well, from past experience in the House, especially during the last three or four weeks, that the tendency of political thought here is that the Government should undertake no further public works. A great deal has been said in the House with regard to the debt per head of the population. I am not one of those who believe in that theory with regard to the debt per head, because there are so many circumstances attending calculations and considerations of that kind, that a broad statement as to the debt per head of the population in any particular community has no bearing on the expenditure of money, at all times. If that is so, and as I have always supported the Premier in his policy of public works in this House, I am one of those who believe it would be quite proper and quite legitimate for the Government to undertake the construction of this railway at once and borrow money to do it. I will give my reasons: because this railway, if constructed by the Government, will at once not only pay the interest upon the money invested, it will not only pay the redemption fund of 1 per cent., but it will leave the Government with a handsome profit besides. Therefore I say, from a financial point of view, the Government are justified in expending the necessary money, probably £300,000 or £400,000, in the construction of this railway. We are met with this difficulty, that during the last month in this House we have had a large number of opinions expressed as to the financial position of the colony. What a large number of financiers have developed on the Opposition side of the House during the last fortnight!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And on your side.

MR. MORGANS: We have seen during the last month or five weeks expressions of opinion with regard to the finances of the colony that have been alarming for the moment, and only on further consideration of the facts one was able to step down out of the position of fright which some hon. members tried to lead us into. I do believe, judging from the tendency of the debates in the House during the last four or five weeks, the time has come when the Government will not spend much money in the country on public works. Many arguments have been brought to bear in this regard; one particularly, that of our entering into federation. I am obliged to admit that there is some foundation and some strength in that argument: there is no doubt about it that our entering into federation will alter our financial status, and will certainly alter it in the future; therefore some consideration will have to be given to our financial position within the next few years. If that is so, it is only another strong reason why the Government should agree to a motion of this kind, and allow this very important and necessary railway to be built by private enterprise instead of the Government building it. What objection can be raised by the House to the construction of this railway? It is not connected with the system of railways of the colony. The nearest station to this district, as far as I can calculate, is about 1,000 miles from the present system of Government railways; and what objection can there be to the construction of this railway for the development of this great gold and mineral field by private enterprise, provided the Government are not able to do it? I ask the Premier whether the Government are prepared to consider the construction of this railway at an early date as a Government work; and if the Premier assures me that is so, I will be one of the first to stand back and say, let the Government do it. If the Government are not in the position, if hon. members are not in a position to tell us they are prepared to make the necessary outlay for the construction of this railway, let us open the gate to private enterprise; and let us not punish those men who are spending their money and their energies in this great North-West goldfield,

by locking up the whole of the district because we refuse to let private enterprise build a railway which the Government are not prepared to build. My word can be verified that it is absolutely impossible to develop this great North-West goldfield without the construction of a railway to Nullagine; and I would go further than the member for Pilbarra and say that a railway should at once be constructed even further than Marble Bar or Nullagine, and go nearer to the Onkover River, by which means the great mineral resources of the North-West would be tapped, and mines now lying dormant could be opened up profitably and to the advantage of the community at large. What is the difficulty in dealing with the mining question in the North-West? The great difficulty is that there is no mining timber, nor is there any fuel; at all events, fuel is so scarce in the district that in many places at the present time it costs £3 10s. per cord for firewood. When one realises that one ton of coal is worth two and a-half or three cords of firewood, it is easy to see what the cost of fuel is in that district at the present time; and this great difficulty can only be overcome by the construction of a railway. It is not possible to work these mines when there is no fuel and no mining timber. We are endeavouring to add our testimony to the fact that this is one of the best and greatest goldfields in the colony; and if that be so, why should the district be denied the advantages of a railway? Why should it be shut out from all the advantages the Southern mining districts have throughout the whole of those fields? It would be manifestly unfair and manifestly bad policy for the country to thus shut that district out; and in view of the fact that it is one of the most important mining districts, it is the duty of the Government, and of the Parliament and the public, to consider the question at once and decide whether or not a railway shall be built by the Government, or if not by the Government, by private enterprise. The system of building railways in the United States is a good one, and there not a mile of railway is owned by the Government, the whole being in the hands of private companies and corporations. Their policy is entirely opposed to the policy that pertains in this colony. There they build

railways to districts for the purpose of opening them up and developing them; but our policy seems to be to wait until a district is opened up and then build a railway to it.

THE PREMIER: Not at all.

MR. MORGANS: The Premier tells me that is not so, but I think that what I have indicated is the policy in regard to railway construction to some extent. I admit that when the railway was constructed from Northam to Southern Cross, the Premier and his Government at that time possessed a large amount of forethought and confidence in the future. I am prepared to admit they ran some risk in building that railway; but it showed their confidence in the future of the gold-mining district in that particular part. But so far as the general system of the construction of railways is concerned, not only in Western Australia but throughout the whole of the Australasian colonies, the policy has been to allow a district to develop itself first, and then build a railway. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule, and I know that in Victoria during the boom time there were political railways built, but these I do not take into account. I am speaking of railways built with the object of developing the resources of the country; and it is quite safe to say that the general policy of Australasia has been to wait until a district develops, and then build a railway. I can give a very striking example in the Chillagoe copper-bearing district of Queensland. The existence of enormous deposits of copper there has been known for years and years, but the Queensland Government never built a railway to Chillagoe, and, finally, in order to enable the mines to be developed successfully, a concession has been given to a private company to construct a line. Under no circumstances could the mines be worked until a railway was built, and as the Queensland Government were not prepared to increase the debt of the country or to make further expenditure, they have given a concession to the company which owns the mines to construct a railway. I could multiply these exceptions, but I think that quite unnecessary. Here at one end of the proposed line we have in Port Hedland one of the best ports on the north-west coast of Australia. When I was there not long

ago I saw one of the largest steamships belonging to the Adelaide Company, lying at the wharf at low water, with 25 feet of water below her then. What better could you want than that, so far as a port is concerned? Objection was raised by some of the captains of the steamers which run along the coast, but now we find that everyone of them is going into the port. It is true that outside the harbour there is a reef, on which, I believe, at low water there is something like four or five feet of water; but in view of the fact that the tide in this particular part is about 21 feet, steamers at all times at high tide can come in without any difficulty whatever. Therefore, we have at one end of this railway we are now advocating one of our best ports, and at the other end we have one of the best goldfields in Western Australia. The people there have to pay extravagant and extortionate prices for the carriage of supplies, the amounts varying from £12 to £20 per ton; and how is it possible that this goldfield, this valuable asset to the colony of Western Australia, can be developed under these circumstances without the construction of a railway? If all these facts are taken into consideration, if we look at what this field has done under the circumstances in producing 170,000 ounces of gold, and if we see that the average value of the ore crushed up to the present time has been 20zs. 8dwt., if we look at all the difficulties by which this great goldfield has been surrounded, this House cannot deny the railway communication required for the development of the resources there. This railway can be constructed without any difficulty, because this is a most favourable country for the work. The member for Pilbarra has told us that the deepest cutting is about five feet, and that through very soft rock; in fact, so far as I am able to judge from my travels over the whole country, it would be impossible to find a part of the colony where it would be easier to construct a railway. These are the advantages this railway has, and it is now for the Government to decide whether or not the wealth and the marvellous potential resources of this great portion of the colony are to be locked up until the Government are prepared to build a railway. Have the people of this district,

who are desiring to open up and unlock the riches which they have at their hand, to remain until such time as the Government are prepared to do the work. Or are the Government, this Parliament, and the people of the colony prepared to let those people call in the aid of private enterprise, which, so far as I can see, is the only way the great and important resources of this great district can be developed?

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am sure everyone who believes in the great future of this colony as a gold producer and a producer of minerals, must have been very pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). I was very gratified to hear such a good account of the Pilbarra goldfield, and it would be a good thing if a few other members of the House would take a journey to Pilbarra, or some other parts of the colony, when they would have very different views of our resources. As a rule, members, although they have some facilities for travelling, do not avail themselves of these facilities, and I regret to say that on this account the proposals of the Government do not always meet with the support they otherwise would. It is all very well for people to say they know from reading the newspapers, or from other sources, what is going on in various parts of the colony; but I know from my own experience that there is nothing like seeing for yourself, when you get a very different view of matters from that which you held previously. We know very little of what is going on on the various goldfields, and in the other large centres of population; in fact, on this account we are not so competent as we ought to be to deal with the various matters which come before us. The question raised by this motion is an important one, especially if it has for its object the adoption by this country of the principle of private enterprise in such works as the construction of a railway trunk line. That is a matter which will have to engage our attention later on. I do not think it is a matter we can very well deal with at the present moment, but we shall have to consider whether we shall build all our public works as Government works, or whether we are to encourage private enterprise when satisfactory opportuni-

ties offer. The only difficulty in the way of the Government constructing such works as this railway is the obtaining of the money; but, as has been pointed out, if the Government have difficulty in finding money, we may depend upon it private individuals will have a great deal more difficulty. The difference between the Government and private individuals raising money is that the Government want the money at a very low rate of interest, they want the price to be what is called "bed-rock," to have the money very cheaply, at 3 per cent. or $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. at the most, and to pay no commissions, or very few, in respect of the loan. Private enterprise, on the other hand is willing to pay more for the money and to give very much larger commissions to those who obtain or lend it. If the Government were willing to pay the same rates as are paid by private persons, there is no man with money who would not sooner lend it to the Government of a country than to a private individual to be expended in that country — [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear]—for the Government have far better security to offer. A limited liability company have only the work itself to give as security. If the work pays, of course all is well; if, on the contrary, the work does not pay, the company goes into liquidation, and the lenders lose their money.

MR. MORGANS: But the Government will not build such railways as this.

THE PREMIER: We will come to that directly. There is a fallacy about private enterprise. I do not mean to say I am against private enterprise as a rule, but I think the construction of the trunk lines of a country should be in the hands of the Government. There is a great fallacy as to the advisableness of building railways by private enterprise, and the only justification I can see for the fallacy is that our people have in their minds a fear that the work will not pay, that it will be a failure, and that the burden will then fall upon private persons who do not live in this country, and not upon the country itself. Because if the work is likely to pay, and if it be a work which the Government of a country ought to undertake, there can be no doubt it is far better for the people of the country that the Government should undertake the work, because the Government can get

the money cheaper, and they do not want any great profit. All the Government want is the interest and a reasonable sinking fund, and the remainder of the earnings is in the hands of the Government to be used for the reduction of rates or otherwise. We must remember the people of the country have to pay in any case, whether private people do it or whether the work is done by the Government. There is no one else who is going to pay. If a private company undertake a work, the revenues received from that work have to be paid by the people; and the same may be said of a public work constructed by the Government; so we must remember that whether the Government or private persons build a line, the people of the country have to pay all the same. For my own part, I do not think it worth while my saying I have any objection to this motion. To such a motion no one can have any great objection. At the same time, I must say it means nothing. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) moves these motions periodically, and he also takes particular care to obstruct the Government whenever they propose to bring forward a Loan Bill to build railways for the colony. We find last year the hon. member proposed a motion "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the Government should, at an early date, take into consideration the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar." It was desirable, only "at an early date." Eventually, that motion was not carried; it did not pass; and what did we find the hon. member doing shortly afterwards, and before that date too? We found him opposing any further expenditure by the Government on railways or public works.

MR. KINGSMILL: No.

THE PREMIER: We found him voting against the Loan Bill which the Government afterwards introduced.

MR. KINGSMILL: No; I did not.

THE PREMIER: I think you did, at the beginning of the session; we also found him saying last session he did not want any further loans at all; and we find him again this year doing the same thing, opposing the Government's desire to build railways throughout the Eastern goldfields. And still we see him coming

forward as he did last year, with a sort of milk-and-water motion like this.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He wanted to save money for the Pilbarra goldfield railway.

THE PREMIER: And what is the motion this time? Last time the construction of the line was "desirable at an early date"; and now the motion reads that, "failing immediate action on the part of the Government," we should receive offers from persons willing to construct the railway.

MR. KINGSMILL: That is a bit stronger.

THE PREMIER: He might as well have left out "failing immediate action," because he knew very well this railway was not part of the Government's programme this session, else it would have been mentioned in the Governor's Speech; but in order not to be an out-and-out supporter of private enterprise, these words were inserted.

MR. KINGSMILL: As a matter of courtesy.

THE PREMIER: We are to receive offers to construct the railway by private enterprise, on terms and conditions to be approved by the Parliament of this colony next session.

MR. KINGSMILL: I did not say "next session."

THE PREMIER: It seems to me that is a very harmless motion. No one can object to it, because it says merely that the people can send in offers, and we will submit them next year for Parliament to consider.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That will be one step in advance.

THE PREMIER: The question, however, is whether we have come to that position in the history of this colony when we are to give up the practice we have adopted with such great success for so many years, of building the railways from loans borrowed on the security of the revenues of the country. That is the very important question we have to decide, and until we do decide that question once and for all, we cannot, I think, seriously consider the construction of railways by private enterprise. I quite agree, if there is a district in the colony isolated, far away in the tropics, absolutely unknown to most people here except by name, that might be an

exception, in the case of which we might wisely say to ourselves: "We do not know what this place is; we do not know what is going on there; only a few people live there now; we hear it is a rich, auriferous country; we will let some one else go there and build the railway." But that is not the way we should deal with an important part of the colony recently visited by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), and of which he gives such a very satisfactory account. If one-half or one-quarter of what the hon. member believes in regard to that country turns out to be the fact, then we need not hesitate a moment in building a hundred miles of railway, costing about £300,000 or £400,000—about £15,000 a year in interest. Are we to delay building a line from Port Hedland to Marble Bar if the potentialities of that country are anything like—as I firmly believe them to be—those depicted by the hon. member? Are we afraid of a £20,000-a-year burden upon the people, when he tells us that £20,000 will be all repaid?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You can keep on the stock tax, if you build the railway.

THE PREMIER: I think not. I think that is a railway we might fairly look forward to building ourselves, and that it will not only pay all its own working expenses and the interest of some £15,000 or £20,000 a year, but will also be of advantage to the people of the colony. Hon. members in Opposition pose as democrats. But did anyone ever hear of a democrat in Australia advocating the building of a private line to a rich auriferous area such as the Pilbarra goldfield appears to be? Hon. members opposite do not know what they are: they are one thing to-day and something else the next. All they care about is a little temporary advantage.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is because you have turned radical. We are only democrats.

THE PREMIER: I will tell the hon. member about that, by-and-by. When we were discussing payment of members, he said he was going to be a conservative: we were too radical. It is rather a thorn in the hon. member's side that he cannot have all the democratic legislation reserved for himself, that there are people in the colony with some liberal ideas, at any

rate, and that he and his friends cannot monopolise them all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We do not want them all.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was not content with dealing with this matter on its merits, but he must anticipate another discussion which will arise here on Tuesday next, I hope, with regard to another railway; and, as usual, he put his foot in it by commencing to contrast the advantages of this proposed Pilbarra railway against those of a railway I am going to advocate on Tuesday—the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. We have had the pleasure to-night of hearing the speech of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). It was not news to me, I have heard his experiences already. But I say, though that district has good prospects for the future, still, if we are to judge by the output of gold, the Pilbarra district has not, during the past few years, done so well as the district my friend opposite (Mr. Illingworth) alluded to in somewhat sneering terms. In 1897 the Pilbarra goldfield turned out gold to the value £45,000; in 1898, £44,000 worth; in 1899, £75,000 worth. The Dundas goldfield in 1897 produced £73,000 worth; in 1898, £121,000 worth; and in 1899, £170,000 worth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How much has it produced altogether?

THE PREMIER: The Pilbarra goldfield has produced more.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what I say.

THE PREMIER: But that is nothing to go by; for after all is said and done, one field commenced much earlier than the other.

MR. MORAN: Not much.

THE PREMIER: Oh, yes; a good deal earlier, I think. The Pilbarra goldfield began to produce in 1889, and has produced about the same quantity every year, the values being, annually, £42,000, £61,000, £45,000, £48,000, £74,000, £44,000, £45,000, £44,000 and £75,000. That is since 1889. But the Dundas goldfield has only begun to produce, really, since 1896. There were two or three small lots before—[MR. KINGSMILL: Ah!]—but they amounted to only £500,000 worth. Surely you do not call that producing gold! That is only the result of the work of prospectors. The

development of the Norseman goldfield is only three years old: there is no doubt about that.

MR. KINGSMILL: Compare the capital.

MR. MORAN: Compare the machinery.

THE PREMIER: I do not want to compare: I do not see any good in comparing one goldfield with another. There is no object in that. I wish them both luck, and I wish to assist them both, and not to make comparisons between one and the other. If this colony is to embark on a policy of building railways by private enterprise, it seems to me the very first thing it ought to do is to set about passing a Bill stipulating the terms upon which it will be prepared to allow private persons to build railways, and then all that will be required will be for persons to offer to build railways on the general terms of the Act; and any special considerations may be embodied in a private Bill which they themselves introduce, authorising the railways to be constructed. It is a very difficult thing for any Government to be in this position, to receive offers from all sorts of people desiring to do this or that, to build this work or to build that. The Government themselves are not aware of the conditions Parliament would like to impose. They do not know the views of the members of Parliament in regard to all the details of a project for constructing an important railway. The Government themselves want a guide from the Parliament of the country. We have found very great difficulty, and all Governments no doubt have found the same difficulty, in dealing with applications from private persons to build this or that public work. People generally ask for permission to build a railway from A to B, costing perhaps a large amount of money; they are prepared to put down a sum; they have all the money subscribed. The money is always ready and waiting, and all they want is for you to enter into a preliminary contract, a promise being made to put down £10,000 in the meantime. The Government have a difficulty to know what to insert in a preliminary contract. They do not know what Parliament will insist upon, and the only safe way for us to proceed in, if we intend that private railways shall be placed in the public works programme of this colony, is to have a Bill setting forth the terms upon which

private railways may be built. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] Anyone who wants to build a private railway will only have to bring in a Bill himself to enable him to build a railway under this legislation; and any other special terms may then be added, either by the person himself or the Legislature. I have had that in view. I have often thought that we might encourage by that means branch lines, such as a timber company line or any other line for the opening up of the country, which the Government themselves do not wish to be bothered with or to undertake. I think we may take it for granted that there is a very strong feeling in this colony at the present time against private railways. We have seen that the goldfields can hardly put down a tramway to bring in wood to a mine without there being a lot of writing to the newspapers about it, and all sorts of reports are made. In fact, the people who promote the work are looked upon not as benefactors but as enemies, and they may be enemies for all I know; but this only shows the feeling, a feeling which has grown up in Australia, and has gained in strength too, that these railways should all belong to the country. I am sure that is the feeling. Of course people may change, and I for my part think that in regard to branch railways we might fairly give opportunities for private enterprise rather than be bothered with them ourselves. But in regard to the main trunk lines of the colony, I believe we would find it to be safer and better for the people and everyone in the country, to keep these in the hands of the Parliament of the country. We know very well that when we have only private people to deal with in regard to railways, there is always trouble. What is it coming to here now? The Government themselves are getting tired of dealing with contractors in building railways—there is so much trouble, and very often at the end of it there is a troublesome arbitration. I think there is always arbitration, but there is so much friction between the contractors and the public that it tends to make the Government unpopular. The contractor charges high rates for everything he does, and the people themselves think they are paying for the railway and the Government are not paying for it at all. There

seems to be a great disinclination on the part of the general public—I do not wish to complain, for I suppose we are all alike in that respect—to pay any more, or very little more, than the Government rates. If you have had to pay £40 a ton, and you are now only charged £22 a ton, the general public complain. Every penny paid in addition to what the Government charge is looked upon by the general public as an imposition. It is all very well for the hon. member to say “Charge more.” That might be done on private railways, and when you grumble you have no redress, but so long as we have Parliamentary Government in this country, and so long as Parliament has control of the railways, so long shall we have to charge the same, or nearly the same, on all our railways.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No doubt about that.

THE PREMIER: It is no use for people to say they would be willing to pay £5 a ton, or so many pounds a ton, for the carriage of goods a distance of 152 miles.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I never said it, and I never thought it. I was only quoting figures.

THE PREMIER: It would be well to come somewhat nearer the mark. It only shows that the people of the country are not in favour of private railways, if they can do without them. They want to have the railways owned and controlled through Parliament.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We cannot have all we want.

THE PREMIER: The present Government, and those who are supporting them, have been able to do so much for people, and to give them so much their own way, that perhaps the people are not so easy to please as at the beginning. Therefore we will give the hon. member a legacy of good treatment, which he will be bound to continue, if he desires to hold a high place in the affections of the people. As I said before, I do not for a moment intend to oppose this legislation. I consider the motion just as colourless as the one moved last year—meaning nothing. When we come back, if ever we do come back after the next general election, we shall perhaps have from someone some applications thrown on the table of the

House; but as for expecting the Government to deal with them, and to interpret the wishes of this House or to make any preliminary agreements, I am sure no Government would feel itself justified in doing that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Could you not bring in a Bill?

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): It is because the Premier thinks there is nothing in this motion that I should like to urge him and the Government to see that there will be something in it, if passed by the House. The Premier will perhaps take care that as far as he is concerned he will see there is not much good coming from it; but that is not the point. If this House decides that it is wise and suitable and timely to receive offers from *bona fide* people to build this line by private enterprise and investment of private capital, it will be for the Government to enter into this matter with spirit, and to have all the preliminaries of such agreement to lay before the House next session. There has been much interesting information given on this subject to-night, and we come at once to the question, what will the cost of this railway be, if it is 120 miles long? I think the average cost of our railway lines in Western Australia is £4,700 per mile. If you multiply that by 120, you will get the probable cost.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This one will not cost the average.

MR. MORAN: Let us put it at £100,000 below the average. Taking those figures, it will cost £400,000. I hold, and I have endeavoured to prove, that the Government are stuck up now and cannot possibly carry on the railways they have on hand. Look at the one to be submitted next week by the Premier. That is another railway costing at least the same amount of money, £400,000. If that line and the Pilbarra line are both necessary, as the Premier says they are, those two additional lines would cost £800,000; and besides that there is a very urgent railway the Premier has already committed himself to, which must be carried out—that is the line from Cue to Nannine and its continuance to Peak Hill.

THE PREMIER: Not Peak Hill yet.

MR. MORAN: I do not know the exact figures: what is the distance from Cue to Peak Hill?

A MEMBER: A hundred and twenty-one miles.

THE PREMIER: More than that. I think it is 140 miles to Cue.

MR. A. FORREST: The Government do not propose to build a railway to Peak Hill.

MR. MORAN: The Government do.

MR. A. FORREST: They have not said so in the Administrator's Speech.

MR. MORAN: But in another Speech the Premier said there was no doubt that a section of railway must be taken to Peak Hill. It is a moot question if Peak Hill is of equal importance to Pilbarra or Norseman.

THE PREMIER: The railways will pay all right.

MR. MORAN: That is the point. Can we go on and increase the indebtedness of this colony beyond all Australasian limits, and beyond all the limits considered safe by financiers in London? As we know perfectly well, even with a population of 200,000, if the Government carry out their proposals for the present session, there will be an indebtedness of £73 10s. per head in this colony. That is without the Pilbarra railway or the Peak Hill railway, and the work has to be done in two years.

THE PREMIER: Are you going to say the same all over again?

MR. MORAN: There is no question about the fact that I am going to give it to you on every possible occasion. I know of nothing so important to this House as keeping before the people at the present moment the imminent danger of running this country on the rocks of bankruptcy by extravagant public policy.

THE PREMIER: We should not do that.

MR. MORAN: If you add £400,000 for the Pilbarra line, you will, at the end of two years (granted that we have an increase of 10,000 per annum in the population) have run this colony into a total indebtedness of something like £76 or £77 per head.

A MEMBER: That is not much.

MR. MORAN: It is only a mere trifle—nothing! No one for a moment suggests that it would be wise to build this line by private enterprise, given the fact

that our credit is good, that we are below the Australasian limit, and that we have a fair chance of getting the money in London at a reasonable rate of interest, with a reasonable chance of the railway paying when it is built. But the Premier knows that he will not seriously consider the building of the Pilbarra railway line for the next three years. If the Premier comes back to power next year, he will not think of bringing a Bill before the House for the construction of this railway line. He may say that there are more important works to be carried out, and that this railway must wait. The present cartage to this goldfield is £12 10s. per ton; the highest schedule rates on our railway—Class 3 rates—is £3 per ton for that distance. While the Premier is waiting for the population of the colony to increase, for the rate of discount to come down, and for the colony to regain some of its lost credit, for lost it is, the people of Pilbarra are paying the difference between £3 and £12 10s. per ton. What for? Because for some unexplained reason it is supposed that we as a Parliament, assisted by the Engineer-in-Chief of this colony, assisted by the Attorney General and the best legal advice which he can get in Perth, cannot draft an agreement that will not be broken through. Here we are a Parliament of 44 members, supposed to have a little ordinary intelligence, yet with the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief, who is second to none in the Australian colonies for legal knowledge appertaining to public works, and with the advice of the Attorney General and the whole legal staff at his command, we cannot draft an agreement for a company to build this line. It seems to be absurd altogether. We have before us the large and considerable experience of every other Australian colony in connection with the construction of railways. In South Australia they had an agreement with the Silverton Tramway Company, and that agreement we should naturally avoid. We should not consider for one moment the land-grant system—that is already dead; nobody would dream of that. We say to the people who are interested, or we might say to the member who has invested so much capital in this district, and who would no doubt be one of the first to take this

matter in hand if he had the privilege of doing so: "We are willing to negotiate with you to build the railway to the coast of Pilbarra." What harm can be done? We shall have the right to purchase the line back again, and even if we give a little more than the railway is worth when the time comes, that would be justified by the saving in cost of carriage ten times over. That would be justified by the increase of population in Pilbarra, by the fact that the country would have ten thousand people engaged there where to-day we have one thousand. I cannot see where the comparison between the land grant railway and the private railway for carriage only comes in. In the one case we lock up the land from settlement, we create a small colony outside of our own laws, outside our own land laws, and we give away the estate. In that case we must expect difficulty and trouble. In the other case we give no concessions at all; at least no monopoly; we simply give the right to lay a railway down in a chain or two-chain width of country. That contract could be hedged round, and there could be the right of purchase within a certain period. If I was to take such a contract on my own behalf I should instruct my engineer to supervise the construction of the line, audit every account and keep a record of what the railway cost. Then allowing so much for depreciation or appreciation, it must be a straight deal from the start between the Government and the contractor. Harm can only come in when there is a big land concession or when the Parliament of the country is negligent, ignorant, or interested—one of the three. Ignorance cannot exist, ignorance cannot be laid at the door of this Parliament, that is perfectly certain, neither can negligence, and nobody in this House is interested in the matter: if so, they would very soon be found out. We are in debt at the present moment; we are committed to an indebtedness beyond any other Australian colony. Are we justified in going beyond the Australian limit of indebtedness? If not, there is an end to the matter—we cannot get the money, therefore we cannot do the work. There are hundreds of millions of pounds invested in the gold-mining industry in this country. The Government do not object to enter into agreements for that purpose. The Gov-

ernment do not object to give away our pastoral and agricultural lands, above all, they do not object to hundreds of millions of capital coming into the gold-fields. We control that because we have the supreme right of taxation and the right of control. We have the control of the Midland Railway Company at the present time. We have absolute control and power to bring that company to their knees if need be. There would be no danger to the State if the money were available for this work, but it is not safe to go beyond that limit for the sake of the credit of the colony. There should be no more objection to allowing a private company to build this line than to allowing a private company to get hold of the Lake View mine. If the motion is carried—I am sure it will be—I hope it will not be treated as a dead letter by the Government, because that will be flouting Parliament. I hope it will be taken up in a live way, and I hope the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), who has shown his faith in this district, will take the matter up and make a *bona fide* offer to the Government. I hope the Government will listen to no man who has not a bank balance in Perth, and who cannot put up a deposit at once. People who wish to treat with the Government must put their money down and show their *bona fides* at the start, and when that money is down the time should be short and brief. If that is done, nothing but good can result from this motion. I hope the new Commissioner of Railways will be able to fix up a contract next session between the Government and some private person for the construction of this line.

MR. CONNOR (East Kimberley) : It gives me great pleasure to support this motion, for the necessity exists for the construction of this railway as soon as possible. If I could see any possibility of the Government being able to undertake the work within a reasonable time, I would not support the motion. But I fail to see how it is possible within the time necessary, for the Government to undertake the work. The question of the construction of this railway is not a new matter to this House: the desirability and the necessity for it was discussed here at great length some years ago. I think it was the then Commissioner of

Crown Lands who moved in the House in this matter and put a strong case before hon. members; so strong that a survey was made of the line over much the same country as it is now suggested the railway should be built. When this matter was being discussed here, the Premier agreed that there was a necessity for this line, and on the 17th September, 1894—six years ago—he said “still he would not object to undertake the work if he could be satisfied that there was a good and permanent goldfield there.” That is the reason why, six years ago, the line was not taken in hand by the Government. Since that time it has been proved by the result of the crushings and the returns from that district, which we have had the pleasure of hearing in the House to-night by a gentleman who is competent to give an opinion, that this goldfield is quite as good, if not better than either the Kalgoorlie or Coolgardie goldfields. As the Government are not prepared to start with the railway, I fail to see why the motion is not a commendable one. It does not bind us to make any concession, and if the agreement made is not to the advantage of the Government and the country and the people who live there, then the contract need not be entered into. If a suggestion of this sort were entertained by the Government, they would insist on terms as to carriage, and would see that no concession in the form of land was given, except what was necessary. The objection to railways being carried out by private enterprise in this colony is in consequence of the amount of land given away. I refer to what is called the land-grant system, and I believe this House is unanimously of opinion that railways should not be built on land-grant terms. The Government would only be required to grant the land on which the line would be built, and fix rates as to carriage similar to those that exist on the Government lines, with the right to purchase the railway at a fair price. We are told that 170,000 ounces of gold have been produced in this district, and we have also been told that if fuel were available at present this amount of gold would be doubled and trebled, with the possibility of producing as much in a few months if fuel were available for the mines. This railway would help not

only to develop the great gold industry, but there are lots of other minerals in that country, including tin and lead; in which case there would be back traffic for the trains carrying supplies to the gold-field. The line would also be a help to the pastoral industry. It would be the means of opening up the back country there as well as taking lots of miners to develop the mineral resources. It would be the means of increasing the marine traffic of the coast, and this is a very important point in connection with the commerce of the country. The more steamboats trading here, the greater the prosperity of the country generally. That in itself ought to be sufficient reason for the Government not to lose any opportunity to help to develop this particular line of industry. I may also say this line was almost started by the Government some time ago, as I believe part of the work suggested six years ago by the Commissioner of Crown Lands was a practical wagon road across the marsh leading to Port Hedland. Years ago this was thought to be a necessity, and that part of the work has been carried out. That being so, and in view of the arguments we have heard from the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), it will be a calamity to this country if this railway be not built in a very short time. The Premier says we are to look forward to this railway being built, and in that he rather puts me in mind of a book I read some time ago called "Looking Backward," because, from present appearance, it will be a hundred years before the line is started. I give this motion my support as a representative of a Northern constituency, and I am sure the people even further north than this particular district will look on the passing of this motion as an indication that the Government wish well towards the whole of the country. The passing of the motion would mean that the money spent in Western Australia will not be centralised in two or three particularly favoured districts, but that the Government intend to provide for the people even so far away as Pilbarra. I move that after the word "Marble Bar" the words "or Nullagine" be inserted.

MR. MORGANS: I second the amendment.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): From what I can gather from the tone of the debate

and from utterances on Government benches, there has been raised the old bugbear of opposition to private enterprise. We have been told about syndicate mongers, and informed that when people got a concession they go to Paris, London, or Berlin to sell it, and the result is that the people of this country at some future time have to pay an enormous advance on what the line could have been built for by the Government. I ask the House to put that consideration on one side, and think no more about it. We on the Opposition side of the House have been twitted with being "croakers" and "do-nothings," but in regard to the Northern district the probabilities are that the terms would better apply to the Government for the last ten years, than to the Opposition, who have never had a chance of doing anything in the matter. While the Premier is very anxious to preserve the British capitalist from being in any shape or form "rooked," he is not prepared to carry that principle so far as he should in other matters. If it be right in regard to railways, why is it not right in regard to ordinary company-mongers connected with timber companies, or bogus mining companies? The whole of the "stuffing" has been knocked out of any argument used by the Premier, when he parted from the paths of plain logic and twitted the Opposition. The Premier is not here, but I would like to ask the right hon. gentleman and the House if there is any possibility of the Government building the line. From what has passed this evening I may take it as a fact there is not the slightest possibility of the line being built by the Government; and if that be so, are we doing right in locking up this great Northern district? Here is a huge district with immense capabilities and resources, and yet we are determined, dog-in-the-manger like, to prevent the development of a country which we are told can support a population as large as that in the Southern portion of the colony.

MR. D. FORREST: You will not give it any representation.

MR. GEORGE: I can understand why Parliament refuses to give the district a representative, if such a representative has to be drawn from the class of the hon. member (Mr. D. Forrest), who is acting as the Premier's deputy.

MR. D. FORREST: I am not acting as his deputy.

MR. GEORGE: I should be very sorry to hear you wish to do so. Have we, a handful of people down here, the right to shut up a large portion of territory which we cannot possibly govern, because we know nothing whatever about it? A great portion of this district is in very few hands, and if Government railways were built there, they would have to be built independently of the system down here; and such railways would entail an amount of responsibility which the new Commissioner would be very sorry to incur. In the very near future we shall have to face the question of the absolute partition of this portion of the colony from the Northern district. And what harm could that separation do to this part of the colony? Do we derive such an enormous revenue from the North that the loss would make a material difference in the estimates of the Treasurer? So far as I can learn, the revenue from that part of the colony is very small indeed, and if that be correct why should we hinder anything likely to develop the North? Why should we hinder it even now, and put back its progress, as we most inevitably will do if we stand dog-in-the-manger now? I cannot understand the opposition to the motion, which I believe the Premier has scoffed at.

MR. A. FORREST: No.

MR. GEORGE: If the Premier has not scoffed at the motion, he has simply undergone one of those chameleon changes of his, and had another sort of turn-over, which is not dignified in the Premier's position. But I cannot take the assurance of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), because I know perfectly well, he having told us so, that he is not in the inner counsels of the Premier. I rose up for the particular purpose of pointing out that the making of railways by private enterprise has been sanctioned by the House, and has been carried out on the goldfields. There are resolutions and questions on record in connection with this matter, and private railways have been built, and are still allowed for the timber mills. If there is not any timber up in the North, and the member for West Kimberley could send up a few jarrah sticks to make a forest, there is not the slightest

reason why the railway should not be permitted. If we take this Kruger-like spirit of blocking the country in its natural development, because we have not the money or the will, or because we desire, for some particular reason of our own, to keep that country locked up until it suits our private purposes, we are not acting as the representatives of the people should, but are preventing the forward motion of a district because we are too mean and too petty-spirited to rise to the occasion.

Amendment put and passed, and the motion amended accordingly.

MR. KINGSMILL (in reply): I just wish to say a few words, to thank hon. members who have taken such a warm interest in, and shown such sympathy with, the motion I have brought forward. It is very pleasing to me to find that this project of mine has met with so little opposition, and especially I must thank the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) for the powerful and flattering testimony he has afforded the House, as to this valuable goldfield. I am somewhat sorry the Premier should have accused this motion of being colourless. The only want of colour I can see is that the motion does not, perhaps, bring more home to the Premier the state of the finances of the colony that necessitated my proposal being put in the form it was; but had I applied that colour, I do not think the Premier would have thanked me for it. As has been said, the Government at present are absolutely clogged with the public works they have undertaken, and it will take them years to carry those out; and I submit that the only chance of obtaining the railway for the people of Pilbarra was to put my proposal in the form in which it has been put. It was Hobson's choice—private enterprise or nothing; and because I was courteous enough to allow the Premier an opportunity of saying that he would not carry out the work, it has pleased him to accuse me of being "colourless." I must also thank the Premier for having supported this proposition with a great deal of ascerbity. He said it was always extremely invidious to compare goldfields, and he straightway proceeded to institute comparisons. If the Premier had only taken, in the first place, the total returns of the two fields, and in the second place

the returns per head of the population of the two fields, and in the third place if he had taken the capital put into the fields and the machinery erected thereon, I think he would have found his comparison did not "pan out" so well as he made it appear. The Premier also said neither this Government, nor any Government would be prepared to say what terms would be acceptable to Parliament. And I submit that, by this motion of mine, they are not asked to do so. As a matter of fact, I took particular pains that they should not be asked. I safeguarded the motion by providing that the terms and conditions upon which the railway should be constructed must be laid before Parliament.

THE PREMIER: You said "to consider offers."

MR. KINGSMILL: If the Government receive offers, I expect them to open the envelopes in which they are contained and to consider the contents, so that if there is any explanation needed they may lay it before this House.

MR. GEORGE: It might be useful to have a few deposits.

MR. KINGSMILL: The Premier said he did not think this motion would be of any use. Well, that is absolutely and entirely in his hands; and I think I can depend on the members who supported me in my motion to-night to see that the motion will be of use. I desire again to thank the House for the consideration shown the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION — WINERIES AND STORAGE, TO ASSIST.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, in order to prevent disaster to the viticultural industry following the altered conditions of the colony under federation, and to promote further extension, inducements should be offered for the establishment of wineries and storage cellars.

He said: It will be within the recollection of hon. members that a motion was carried in this House some two years ago, providing that the Government should assist in the establishment of approved local industries. Since that time a deputation has waited on the Commissioner of Lands, and was assured by the Commissioner that it was the intention of the Government to introduce such legislation

during this session. However, since that time the members of the deputation have learned that, owing to so many other subjects engaging the attention of Parliament, possibly this proposed legislation will not be passed this year; hence my reason for moving this motion at their instigation. Some slight objection may be taken to its wording, but that can be easily amended in the course of the debate; still I hope hon. members will realise the importance of taking some such step at the earliest possible opportunity. A similar course, adopted in the South Australian Assembly by a resolution identical in effect with that I am now moving, was the means of establishing a wine dépôt in London; and it is needless to say the advantages have been immense; so much so that South Australian wines are being readily purchased in England. Owing to the blow which has been dealt to this particular industry by federation, my object is to seek some means of putting it upon a better footing than that on which it now stands. While hon. members may differ in opinion as to the extent of the effect on this industry of the adoption of federation, still the federal question is now settled and I have no desire to raise the point. Such a pronounced verdict has been given in the referendum, that I am quite willing to join with those who hold views contrary to my own, and to work with them for the good of the country. I have been informed by those who are competent to express an opinion that the cost of producing wine in this colony is about 2s. per gallon, whereas in other colonies wine can now be bought for 1s. per gallon. The principal reasons are that in this colony the areas under cultivation are very small, necessitating greater expenditure in labour, in pruning and ploughing, and especially in regard to clearing the land, the portions of our Eastern district specially adapted to vine growing being heavily timbered. The cost of clearing amounts to from £5 to £10 per acre. At the present time there are altogether 300 vineyards in this colony, with an estimated capital cost of about £150,000. In some places in the other colonies there are very large areas under vines, with modern machinery and appliances, which enable wine to be produced much more cheaply than here. Vignerons there, having sufficient capital

at their disposal, are able to give maturity to their wines, and they already have those advantages we are now seeking to gain by the proposition before the House. My proposal is that the Government should give a guarantee of, say, four or five per cent. upon the amount invested, the investment, of course, in any particular industry to be subject to the Government approval. I readily understand it may be urged that, now federation is accomplished, we shall not have power to do these things. But I desire to point out that we are not seeking for anything more than we are permitted to do under the Commonwealth Act; and I think it is possible to make provision for a guaranteed percentage upon the amount invested.

MR. MORAN: I think that is prohibited.

MR. QUINLAN: It has been urged that something of the kind is being done in South Australia. I think after hearing the Commissioner of Crown Lands, hon. members will agree that it is within our powers to give effect to my proposal. At all events, I know it is intended by one or two capitalists to invest money in this direction, if some guarantee of a certain rate of interest upon the capital invested be given. I also know that there are a number of other industries which could be helped with advantage to the colony; but to-night I principally urge the claims of this particular industry, because it is of such vast importance, and those concerned in it, owing to the near approach of federation, are almost giving up hope and will be seriously discouraged unless some such proposal be adopted. This is not a new idea in this colony: we have precedents for it here, and we have a precedent, I understand, in England. But suffice it to say, in this colony we have already offered inducements to establish the smelting industry in Fremantle, and the company there were paid a considerable sum.

MR. VOSPER: That is an unfortunate precedent to quote.

MR. QUINLAN: I am quoting it merely as a precedent; and I do not desire this bonus to be granted on similar terms. We have also assisted the Midland Railway Company with a grant of £500,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Another bad instance.

MR. QUINLAN: And some few years ago, this House made a concession to the pastoralists in the Northern districts, and a very proper one in my opinion, which had at the time my hearty support. What I seek now is merely that some guarantee of the interest only shall be given to people willing to start this enterprise. It will give them the advantage of being able to pay small growers in cash; or in other words, they will be able to deal with the growers in the same manner as the millers deal with the farmers. In asking hon. members to support this motion, I need scarcely relate the fact that I have not buttonholed any member for the purpose of securing his support. I leave it to hon. members' judgment, and feel confident that they will realise the necessity for taking some such step with a view of helping not only the industry I have in my mind, but of taking a similar course at a later stage with regard to other industries established in our midst. I had intended to quote from several authorities, but at this late hour I leave the question in the hands of hon. members, asking that they will pass the motion in the slightly altered form in which it will appear after the amendment intended to be proposed by the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

MR. MONGER (York): I have the greatest pleasure in supporting this motion. On the eve of departing from our old ideas and our old form of government, I think it is necessary for the present Parliament to protect as far as possible the industries and the interests of the people of Western Australia. It is not necessary for me to point out to hon. members the number of bonuses which have been given by the Governments of the other colonies for the support of industries such as those referred to in the motion. To refer to the bonus system which for some years has occupied a prominent position in Victorian politics would take some considerable time. I believe every hon. member knows the productions which Victoria has encouraged in that manner, yet we in this colony have never attempted to foster our industries in that direction. However, on the eve of what we may term a great political change, at all events as regards this colony, it is the duty of every member, whether he be interested

in agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, or any other Western Australian industry, to try to place such industries in a position somewhat similar to that which they occupy in the sister colonies.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell): I desire to say that, in dealing with this motion, the Government will be quite prepared to consider any *bona fide* proposal brought under their notice. They fully recognise how desirable it is to encourage in every legitimate manner the spread of viticulture in this colony. My first impression was that this industry would be shattered by federation; but, strange to say, on my discussing the matter with some of our leading viticulturists, they rather laughed the idea to scorn. But apart from that, and with regard to the spread of settlement, it is the small man who goes in for the cultivation of the vine with five or ten acres, who should have a market to which to take the raw material, just as the farmer should have a roller mill to take his wheat to. From this standpoint I regard it as very important indeed that a central winery should be established. We have not had much experience with regard to giving encouragement in this direction, but there is no reason why a *bona fide* proposal should not be entertained. It has been felt that the time has arrived when measures should be taken to give encouragement not only to the spread of viticulture and the establishment of central wineries, but also direct encouragement to new industries generally. One of the great wants of Western Australia is indicated by the fact that manufacturers in different directions have not kept pace with development. Those engaged in agriculture and in other departments are compelled to use imported machinery instead of machinery manufactured in Western Australia; and we have been stimulating the industries in South Australia and other places instead of industries in our own colony. I hope very shortly to have the pleasure of introducing for the consideration of members a measure dealing not only with the motion before the House, but also with the direct encouragement of other industries, by which a guarantee of 5 per cent. upon the paid-up capital will be provided. I need

not dwell upon that further than to say I believe I shall be able to convince members, at the proper time, of the importance of giving every encouragement to the establishment of new industries and manufactures in this colony. Meanwhile the only proposal coming from viticulturists with a view to giving effect to this motion will have due consideration at the hands of the Government.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): It is a peculiar fact that when we arrive at the last session of a Parliament, its political progress is always marked by two phenomena. One is the extreme anxiety of members to pass democratic legislation, and thereby make their "calling and election sure" at the forthcoming general election. The other is to provide for themselves in the case of emergency, so that in the event of defeat they may carry with them from their parliamentary career some substantial advantages to act as a solatium for their removal from office. So we see in one session attempts made to "tickle the ears of the groundlings" by means of democratic measures, whilst on the other hand there is an endeavour to secure substantial privileges for syndicates. A smell of syndicates has been over our proceedings, and it has fallen to my lot twice to give a warning word against granting too many concessions to private capital. If I may quote the words of a distinguished and celebrated Chinese (I refer to Li Hung Chang): "Let us make use of foreign capital, and take care that foreign capital does not make use of us." It appears to me that in these proposals of private railways and central wineries we, in making use of foreign capital, might find ourselves made use of in return. What is this proposal? It is that certain viticulturists who are willing to establish central wineries shall get a guarantee of 5 per cent. on the outlay. That is a guarantee against all possibility of loss; and the justification urged for that measure is that this will afford a market for the small men, and thereby presumably increase the numbers of small men, and the amount of good which they will accomplish. If this subsidy were to be given to the producer of grapes directly, I should not have very much fault to find; but what is it? It is an encouragement to the middlemen; a subsidy given to

those who deal in wine, so that they may be able to deal in more wine; it is to encourage them to establish wineries so that they may create a demand. Of course, unless they get a sale, any encouragement given to them in this direction will necessarily fail in its purpose; but I cannot understand any reason why this Government should go to any special trouble to assist those who very often oppress the producer on the one side and cheat the consumer on the other. I do not say this particular syndicate or syndicates will do that, but still that is the general scope of the middleman's operations, and the further he can proceed in that direction the larger is the profit he makes. It is a class of persons notoriously oppressing the producer, which is to be subsidised out of the revenue of this country. This proposal to guarantee these middlemen 5 per cent. on the outlay means practically that the Government take the risk while the middlemen take the profit. The middlemen risk their capital, and who would not risk capital under these circumstances, when they have a security that their industry will be established, and a guarantee of the Government in the last resort that they will have their interest paid? We deprive them of all the risks incidental to the investment of capital, and we take those risks upon our shoulders in order to establish a syndicate of middlemen who, as I say, will oppress the producer and cheat the consumer. We may, or we may not, get direct profit from the operations of such syndicate; but it is so vague and indefinite that it is scarcely worth mentioning. I certainly think that before any proposal of this kind is accepted by this House, the House might take into consideration the advisableness of the Government undertaking to do something of this kind themselves. Why cannot they establish central wineries in the same way as the Queensland Government have established central mills? If we are going in for socialism, let it be out-and-out socialism, and not half-and-half. Half-and-half means that we take all risks and give all the profit to the foreign exploiter. To me there are no advantages in such a system. If the Government think it worth while to have central wineries established, and if they are willing to take the risks of loss arising out of this trade, if they are willing

to assume this responsibility, in the name of common sense let them take over the responsibility of establishing wineries themselves, and work the industry for all it is worth. If this proposal were of a character which I think would promote the interests of the growers, the wine producer and the wine maker, I should give the motion my vote; but the contention of the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) is that this will be for the benefit of the middleman (at the expense probably of the consumer and producer), and I see no reason why this country should take financial risks for the purpose of encouraging a class of persons often too undesirable.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Federation will stop this.

MR. VOSPER: I do not think you can do it under the Commonwealth Act.

THE PREMIER (Rt. Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If only one winery were to be established, of course I should quite agree with what the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has said. If one person had the whole of the business in his own hands, he might be able to give a very small price for the product and charge a large price to the consumer; but I take it that there would not be only one winery. The object of my friend the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) and of the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell) is to try and improve the wine industry and encourage the production of the grape. There is no doubt that if they could do that, it would be worth risking something. This country is admirably suited for the growth of the vine, but the difficulty is that there are no central wineries established, and the article produced is not of a regulated character. Each person makes his own wine, and all sorts of qualities are produced. We will never be able to make the wine a good marketable article unless we can produce the same quality year after year. That is the object of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) and of my friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell), who has given a good deal of attention to the subject. The Commissioner of Crown Lands has a Bill drawn which he intends to submit to the House. I desire myself to encourage him in every way I can in his efforts to

increase the productions of the country. Of course there is a difficulty under federation. If this be a bonus, it will not be possible to give it under federation. The time has gone by under the Act when any bonus will hold good. Bonuses up to a certain date, some time last year I think, would hold good, but any bonus given now would not be legal under the federal constitution. This motion is something like the one which preceded it, for it seems to me that it will give pleasure to some people and do very little harm. I do not think there will be much harm in it, but I desire to ask my friend to amend it. I do not like the wording of it, because it seems to imply that federation is going to be disastrous to industries. I think we ought not to pass that. I am surprised that the great federalists opposite have allowed this motion almost to pass without remarking on that point.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is colourless.

THE PREMIER: I do not like to pass a motion saying that disaster to the viticultural industry of the colony is threatened by federation. I do not think it would do to pass a motion of this sort; therefore I ask the hon. member to amend it to the effect that it is desirable that inducements shall be offered by the Government for the establishment of wineries and storage cellars. That matter will have to be considered, if my friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands introduces his Bill with regard to this subject. I believe the measure is one to which he has given a lot of attention, and he places great value upon it. If he introduces it, it will take the place of this. I do not know whether it will get that far, but still the hon. member will probably place it upon the table for the information of the House. I would ask the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) if he will accept this suggestion that I make. I do not care to move it myself. If some one will move it, I think it will be more acceptable to hon. members; but I would rather move it myself than that we should pass the motion in the shape in which it stands on the Notice Paper. The only objection I have to moving it is that it may be thought I am too serious about this matter, and that I would be bound to give effect to it: I rely upon the Bill which the Commissioner of Crown Lands

proposes to introduce: I rely upon that measure more than this motion to carry out the object in view. I must confess that I am not acquainted with the details accurately at this moment, but still, when placed before the House, the Bill will give full information in regard to the object the Commissioner has in view. The principal object is to try and encourage as far as we possibly can every producing industry upon the land, and I am sure that in that object all of us will try to assist him.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I would like to suggest to the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) that having the assurance from the Commissioner of Crown Lands that a Bill is to be brought in which covers this ground, and some other ground as well, it would put the House in a better position if he would withdraw the motion and await the result of the Bill. I do not think the motion will be carried: I would not like to see it carried in its present form: any amendment would be much better. Having ventilated the question and having the assurance of the Premier that the Government intend to bring in a Bill in this direction, it would be better for the House to be in possession of the proposal of the Government, than to discuss a blank motion which may or may not mean anything. I hope the hon. member will withdraw the motion and await the appearance of the Bill.

MR. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I wish to explain that my sympathies are with the ideas contained in the motion. As to the particular form of help, the motion does not set it forth. I entirely agree with the leader of the Opposition when he suggests to the mover that it would be judicious to leave the matter in the abler hands of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. I understand that the sympathies of members on both sides of the House are for encouraging this industry. Even the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), who spoke against the motion in its present form, is in favour of the idea suggested. I think this motion will no doubt strengthen the hands of the Minister when the measure comes before the House. Every one of us will then be able to give our support to the Bill, which will be done willingly.

Mr. RASON (South Murchison): After the remarks which have fallen from the Premier and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, I think it will probably meet with the view of a majority of members if I move that all the words after "House" in the first line be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: "It is desirable that inducements should be offered by the Government for the establishment of wineries and storage cellars." I simply wish to remark, in connection with the amendment, that the viticultural industry has reached such a stage in this colony, that either some inducement of this sort must be offered to it, or undoubtedly it will go to ruin. From what the Commissioner of Crown Lands has stated, it is his intention to introduce a Bill which will give effect to the ideas expressed in the motion; therefore the amendment will probably meet with the approval of a majority of members of the House.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): Before the motion is put I would like hon. members to consider what it is they are committing themselves to. If the motion is passed—not that I have any objection to assisting an industry provided the assistance is on commercial lines—there is nothing to prevent any industry in the colony coming cap-in-hand to the Government and to members of the House to try and get some sort of inducement offered by the Government to establish what are called new industries. And the Government have been giving land away for the establishment of "new industries" which are not new, being only another branch of an industry we have had established in the colony, and which will tend to rob the established industry of the footing it has obtained throughout the trials and troubles of the last six years. If once we give this power to the Government, it will mean one huge "job" of political jobbery, which the Government can ill-afford to stand at the present time. A member has stated that unless the motion be passed the wine industry will go down. I am afraid the hon. member is sitting on the wrong side of the House: he should be sitting on this side amongst the "croakers" of the colony. Why is not the sun of his graciousness shining on the hon. member? Surely the hon. member has made

a mistake: this is the side he should be sitting on. A few days ago I heard that one of the largest vineyards in the colony had been bought by an English capitalist; not a man who belongs to this side of the House or to the other side, but to a gentleman who has invested large sums in this colony, and he has now invested a large sum in what I believe is the largest vineyard in this colony. I refer to the vineyard at Armadale. Why, I ask, is there any necessity for a motion like this? Is it in the interest of the large vineyard, or a few of the small ones? If it is in the interest of the few small ones, cannot they obtain their object by co-operating? And if it is in the interest of the large vineyards, then I ask why should the large vineyards come cap-in-hand to the Government? This bears the complexion, pretty well, of a "job." If such a power as this is given into the hands of the Government, I say it is too great for them to possess. If the viticultural industry is suitable to Western Australia, let it fight for its own the same as other industries have done. If it is not suitable to Western Australia, let it die the death it ought to die. If there is one thing that Western Australia is spoken of in regard to its land it is that it will grow vines. Land in this country, whether it is clay, granite, or jarrah forest, if it is good for nothing else we are told it will grow vines; and if it will grow vines it will grow vines which will make wine, and if the vines will make wine that is good, those who enter into the industry ought to have sufficient backbone and sufficient capital to avoid coming to this House to ask the Government to add another to the enormous trades which they do not understand, and become one of that large number of gentlemen who have three balls hanging over their shop—become usurers lending money at 5 per cent. I think the member for Toodyay is sincere in bringing this motion forward, but I ask the House to consider very strongly before it gives assent to a motion of this sort. The motion at once opens the gates to every industry in the colony to come to the Government. And when we come to consider the question of a new industry, I ask what is a new industry? What new industry can be introduced into Western Australia? There is not a

single industry on the face of the earth that is not established here more or less, even the industry of making bankrupts. The industries are all established here more or less. And if the Government assist these new industries, what are they going to do for those industries already in existence in Western Australia? Are the Government going to make some recompense to those men who have gone through years of toil, to recompense them for that hard toil; those who came here without any interest, and who started their industries with their own pluck?

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): It is my intention to support the amendment moved by the member for South Murchison (Mr. Rason), and in doing so I think this is an industry which can be supported by the Government to some extent. Coming from the goldfields and knowing the great good which has been done by the Government in assisting the gold-mining industry by the establishment of public batteries, knowing that it is impossible for small parties to co-operate, I think some assistance should be given to try to assist an industry of this sort. The member for the Murray (Mr. George) has said, why should not the vigorous co-operate and build their own cellars? It is absolutely impossible for the small growers to find the funds for this purpose, and I hardly see how it is possible for a number of those vigorous to establish cellars without placing themselves in the hands of the usurers of whom the member for the Murray has spoken. We wish to see this industry flourish. It has been pointed out by the member for the Murray that if the land of this country is good for nothing else it is good for vine growing. If so, there must be something wrong in the industry if it does not progress at a greater rate than it has done in the past. I would have preferred to see an amendment that an expert be brought here by the Government to report on the industry.

MR. PIESSE: We have an expert here already.

MR. GREGORY: We want to see some outsider, some better expert, with some knowledge. Let us understand the best way to promote this industry. I always like to look after my own section of the country, the goldfields, and to see that it is assisted, and I think we should

also look after another industry. If we do look after the industry, it should not be in the way suggested in the Press, of getting some company started here guaranteed by the Government. I think the Government should come forward and build cellars, and we should await the report of an expert, and then let Parliament see the best way to encourage this industry. I shall support the amendment.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I would like to say the amendment leaves the House in much the same position as the original motion, because leaving it entirely in the hands of the Government to say what manner of encouragement should be given to the industry. We have been told frankly by a member of the Government that he is framing a Bill to give a guarantee to those persons investing their capital in this industry for 20 years, and one particular industry is mentioned to cost £5,000 a year for all time. If the proposal were to establish public wineries the same as public batteries, I would have nothing to say against it. I say it is a matter over which we require to use very great care and to advance slowly. When we come to the old proposition of subsidising the middlemen, I am as much opposed to the amendment as to the original motion, because the amendment leaves us where we were before. I spoke just now about subsidising capital. I shall always speak strongly against that, and unless some member is prepared to move that the Government undertake this work and directly encourage wine growers, I shall oppose the amendment. If the Government are going to bring down a Bill to subsidise Mr. Vanzetti and company and other firms of capitalists, then let the Government take upon themselves the sole responsibility, and not shelter themselves behind an abstract resolution of this House. I do not approve of this fishing for the approval of the House before bringing in legislation. The Government ought to know their party strength and to know the support which they have; they should also rely on themselves before bringing in a Bill, and should know whether the principles of the Bill would be agreed to. Therefore I shall vote against both the motion and the amendment, because I believe

they mean not so much encouragement to the industry as encouragement to the middleman and to political jobbery.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison) : I again urge on both the mover of the amendment and the mover of the motion to withdraw. I have very great suspicion that all that is involved in this is help to a certain syndicate, to say the least, or to an individual. I would rather not have said this, but the impression I have is that the only effect of the motion would be to help a certain syndicate, because we have seen a good deal in the Press in that direction. If a Bill were brought in, we would understand really what the proposal was, and the House would be in a position to judge of the nature of the concession or assistance to be given. But by the motion, the matter is left in the hands of the Government; and though I do not suggest they would do anything improper, this is far too much to leave to them. The very thing those who have spoken desire is that the small men or people in need of help shall get that help; but my impression is, all that will happen will be that the "fat man" will get the help, and the industry will be placed in such a position that the people who are engaged in it will be dependent almost entirely on the large firm, and have to take for their grapes the price which the firm likes to give. If we have to give help, let us give it in a straightforward and open way; let us say what it is proposed by the Government to do, so that we can form our judgment on a Bill, and be in a position to act with knowledge. But I object to a motion like this, under which anything can be done by the Government; and I once more express the hope that both the mover and the seconder will see their way to withdraw, and trust to the Bill which the Commissioner of Crown Lands says he intends to introduce.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle) : I agree with the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) that it would be advisable for both the mover of the motion and mover of the amendment to withdraw, because it would be far better to have something definite before us on which we could vote. Both the motion and the amendment are much too vague, and commit us to something in every way indefinite.

MR. QUINLAN (in reply) : It is always my desire to meet the wishes of hon. members; and seeing the feeling of the House, I think it would be in the interests of those who are concerned in the industry, that I should act on the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition and withdraw the motion, especially in view of the assurance we have had from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, that he will introduce a Bill this session. In reply to the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), I must say he certainly was mistaken if he thought for a moment that in this I was acting so as to propitiate my constituents. I was asked by a gentleman in Perth to move in this matter in case a Bill was not passed this session.

MR. VOSPER : I said nothing about the hon. member's constituents.

MR. QUINLAN : The hon. member for North-East Coolgardie said it seemed strange that I should be so earnest and anxious to have something before my constituents at the coming election.

MR. VOSPER : Will you allow me to explain. In speaking of what came before the constituents of the hon. member I was speaking of the democratic legislation introduced by the Government lately, and was not in any sense of the word referring to the hon. member, or to any desire on his part to conciliate his constituents.

MR. QUINLAN : I am glad to hear the explanation, because I do not set so much value on a seat in Parliament as appears to be the idea.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The hon. member's is a very safe seat, anyhow.

MR. QUINLAN : I help my constituents here as best I can, and I will be satisfied with the result at the next election.

MR. VOSPER : I am more afraid of the "gentleman in Perth" than of men in Newcastle.

MR. QUINLAN : I am glad to have the opportunity of saying that I heard of a syndicate, and advised the Commissioner of Crown Lands to be wary of that syndicate. There was a certain property purchased in Guildford, and so far from being a party to a motion to benefit those gentlemen, I warned the Commissioner and advised him how careful he should be of those who pretended to be

so philanthropic as to buy a property cheap and float it on the strength of a Bill we will have later. I am sure, from what has been expressed by the member for the Murchison (Mr. Mitchell), that he has probably heard of the same people.

MR. VOSPER: We have not to go far to seek them.

MR. QUINLAN: Having heard the expression of opinion from the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), and the assurance of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION—REVENUE FOR WORKS, TO ALLOCATE ON POPULATION BASIS.

MR. GEORGE (Murray) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the sums available out of revenue for works shall be allocated to each electoral district on a population basis, and that the local authorities shall have a voice in the disposition of same.

He said: It is generally admitted, I think, that the bulk of the revenue of the colony is raised from the customs, and presses equally on the poor man as on the rich. If that be so, I think it cannot be denied that each is an equal contributor to the funds of the State; and where these men congregate in large numbers they naturally, according to the numbers, contribute an equally large quota to the revenue. It seems to me to be a fair and just thing that, at any rate where the largest sums of money are contributed, there should the largest sums of money be expended. It may be said, and will be said by some hon. members who always look to local matters more than they look at the broad principles which should guide legislation, and which I hope in time will: "What have we to do with places such as Kimberley, and others in the far North, where only a few persons contribute to the revenue, and where there are principally bullocks, sheep, blacks, and cheap labour?" How are such districts to get on when they want a work done? I will say that if there is any work in a district of sufficient importance to require to be done, whether the population be large or small, that work becomes a fit subject for dealing with under loans, and not for dealing with out of revenue. What does

it matter to the large population in Perth and Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, or Coolgardie, that there are a few people who speculated up in the North? What does it matter to them—I mean to say what benefit is it to them that the money contributed by large centres should be expended in large sums, year after year, on districts which have few contributors to the revenue? If that principle be admitted, it comes to this: the privilege of contributing to the taxation of a colony shall belong to individuals by force, and the expenditure of it shall be in inverse ratio to the amount contributed. It may be, and will be, said by some of the representatives of these sparsely populated places, "Oh, but we contribute an amount to the revenue in places where we live," and all that sort of thing. But that has nothing to do with the principle which underlies this motion. It seems to me that by putting this matter on a population basis, I am simply carrying out the principle which has been initiated during the last year or two in regard to electoral representation, and which will, as sure as the sun rises to-morrow, be carried into effect in the colony before many years. It is intolerable to suppose that people in this colony will consent to contribute to the revenue and to bear all the responsibilities of contributing to the revenue, and allow themselves to be dealt with in such a way that thousands of people only have one representative, while thirty or forty have the same power with a representative, who can do just as much harm or good as the representative of thousands. On that ground alone I am justified in contending that the sums which are available shall be allocated to districts on a population basis; and I want to point out to members a matter on which I feel very strongly. Instead of a district having the right to moneys, and to know what sums can be allocated to it out of the amount it contributes, the matter resolves itself absolutely into, perhaps, one of the worst systems of political patronage ever seen in the colony. In fact, this political patronage is carried to such an extent that I may, if allowed by the rules of the House to do so, designate it as political jobbery, or at all events as tending to political jobbery of a very bad nature. I ask whether it is dignified for a member of this House

whether he represents a large or a small constituency, to have to go practically cap-in-hand to one of the Ministers to ask for money which should belong to his district by right? I ask, further, is it right that immense power should be placed in the hands of any one Minister of the Crown to refuse or to grant accordingly as support may be given to him in the House? When we talk, as many of us have talked, about the evils likely to come out of payment to members, a proposal which is on the *tapis*, I say the present system in regard to the allocation of money is more likely to be and more likely is at present productive of political jobbery or political intimidation than any other system that could possibly be. I have no personal complaint to make in regard to the treatment which either my district or myself have received from Ministers, but I have always felt that however Ministers may have received me, it is degrading and undignified that a member should have to ask for things which ought to belong as a right to his district. And it puts the Ministers themselves in a very unenviable, invidious position. They are there open to the importunities of different members, and in a less honest Parliament than we have, and a less honourable country, they would be open to threats from members who might say, "We will not support you, but will block you in this or that unless you give us what we want for our districts." I say that to the members of the Ministry themselves such a motion as this, if carried out to its logical conclusion, would certainly be a relief and a boon. I think a great deal of worry and annoyance would be taken off the shoulders of members of Parliament if the local authorities were informed of the amount of money available for each district, and if those authorities could meet in conference and decide upon the best way of expending such moneys. This would also have a beneficial effect on the conduct of elections. We should not hear of members on the Government side going to their constituents and promising that, if elected, certain works should be carried out. I say that to do so is debauching and prostituting the political rights that appertain to Ministers and members of Parliament, and is depriving the people of the colony of the right to dispose of

their funds. The Government of this colony is practically on the same basis as a co-operative society. Every one of us, whether workman or capitalist, contributes to the funds of the colony through the custom-house; and surely, if it is the bounden duty of each member of the community to contribute, it is also his right and privilege to have some sort of say in the way in which the revenue is disbursed. Of course it may be said that this matter of distribution can be dealt with on the Estimates; but let each hon. member ask himself whether, when he has managed to get items placed on the Estimates, he is not likely to view with a very lenient eye an item affecting some other hon. member who, if his item be attacked, will retaliate. I do not suppose this motion will be passed, because I find myself, as a rule, in a very small minority. But I am like many men who pass their time in political life, both in the old country and in these colonies, who are quite satisfied with setting an idea rolling, and who look to future years for that idea to fructify; and I am glad to say here that although this motion may be one at which members may smile, yet probably in a few years I shall have the gratification of knowing that the people of this country object to their members prostrating themselves before a Minister as they do under the present system, and that the people demand the right to control the expenditure of their revenue.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I second the motion.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I should not like the hon. member to think that I do not treat his motion with the greatest respect; but, at the same time, I regret to say I am not able to give it my support.

MR. GEORGE: I did not think you would.

THE PREMIER: I really do not know what the hon. member means; because he has not very clearly explained the position he desires to take up. He says it is desirable that the sums available out of revenue for works shall be apportioned in a certain manner; but he does not say what sort of works he refers to. Does he mean all the buildings and public works carried on in the colony? Out of revenue, £400,000 was spent last year on works and buildings. He says

such expenditure should be allocated to each electoral district. That would be about £10,000 a-piece, I suppose.

MR. A. FORREST: The motion reads, "on a population basis."

THE PREMIER: True; on a population basis.

MR. A. FORREST: Some electorates would get nothing.

THE PREMIER: And that the local authorities should have the right to distribute the moneys.

MR. GEORGE: I said "a voice" in the distribution.

THE PREMIER: That would be a very good thing for the local authorities. At the same time, some districts would come off very well and others very badly. There are some very important districts in the colony which do not produce very much revenue, but still do a great deal of good for the country, and they would come off very badly. I think the hon. member was quite right when he said his views were too advanced to be entertained at the present moment. He said the time would come when this motion of his would be referred to as the beginning of a system which, though it found very little favour when first proposed, blossomed forth subsequently and became generally acceptable. The hon. member, perhaps, is thinking of countries like Queensland, in the three different divisions of which there are different interests, and where an attempt has been made to secure the division of the revenue proportionately amongst those divisions of the colony. But the hon. member is far more ambitious than the people of Queensland. He desires that every electorate shall be considered as an individual portion of Western Australia and treated accordingly; that this Parliament shall have nothing to do with the distribution of the revenue, but that the local authorities shall control its distribution. I cannot make myself believe that the local authorities have any right to distribute the revenue raised from the people of this colony. They may have something to do with the distribution of revenues raised by themselves; but to hand over the revenues of the colony to irresponsible persons—I may call them that, as they are not members of Parliament elected for the purpose, and have no responsibility in regard to raising revenue—when

he asks that, I think the hon. member is asking us to go a little too far. In regard to the hon. member's imputation on our system of Government, and his statement that members of Parliament have to go cap-in-hand to Ministers asking them for this and that, I think he somewhat exaggerates what takes place. Members certainly do bring under the notice of Ministers the requirements of their districts, with a view that provision for them shall be made on the Estimates to be submitted to Parliament; but I cannot think for a moment there is anything in that derogatory to the member or to the constituency. Members simply go to Ministers as independent representatives of the people, with a view to keeping Ministers informed of the requirements of the districts those members represent. If a Minister treats an hon. member with contempt or with discourtesy, or will not listen to the wishes of the district as expressed through the member, I think such a Minister is wanting in his duty.

MR. GEORGE: I do not personally complain.

THE PREMIER: No; nor am I speaking personally. At the same time, the Estimates as passed by this House are the basis of the distribution of the revenues of this country, with small exceptions in regard to minor matters outside the Estimates, which are dealt with on the representations of hon. members. The representations of members of Parliament in regard to the wants of their districts are a guide to the Treasurer and the Government in framing the Estimates for submission to this House. Where a member asks for a vote during the recess which has not been provided for by Parliament, then, if it is granted, the Minister takes the responsibility, knowing full well he will have to answer to the House for the amount. How there is any special obligation on one side or the other, I do not know.

MR. GEORGE: I did not say there was.

THE PREMIER: It seems to me, if members recognise that the Estimates are the basis of the distribution of the revenues of the colony, and that all these other applications during the recess are matters extra to the Estimates, and that all matters prior to the Estimates being submitted are brought up with a view of

having them included in the Estimates, they will at once perceive there is nothing derogatory or supplicatory in the action of a member who informs a Minister of the requirements of his district.

MR. GEORGE: Wait till you become a private member and have to ask for things.

THE PREMIER: If I were a private member and my constituents made any request to me which I supposed was reasonable, I should write to or wait upon the Minister to whose department it related, placing it before him; and I should not consider myself under any personal obligation in the matter at all, but should merely look upon my action as the performing of a public duty in the interests of my constituents; and I feel quite sure that neither the Minister nor anyone else would think I was going to him cap-in-hand, as if I were asking for anything out of his own pocket. It would be merely placing before him what I considered was a want of my constituents; and whether I were a supporter or an opponent of the Government, I should expect to receive for my constituents the same courtesy and the same consideration. In regard to concessions being granted to gain support in this House, I hope that will not be the case. I have heard complaints on both sides—from members who support the Government that they are not as well treated as the Opposition; and a few complaints, a very few, from the Opposition, that they do not receive as good treatment as if they were Government supporters. But I do not think there is much in that. It is necessary for Ministers to try, not to please the member, but to do justice to the district. What is the good of supporting a member without supporting the district? To offend a member is much less serious than to offend the people he represents; and I feel quite sure that whoever are in office will find they will have to do what is right—they will have to distribute any revenues they have at their disposal pretty fairly, otherwise they will not be acting justly, and for their actions they will soon be called to account. I really think the hon. member should not persist in this motion. [MR. GEORGE: Oh!] It is simply ridiculous, if I may say so with respect. The hon. member, who has a great knowledge

of business, poses I believe as a business man; yet his ideas are sometimes most unbusinesslike. I have been twitted with not being a business man. Because I have not been an accountant and have not kept a shop or engaged in a retail business, I cannot be a business man! I can administer millions in this country, but they tell me, though I have spent I do not know how much—20 or 30 millions since I have been in office—I am not a business man because I have not been engaged in a retail trade. Well, I think if the hon. member is a sample of what is popularly called a business man, his motion is most unbusinesslike, and one which will not command much support. I regret I cannot support it, because I fear the hon. member fancies he is a great genius, a “Daniel come to judgment”; and he makes these ridiculous motions, taking up the time of the House, and no one can understand what he means. [Several MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I ask the hon. member, for his own reputation's sake and for the sake of hon. members generally—[MR. MONGER: Hear, hear!—to be good enough to withdraw this motion.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): Before the member withdraws his motion—

MR. GEORGE: You need not be afraid: he is not going to withdraw.

MR. A. FORREST: I should like to say a few words. It appears to me from the first start that the motion is impracticable. Take the cases of Perth and Fremantle, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and Boulder: these towns would have nearly all the money. Perth and Fremantle have been in existence a great many years, and have been well fed with public moneys during the whole of that time. They would receive seven-eighths, practically, of the whole of the works provided for the whole of the colony. I do not think there is any member in this House who would agree to that. Now we will go a little further and suppose that a new town springs up. Take a district which the hon. member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) represents at the present time—Mount Higgins. A few people are there, no doubt, and in the course of a very few months there will be more people. For the time being they would not be able to get any work done

at all: they would not be able to get a police court, a police station, or anything. There would be no money for this place, nor for Mount Sir Samuel: there would be nothing for the Kimberleys, and the Northern Division of the colony would not get a £5 note; yet the people in those places are producers, and they export down to these parts of the colony. If the motion of the hon. member were carried, it would be a very good thing for Perth, Fremantle, Boulder, Kalgoorlie, and one or two other large centres; but outside that the whole thing on the face of it is ridiculous, and one can hardly understand the attitude of the member for the Murray (Mr. George), whose district would be affected to nearly the extent I have named, because it is a small district and would get very little. Some places have obtained what they required, and now they ask us to give them more. I am sure the good sense of every member will cause him to vote against the member for the Murray (Mr. George) on this question. If carried into effect, the motion would paralyse every district in the colony, except the large ones. Until the districts are altered on the basis of population, this cannot possibly be carried out.

MR. GEORGE: When they are altered, will you agree to it?

MR. A. FORREST: I do not say I will agree to it: I certainly will not agree to this motion. I do not say what I will agree to in five years' time. The hon. member calls himself a business man and prides himself upon being a clever arithmetician. He sits by himself, and is a party by himself in this Chamber, because he never consults any party in the House regarding any motion by him on the Notice Paper. It would be a laughing-stock in the country. The least the hon. member can do is to withdraw the motion, because on the face of it, it is ridiculous.

MR. GEORGE (in reply): I am glad to hear the opinion of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), but I do not follow it. I see that I am in a minority of one, or whatever it is. I am sorry the Premier is not in his place, because, as usual, he cannot discuss a motion without trying to make it personal. His brother belongs to the large Forrest brigade in this House, and you

cannot in any shape or form reflect upon the Premier without bringing his wrath upon you. It is twaddle for the right hon. gentleman—I hope that language is parliamentary; I know it is expressive—to draw a red-herring over the trail by endeavouring to make the matter personal to himself. I am not aware that I ever posed as belonging to the clever division, or as being a genius. All I ever posed as in this House, and all I suppose I ever shall pose as, is simply a man who by the labour of his own hands finds himself in the position which he now occupies, a position which he is not ashamed of; and I think the hon. member to whom I have referred would think I need have no shame about it, if I lent my support to the Government. I take up an attitude against the arrogance and intolerance of the Forrest division. The Premier told me that he did not understand what I said. It sometimes takes a gentleman with even a little more intellect, a little more education, and a great deal more sympathy than the Premier possesses, to understand what a person like myself does mean; but I think I made myself particularly clear. I brought before this House (and I intend to bring it up again, if I am returned) the fact that I object to going cap-in-hand to this Minister or to any other Minister in power, if ever such a thing should come about in Western Australia. Why should a member have to take an undignified position? Why should he run the risk of being told, "You do not give your support to our side, and why should we give things to you?" If the right hon. gentleman were there, I would call attention to the fact that requests are refused because members do not belong to his party. I say with regard to the question before us, I do know what I mean, but unfortunately I have not been able to pierce the density of the cloud of so-called intellect of a gentleman who, without being a business man, has managed to squander millions of this country's money through the Parliament which he professes to lead. He says members do not come as suppliants. Of course members stand upon their dignity as men, and also as members, as far as possible. At the same time, what is the reception a member meets with, if he goes to the Premier or any other

Minister? The reception usually is a statement that they will consider it: they have to do this, and they have to do the other. There is not any question whether a district is entitled to the money or anything of the sort which has to be considered; and I make bold to say—I will say it here and outside—that I believe the great consideration which guides the right hon. gentleman and his Ministry in the distribution of this money is the amount of political support it will bring to them both in this House and outside. If that be not so, what has been the meaning of the right hon. gentleman's speeches times out of number throughout this country, in which he has referred to members who have been successful in doing certain things for their district? Why? Because they have been supporters of the Forrest Government. [A MEMBER: Oh!] A member says "Oh!" and all the rest of it, but neither that gentleman nor the hon. member over there (Mr. A. Forrest) has any knowledge of the large centres of population. If the hon. member thinks that because he has been Mayor of Perth for some time he understands the people, I tell him that he no more understands the people than I understand the way of carrying on a cattle station in the extreme north, where he employs a few men, principally blacks I believe, and can get practically as much out of the revenue or out of the loan money as he wants for jetties and things of that sort, to be used occasionally in the course of the year. I say it is all balderdash for arguments of this sort to be brought before a reflective Assembly. Then the Premier said there was £400,000 last year out of revenue that could be allocated to different works; and the hon. member who supported him, and who always does support him, says that, if the motion were carried, a few places would have seven-eighths of the revenue. If we had anything like a proper census of the population of this colony, we should find that it would not all by a long way be allocated to Perth, Fremantle, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie. Nothing of the sort. If the motion were carried, a district with a population of 10,000 would, taking the population of the colony at 170,000, be entitled to have one-seventeenth of the revenue. If there are 10,000 people there, they have a right

to have expended in their district ten thousand men's share of the money.

A MEMBER: Supposing they have only been there for one year?

MR. GEORGE: A member says "Supposing they have only been there for one year?" I will point out to the hon. member that it is not beyond the resources of the Government to ascertain what the population is. The voting lists will practically tell them that. If the population of a district in one year is 10,000, then that district gets the share of 10,000 of the population of the colony. If in the following year the population is only 5,000, then the district will get its ratio in proportion. If it only consists of 10 white men, 50 black, and 170,000 bullocks, the share for the white men will be obtained for them by the member for one of the Kimberleys, or both Kimberleys, and the bullocks will have to go without. I do not know that I need say more about this matter. I do not intend to withdraw the motion, for I am not built that way, but am content to fight my battle single-handed, even if I have to do so until I am old. Although I may be beaten in this division, if I happen to be in the new Parliament I shall bring forward the motion session after session. Members must know that no great reform in any part of the world has been brought about without its having first received the ridicule of gentlemen like some members present. Populations have righted themselves, as the population will right itself in Western Australia; and when the reform is brought about, it will be known that the member who first introduced the subject had done his duty to the country.

Question put and negatived.

MOTION—PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, TO LEGISLATE IMMEDIATELY.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): The motion of which I have given notice reads:—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that legislation should be introduced immediately to provide for the payment of members of future Parliaments.

Members of this House will be aware that in 1897 a resolution was passed by a large majority of members, affirming the desirability of payment of members of Parliament. In the session of 1899 a

motion was brought forward, and an amendment was moved by the Premier—

That the question of payment of members should be referred to the electors of the colony for an expression of their opinion at the next general election.

This session the Administrator's Speech made no mention of the intention of the Government. Questions have been asked, and in reply to one asked by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), the Premier replied that the Government intended carrying out the undertaking of last session, and the expenditure to be incurred would be nominal. It was reported in the Press a short time ago that it was the intention of the Government to bring forward legislation this session to provide for the payment of members of future Parliaments. If such is to be the case, I will willingly withdraw my motion without further delay, if I receive an assurance that in this session legislation will be brought forward. If not, I shall proceed with my motion; and I think a majority of members will be found prepared to vote that members of Parliament shall be paid, also that provision shall be made for their payment.

THE PREMIER: Then there must have been a change of opinion since last year, at any rate. You have changed your opinion since then.

MR. GREGORY: I was making an anti-federal speech at that time. I agreed last session to a plebiscite being taken at the next election. I have looked carefully through *Hansard* to find the statements that have been made. The leader of the Opposition said it would be indecent for members to vote themselves payment, and the Minister of Mines also said he thought it would be indecent for members to vote themselves payment. I say that, unless legislation is passed this session, it will place the next Parliament in the same position as members are in to-day.

THE PREMIER: You did not say that, last year.

MR. GREGORY: I have altered my opinion, after mature consideration.

THE PREMIER: You have changed your opinion.

MR. GREGORY: I think the present course desirable, and I desire to point out why this House should pass this motion. At the present time everything in regard

to payment of members is shrouded in mystery. We have received no assurance beyond that resolution. No legislation has been brought forward to provide for a referendum on the subject; and in reply to a question asked, we hear that the Government consider it quite within their province to have a referendum without legislation at all. I do not think so, and most members do not think so also. I think we should have legislation, and I think the question should be proceeded with to-night and settled here. We should decide how we are going to act in a matter of this sort. We have received a great many promises from the Premier on different occasions, and he has not always carried out those promises in their entirety.

THE PREMIER: Do not say that.

MR. GREGORY: I say so.

THE PREMIER: Name?

MR. GREGORY: There were the promises in regard to the bringing forward of the Electoral Act and the delay that was occasioned. When we did get the Bill, it was such a wretched measure that I only wish we could have amended it to make it better.

THE PREMIER: You thought it was a good Bill at the time.

MR. GREGORY: I never thought so. I think it will be just as indecent for the next Parliament to vote themselves a salary as for this Parliament to do so.

THE PREMIER: The referendum will show us what the wishes of the people are.

MR. GREGORY: At the next election if a majority of members are not returned in favour of payment of members, then the law can be repealed. At the next election members will be asked whether they are in favour of payment of members or not, and if a majority are returned against payment of members, the law can be repealed.

THE PREMIER: It is not so easy to repeal as to pass, you know.

MR. GREGORY: We gave way on one occasion when we had a majority in the House, because we thought it improper to vote ourselves a salary; and the same taunt may be thrown at members of the new Parliament. I can assure the House that if I felt satisfied that the members of the next Parlia-

ment were not going to be paid, I would not stand for a constituency.

THE PREMIER: That would be a terrible loss to the country!

MR. GREGORY: It would be a great loss to the member opposite. I look at it in this light: when we come here week after week to do our duty, we should be paid. The right hon. gentleman takes good care that he is paid for his services. If it is not payment, let us put it in another way.

THE PREMIER: An honorarium.

MR. GREGORY: If it is not payment, the members of the Ministry take good care to draw £6,200 a year among them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And they are not very ready to give it up.

MR. GREGORY: No. I think this question should be dealt with, and that Parliament should insist on the motion being passed. The Premier has seen fit not to act up to resolutions in the past.

THE PREMIER: I am now acting in accordance with the resolution passed last session.

MR. GREGORY: There was no statement in the Administrator's Speech as to the action the Government would take, although we were told all about railways, and post offices, and other buildings which had been erected all over the country.

THE PREMIER: The question was settled last session, and an arrangement was come to by both sides of the House.

MR. GREGORY: Last session a motion was passed for the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the Police Department, and what became of that motion?

THE PREMIER: We are not talking of that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And there was also the question of a health board for North Perth.

MR. GREGORY: How do we know that the Premier will send this question to the electors? I would like the Premier to promise he will bring forward a Bill to provide for the payment of members in the next Parliament. If it were possible for a private member to bring in a money Bill, such a Bill would very soon be introduced; but, as we know, to introduce such a measure is beyond the province of any private member.

THE PREMIER: If the House pass a resolution that a Bill shall be brought in this session, the Government will no doubt bring in a Bill.

MR. GREGORY: I hope the House will see the way clear to pass such a motion, because there is no doubt hon. members ought to be paid.

THE PREMIER: That is not the point.

MR. GREGORY: No doubt it would be a waste of time to go over the arguments in favour of the principle of payment of members; indeed, I have done that before so effectually that the House passed a motion affirming the principle by a very large majority. When this question was last before the House, the whole of the Ministry were opposed to it, though the Commissioner of Crown Lands certainly did not vote. Now, however, a prospective new Minister, who is on the hustings, has declared himself in favour of payment of members.

THE PREMIER: He always has been in favour.

MR. VOSPER: No; he said he was strongly against it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not a month since he told me he was against it.

THE PREMIER: Let us see in *Hansard* what he said; because he told me to-day he was in favour of payment of members.

MR. GREGORY: Now that there is a Minister, or prospective Minister, very strongly in favour of payment of members, it may be possible to induce the Government to introduce a measure.

THE PREMIER: It is not a question of payment of members, but whether a Bill ought to be introduced this session or the next—whether a Bill should be introduced before the people have expressed an opinion on the matter or after the people have expressed an opinion.

MR. GREGORY: The Premier is not always so anxious to find out what the people think. I have known a petition signed by 23,000 people, to which the Premier did not think it worth while to pay attention.

THE PREMIER: That petition was not signed by a majority of the people of the colony.

MR. GREGORY: There are one or two other matters which require consideration in connection with this question, and no doubt a Bill ought to be brought forward.

THE PREMIER: I thought we were a "moribund" Parliament?

MR. GREGORY: But the next Parliament could easily get rid of the Act, if they did not like it. Such a measure is not like the Government public works policy, because if we pass a measure which means an expenditure of £500,000 or possibly £1,000,000, the next Parliament is bound to adopt that measure. In the last session of the last Parliament, I think, it was agreed to expend over £7,000,000 of money, and the next Parliament had to adopt that proposal and continue the works which had been authorised; but in the case of payment of members, if the next Parliament do not agree to the measure, they can easily throw it out. It is quite possible that at the next general election a majority will be returned opposed to the payment of members, though I do not think that that will be the result, because every constituency in the colony is fully seized of the desirability of members of Parliament being remunerated. We want to get, as far as we can, a good, straightforward, honest Parliament; and in order to do this we should see that hon. members are paid, because if a man receives payment and indulges in intrigue, or does anything a member should not do, he will be a double-dyed rogue, seeing that payment for his services should be quite sufficient for him. I notice that the new Commissioner of Railways, who has yet to take his seat, said, according to *Hansard*, page 401 of the volume for 1899:

It is in no way surprising to me that a man like the Premier should see in what direction the tendency of modern political development is growing. He sees that development, he leads it, and to-day he is receiving the congratulations, not only of the most prominent among the Oppositionists, but nearly every member on either side of the House.

These words are in regard to the action of the Premier on his motion for a referendum, and it is only an indorsement of the Premier's promise that we should have a plebiscite. Now, however, the new Minister announces that he is fully prepared to indorse the principle of payment of members.

MR. VOSPER: He said he was pledged against payment of members, if he was pledged at all.

MR. GREGORY: Members of Parliament should, I would suggest, receive

something like £250 a year; but some arrangement should be made by which members who do not attend the sittings shall not be paid.

THE PREMIER: You would be a slave-driver.

MR. GREGORY: When an hon. member receives money from the State for services, he should be compelled to render those services; and if he get leave of absence in order to attend to his own business, to the neglect of the business of the State, he decidedly ought not to receive payment during that leave. I warn the Premier that the next Parliament may demand a higher rate of payment than this Parliament is likely to grant.

THE PREMIER: That will be all right. They will control the finances.

MR. GREGORY: We all are fully satisfied that the present Premier will not have control of the Treasury after the next general election.

THE PREMIER: Then we will be in Opposition.

MR. GREGORY: But in a minority, and a majority will insist on a higher scale of payment. There are very few parliaments in the world where there is not payment of members—only Italy, Germany, England, and Western Australia having Houses where no remuneration is given. I hardly think it is necessary to show why there should be payment of members in this colony, while a similar law is not necessary in such a place as the House of Commons; and I hope the House will insist on going on with this motion and coming to a decision. This is not a matter which need be debated, but to decide as to whether we deal with the question this session or not; and we ought to have a reply from the Premier as to whether legislation is likely to be brought forward.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I rise to second this motion.

THE PREMIER: Adjourn the debate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is no necessity to adjourn the debate. There will be plenty of time for the Fremantle members to catch their train. I do not intend to speak at length. The Administrator's Speech makes no mention of what the Government intend to do on the question of payment of members. However, I will take advantage of the suggestion of the Premier. It is evident the House

does not wish to discuss this matter. I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion (adjournment) put, and a division called for by MR. VOSPER.

MR. VOSPER: If there is no objection, I think we might dispense with the division.

THE SPEAKER: Very well. The motion for the adjournment of the debate is carried.

Debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 20th September, 1900.

Papers presented—Question: Locomotive Officials, Discharges and Appointments—Public Service Bill, third reading—Customs Duties (Meat) Repeal Bill, in Committee (resumed), Division, reported—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, in Committee, Division Clause 1, progress—Federal House of Representatives W.A. Electorates Bill, in Committee, Recommendation, reported—Police Act Amendment Bill (Betting), second reading (moved), adjourned—Game Act Amendment Bill, second reading—Distillation Bill, second reading (moved), adjourned—Motion: Payment of Members, to Legislate immediately, adjourned—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Government Photo-Lithographer, annual Report; 2, Paper as ordered, Dues etc. paid by Mail Steamers at Fremantle.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION — LOCOMOTIVE OFFICIALS, DISCHARGES AND APPOINTMENTS.

MR. SOLOMON asked the Acting Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether it is a fact that a number of clerks in the Locomotive Engineer's offices at Fre-

mantle have had notice to leave? 2, Whether it is also a fact that two new clerks or officials arrived from New Zealand by the last mail steamer, and were placed over the heads of old officials in same department? 3, If so, what are the salaries of these two new officials? 4, For what reason, whilst retrenchment is taking place, old officials are discharged and new officers from other colonies imported. 5, By whose authority are the officers discharged and the new officers engaged?

THE PREMIER (Acting Commissioner) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, £200 per annum to start with. 4, In order to preserve the efficiency of the branch, the employment of trained and experienced men, who were not obtainable in the colony, was necessary. The services of those who were being retrenched were not required. 5, These changes are made on the recommendation of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, approved by the General Manager and the Commissioner of Railways.

PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

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

CUSTOMS DUTIES (MEAT) REPEAL BILL IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from 18th September at Clause 1, Amendment by Mr. Gregory that the words "preserved and" be inserted after "upon," in line 4:

MR. MITCHELL: It was impossible to please some people. If you gave them an inch they would want an ell, and if you gave them an ell they would want a mile. We had taken the duty off frozen meat and live stock, which ought to meet all requirements. If preserved meat, or as it had been called "tinned dog" or "tinned microbes," was such a dreadful mixture as some members had stated, then instead of taking the duty off we ought to put a prohibitive duty on. Representing a squatting and farming district, he would be failing if he did not protest against this duty being removed. The working man would not derive any benefit, only the middleman.

MR. VOSPER: It was all very well to make this a matter of jest, for after all it was a serious question whether the