

that one of the questions quite likely to be considered at the approaching Federal Convention would be that of national defence, and now that we were so desirous of priding ourselves on having been admitted to the family circle of the Australian colonies it would look very bad to have this item struck out. Would it be a good thing to wipe out the Volunteer vote altogether at this stage of the history of the colony? If it were not, would it not be better to have the men properly trained in military practice? The present Commandant had not time to devote himself to the movement, and travel all over the country.

Question put—That the item be reduced by £400.

A division being called for, the numbers were—

Ayes ... .. 8

Noes ... .. 8

AYES.  
Mr. Clarkson  
Mr. Hassell  
Mr. Keane  
Mr. Paterson  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. Richardson  
Mr. Scott  
Mr. A. Forrest (Teller.)

NOES.  
Mr. DeHamel  
Mr. Marmion  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Piesse  
Sir J. G. Lee Steere  
Mr. Symon  
Mr. Venn  
Mr. Forrest (Teller.)

The numbers being equal, the Chairman gave his casting vote with the Ayes.

The remainder of the vote was agreed to.

*Special Coast Survey, £3,000:*

Agreed to.

*Central Board of Health, £200:*

MR. PARKER, referring to the item "Secretary and Chief Inspector of Nuisances, £100," asked if this officer performed any duties at all as an inspector?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest) said this officer was employed under the direction and control of the Central Board of Health, which was a statutory Board, and the Government were not responsible for its actions, nor for its officers. This gentleman also acted as Secretary to the Board.

MR. A. FORREST said that whoever was responsible for the disgraceful way in which the removal of night soil was carried out in the city ought to be prosecuted. He did not know whether it was the duty of the Central Board to look after such things.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): It is the Local Board.

MR. KEANE said that his experience of the way the work referred to was done led him to the conclusion that neither the Central nor the Local Board was any good. The present system was simply a disgrace to any civilised community; it was a perfect farce.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE emphasised the remarks of the hon. member for Geraldton.

MR. QUINLAN thought it would be a good thing if the Central Board of Health and the Local Board were amalgamated, and placed under the control of the Municipal Council.

Item passed.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 20 minutes past 6 o'clock, p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 5th February, 1891.

The Federal Convention at Sydney—Protection of Immature Sandalwood—Management of Government Railways—Loan Bill: in Committee—Census Bill: second reading—Officials in Parliament Bill: second reading—Postage Stamp Act Amendment Bill—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

FEDERAL CONVENTION AT SYDNEY.

MR. PARKER asked the Premier whether the Government had taken into consideration the question of sending delegates to the forthcoming Federal Convention, and whether he could give the House some information on the subject? He asked the question with leave without notice, as the whole House was interested in the matter.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest), in reply, said it was clearly stated in His Excellency's Speech that it was intended

the colony should be represented at the Federal Convention, and with that view it was intended to hurry on the business of the session as quickly as possible. He had been in communication with the Premiers of the Eastern Colonies in connection with this matter, and had endeavored to have the Convention postponed for a fortnight. So far, Victoria was the only colony willing to agree to the postponement, and although he was doing all he could in the matter, he did not think there was much chance of all the colonies agreeing. It therefore rested with hon. members whether they could finish the most important business of the colony in time; they could not go to the Federal Convention until the Estimates and the Loan Bill were disposed of. The Federal Convention, important as it was, was not of so much importance to this colony as the passing of the Loan Bill. It was the intention of the Government, if the colony was to be represented at the Federal Convention, that they should be represented by the full number of members, namely, seven, as it was unadvisable that Western Australia should be represented by a less number than any of the other colonies. He only hoped that it would be possible to finish the business in time.

#### PROTECTION OF SANDALWOOD.

MR. PIESSE asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether it was the intention of the Government to adopt more stringent and effective measures for the protection of immature sandalwood, the present Act dealing with such being inoperative?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied that the Government had the subject under their consideration, and would inform the hon. member, at a later date, what conclusion they had arrived at in the matter.

#### THE MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That this House, being cognisant of the apparent impossibility of economically managing Railways under direct State control, is of opinion that it is desirable that the Government

should invite offers from persons willing to undertake the entire management of portions or the whole of the Government Railways, on such terms as may be reasonable." The hon. member said he desired first of all to explain that in moving this motion it was not his desire that the members of the Government should look upon it as in any way reflecting upon their capacity, for he was quite sure that the desire of the present Ministry was to do their utmost in this as in other matters; and he was certain that his hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways fully intended doing all that human nature was capable of, in furthering the interests of our railways. But, looking at the reforms that had of late years taken place in the management of State railways in other countries, he thought that at the present juncture in the history of this colony, entering as we were upon a new form of Government, it was very important we should consider whether the systems of management which had hitherto been adopted in other parts of Australia were such as were most likely to be attended with success. Before dealing with the systems of management adopted in Australia, he would just refer to the English system, which, as they all knew, was that of Joint Stock Companies. It had been found necessary that there the Government should from time to time step in and protect the public against the tyranny of those companies, which had become so strong and influential that only within the last two years an Act was passed for regulating the railway and canal traffic in that country. It was found that the railway companies, where they had the power, resorted to preferential rates which operated very much against the interests of the public, and it was found necessary to pass this Act to enable the Board of Trade to interfere in the interests of the public, and to regulate the action of these powerful companies. That had been the result of the English system. In Australia, as they all knew, the system in general operation was one by which the Government, generally speaking, constructed the railways and also managed them. The result had not been very satisfactory, he thought; because he found that about seven years ago, the

colony of Victoria, finding that the system of State management pure and simple was so enormously expensive and also inefficient, determined upon adopting a new system, introducing as far as they could certain mercantile or commercial principles into the management of their railways. They appointed a Commission or Board to control the State railways, in order as much as anything to protect the Ministry of the day against undue pressure from outside. It was impossible yet to say what the result of that system would be, for it was still in what he might call its experimental stage. But, considering that the Railway Commissioners were dependent upon the Government for their position, and their continuing in office, it was doubtful whether the object in view was likely to be attained. The new system might perhaps shift the cause of complaint, but he doubted whether under the circumstances it would remove it. The same system, however, had been followed by other colonies—which at all events was an admission that the Governments of those colonies were incapable of what he might call commercially managing their railways. He admitted that the result even under the improved system was one which had not achieved that financial success which one would naturally look for in railway management conducted on purely commercial principles. He found, from the last returns, that in Victoria the loss on the year's working was £220,000. Victoria was the only colony that summed up her loss in that way; the other colonies only gave the percentage of loss after paying working expenses, and he found that in New South Wales the percentage was a little over  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.; in New Zealand,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; in South Australia for last year it came up to 5 per cent., but during the three previous years it was very near down to 2 per cent. (the average for the last ten years being a little over 3 per cent.) So, it would be seen that all these colonies had lost enormous sums in working their railways. The figures given related only to interest and working expenses; there was one item that was never mentioned in these returns, but which was universally included in the balance sheets of Joint Stock Companies, and that was the

depreciation of stock, which was generally put down at 10 per cent. (roughly speaking). Therefore these sums did not at all represent the total loss which these Governments suffered. He would take the evidence of one colony, to show to what straits Governments got into in attempting to manage their railways. He would take the case of New South Wales. About two years ago it was generally understood throughout the community that the railways were in a very bad state, and the Government appointed three independent gentlemen to examine and make a report upon the railways, rolling stock, and permanent way. Those three gentlemen were Mr. Price Williams (whose name was known to us in this colony), Mr. Howe of South Australia, and Mr. Angus. Mr. Angus reported on the permanent way, and gave an adverse report on every section. Mr. Price Williams, who went into details, and who was allowed access to all the books of the department, represented things in a most deplorable condition. Engines that should have been off running after having run 200,000 miles had been kept on running for 500,000 miles. He reported the permanent way almost in a worse state than the rolling stock; and he summed up by informing them that to put the rolling stock alone in a fit condition would require £1,357,000, to say nothing of the permanent way. The last report of the Railway Commissioners of New South Wales supported these statements in a very large measure. (The hon. member read extracts from the report.) Constantly they heard it claimed by public men, when the continuous borrowing of the Australian colonies was mentioned with some degree of regret and concern, "Oh, our railways are worth our public debt, if they were sold, to-morrow." If that was the case, it was only by careful and economical management we could ever hope they would continue so. As to our own railways, he had heard himself that a syndicate could be established to-morrow to take over all the Government lines, and not only pay interest and working expenses, but also make a handsome profit. This was a remarkable statement, when they came to consider the enormous sum we were now losing annually in working our railways, equal to about £1 per head of

the whole community. In the face of these facts, it was surely time for us to consider whether some more satisfactory system of management could not be adopted. And here he would point out that the course taken respectively in England and in Australia ended in the same direction. The Government in England found that the Railway Companies could not be trusted altogether, and so the Government stepped in and interfered. The Government in Australia found that the State could not successfully manage the railways, and so they sought the assistance of commercial men. It was generally accepted by railway people that 50 per cent. of the gross earnings ought to leave a good margin of profit on a well-managed railway. He found that in the other colonies they made up their expenses as follows:—in Victoria, 68 per cent. of the gross earnings; in New South Wales, 63 per cent.; in New Zealand, 65 per cent.; in South Australia, 50·68 per cent. Not one of these came near what might be looked upon from a commercial point of view as being a paying railway, although if worked on commercial lines they would be good paying lines. It was of the utmost importance for us, a poor struggling community, to adopt the very best means we can to endeavor to improve upon the system of management hitherto adopted in these colonies. If we could manage our railways at anything like 50 per cent. of the gross earnings we should be losing perhaps little or nothing. With regard to Ministries managing the railways, he should think any Ministry would be glad to be relieved of the difficulty; he thought he might safely say that no question throughout these Australian colonies had given Ministries more trouble, and probably no question had wrecked more Ministries. It would be observed that the motion did not commit the House nor the Government to anything beyond ascertaining whether it was not possible to have some more economical system of managing our railways than the present system. No one would venture to say there was no necessity for a better system, and the general opinion was that commercial people as a rule managed their concerns more economically than the Government. It might be remembered that some years ago some people at

Roebourne wanted to be allowed to rent and run the Roebourne-Cossack tramway, and he believed they would have run it with financial success; but the Government were unable to do so. So far as he had been able to ascertain, no expert in railway matters had ever been heard to say that he believed in the principle of Government or State-managed railways in opposition to the system of commercial management; and he thought we ought to pay some deference to these views. With regard to our Eastern Railway between here and Albany, he wished to point out that a private company at present owned two-thirds of the line between Fremantle and the Albany end, so that they have the larger voice in the traffic of that line, so far as the length of line belonging to them went. If that company could be induced to take over the Government section of the line, on terms that would be fair and reasonable to the country, it would be to the interest of the company to divide the traffic between the two terminal ports,—Fremantle at this end and Albany at the other. At present it laid itself out for attracting and monopolising the traffic for its own particular end of the line. Of course the objection some people would raise to this would be that the company, if they had the whole line in their hands they would be likely to put on oppressive rates and that the public would suffer; but that could be easily prevented by the terms of any contract entered into with the company. The Government could always protect the public against the rapacity of the shareholders. He now formally moved the motion standing in his name.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. Forrest) did not know whether the hon. member really wished his motion carried or not. He supposed the hon. member did; still he could hardly think he could expect the House to affirm this principle at the present time. At any rate, the Government were not prepared to fall in with this motion at the present time. They had only just been in office about a month, and they had not yet had an opportunity of showing what they were made of, or what they might do; and he thought it would only be reasonable that his hon. friend, the Commissioner of Railways, should have an opportunity

given him of showing whether he cannot make our railways more profitable in the future than they had been in the past. Although these railways might not pay directly, he was not at all sure that indirectly they had not paid a very large amount to the country, and done a great deal of good; for he noticed that we were progressing in every direction, and certainly none of us were any the worse off than we were before we had these railways. He thought the more they investigated the matter the more they should find that these railways had been a very great gain to the country, and not a loss. It was all very well to say that a syndicate could do this and do that with our railways. That was a mere assertion, and a mere assertion of that sort was not worth more than an assertion to the contrary. It certainly was not sufficient to satisfy him that, after spending a million of money on these railways, it would be a prudent thing to hand them over to a contractor. They knew very well the contractor, whether a syndicate or not, would make the most he could out of the plant, run the engines to death probably, and, having got all he could out of them, hand them back to the Government of the country. It would require a good many safeguards and a great deal of legal ingenuity before the country might consider itself perfectly safe in handing over to a syndicate railways that had cost them a million of money. He was not prepared to say that companies could not manage their affairs as well as the Government could; he knew the accepted idea was that they did it very much better, and that Governments generally managed their affairs more expensively. But he thought they did their work much better, and that it was of a more permanent character. He did not know that in this colony they had found that private individuals could do things better than the Government. Private individuals, whether syndicates or not, looked for profit to themselves. The Government did not want any profit for themselves; all they had in view was the public interest and the good of the country. At any rate, at the present time, just as they had entered upon a new form of Government, he hoped members would not listen to this motion. He did not know that it went very far, but he did

not think this was an opportune time for bringing forward such a motion, just as they had handed over the railways to the care of his hon. friend on his right, without giving him a fair show at any rate. His hon. friend might next year be able to give them a much better account of their railways than they had had hitherto. He thought the motion was premature, and uncalled for at the present time.

MR. RANDELL said that, standing on the Post Office steps the other day, he heard a gentleman saying we were 2,000 years behind the other colonies. He was not prepared to admit that, but he could not help thinking that the hon. member for Beverley was somewhat behind the day in bringing forward this motion. If the hon. member had moved it some time ago, before the change of Constitution, he might perhaps have had a few more votes than he was likely to get just now. Having now adopted a Ministerial form of Government he thought it was only right and fair that the hon. gentleman now presiding over their railways should, as the Treasurer had put it, have a fair show. He had some confidence in the hon. gentleman that he would do his very best to make himself acquainted with the best mode of working our railways, and that after a time he will be able to effect some improvements. It was admitted on all hands that improvements could be made, and that alterations were necessary; and he for one should expect to see the present Commissioner carry out some alterations and improvements in the management of our railways. He thought the Treasurer hit the right nail on the head when he said that if they were foolish enough to hand over these railways to a company or a syndicate they would simply run them as long as they possibly could, and, having made all they could out of them, hand them back to us pretty well worn out. That had been the experience of India. The railways there, before they were handed over to the Government, had been run almost to death. There was another instance, nearer home, in Tasmania. It was currently reported that the railways there which had been run by a company had been run to death, and now they were asking the Government to take them over. Apart from this, he thought the

hon. member was too late in bringing forward his motion, and that every possible opportunity should be given to the first responsible Minister in charge of this department to do his best in the interests of the country, and in the promotion of the efficiency and success of the department under his control.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) thought that the most unfortunate position any man could occupy in a Ministry in this colony or any other colony must be that of Commissioner of Railways. Speaking for himself, he certainly looked forward to becoming the best abused man in Western Australia. In dealing with this question he was sorry to hear members saying they wished to leave everything in his hands. He thought it should not be left to his hands alone, but that his hands should be strengthened by that House. If the head of the department was not supported and backed by that House he could do very little. It was no use for members in that House to preach economy and to expect their railways to pay, and then come to his office and seek for a reduction of the rates. They could not expect a reduction of rates and an increase of profit at the same time. The House must be consistent in its expectations, and be prepared to support the head of the department, whoever he might be, if they expected any good results. He thought if the late Commissioner of Railways could speak his mind on this subject he would say very much the same as he was saying. As for the motion before the House, the hon. member for Beverley might as well ask that the whole colony be handed over to a contractor, to run it. If the principle he advocated was true as regards the Railway Department, it would apply equally to the Post Office, for, if they looked at the returns there, they would find there was a very large deficit. The fact of the matter was, neither of these departments of the public service was intended simply to make a profit out of them: their main object was the convenience of the public. He ventured to say that the indirect gain to the country from these railways was very considerable—more so probably than many of them imagined. Just to show them what

a stimulus the Eastern Railway alone had been to cultivation and production, he would quote a few figures. He found that in the five years preceding the opening of that line the quantity of land alienated in the Eastern districts was 26,012, as against 61,226 during the last five years. Taking the same two periods, he found that the area of land under cultivation within the first period was 63,902 acres, as against 117,833 acres at the present moment. That was entirely due to the establishment of railway communication; and whatever they might say about revenue and expenditure and about direct profits, the fact remained that this large increase in cultivation and production was solely due to the establishment of a cheap and easy means of transit. He had some other figures also he should like to put forward, showing what he thought was a gratifying state of affairs. He did not mean to say that it had anything to do with the present Government, or that the present Ministry, or the change of Government, had had anything to do with it, or with the figures coming out as they did. In 1890 the estimated expenditure in connection with our railways was £62,342, and the estimated revenue was £48,000, showing an anticipated loss of £14,342; whereas in 1891 we started with an estimated expenditure of £63,551, and an estimated revenue of £56,000, showing a presumed loss of £7,651, as against £14,342 last year. In addition to this there were two items on the Estimates of expenditure for this year which were special items; one was the sum of £1,500 set down for the salary of an Engineer-in-Chief, and the other was the sum of £1,100 set down for the supervision of land grant railways. Deducting these two amounts from the anticipated loss this year they reduced it to £5,051, as against £14,342, the presumed loss last year. As he had already said, this had nothing to do with any change of Government, but there were the figures, and they simply pointed to a very largely increased traffic, whilst on the other hand the expenditure was not increasing. It cost no more to run a train to York full than it did to run it empty. After all, he did not think there was much credit attached to managing the railways of this colony advantageously; it was no more than a good coach service.

He did not think the hon. member could seriously think that the Government could do otherwise than oppose this motion.

MR. RICHARDSON said he agreed with the principle of the motion, and he believed the day was not far distant when these things would have to be done on strictly commercial principles. He was of opinion that the Government could not do things as cheaply as private enterprise. At the same time, he thought the hon. member's motion was not altogether opportune at the present moment. It would not look well to refuse to give the new Ministry a show. If in twelve months time things did not improve, then such a motion as this might become necessary. On the other hand, if the present Commissioner succeeded in carrying out such improvements without this motion, it would be a feather in his cap.

MR. THROSSELL thought the thanks of the House were due to the hon. member for Beverley for drawing attention to this question of railway management. It was a question of the utmost importance to business people, and more or less to all classes of the community. But whatever abuses existed in the past as regards the management of their railways, he was glad to say publicly that there had been a marked improvement lately in the manner in which the traffic business had been conducted. Brought into close contact, as he was obliged to do, with this branch of the service, he had noticed a decided improvement already in the way the traffic on the Eastern Railway was now managed. He was one who believed that the present Commissioner and his staff should have a fair show in the conduct of this line, and, if in twelve months time there was no marked improvement in the general management, he for one should join with the hon. member for Beverley in saying that the sooner we took the management of our railways out of the hands of the Government the better. In the meantime he had every confidence that their new Commissioner would do his level best to satisfy the general public.

MR. KEANE thought they ought to be obliged to the hon. member for Beverley for bringing this matter forward, and, for his part, he was rather sorry it did not pass, for the Government would have found some very useful information when

these contracts for working the lines came in.

MR. HARPER said that one word which had fallen from the Commissioner of Railways himself had proved exactly what he had been saying. The hon. gentleman said it was no use members coming into that House urging rigid economy and expecting large profits, and then going to his office asking for a reduction of rates. That was just the difficulty which Ministers had to face in the other colonies. The Minister of Railways had to protect his Government at the sacrifice of the public funds. Outside pressure was brought to bear upon him which he did not like to resist. That must always be the case while the railways were under the management of a Ministry whose retention of office depended upon their being able to please their supporters, and if our Commissioner of Railways thought he was going to escape pressure being brought to bear upon him for a reduction in the rates, he was afraid he was doomed to be disappointed. The longer he remained in office the more would he find that pressure would be brought to bear upon him, and he would find it very difficult to resist, and at the same time retain his position. He had no particular desire to press the motion. He claimed however that the principle of State management was entirely wrong, and they had the combined evidence of the other colonies in support of that fact. He was quite in accord with the desire to give the present Commissioner of Railways a fair chance; but he knew what that fair chance meant and what the probable result would be; and, if the hon. gentleman was able to do what no Minister of Railways had done yet in these colonies, he should say that Western Australia had indeed produced a prodigy.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### LOAN BILL (£1,336,000).

##### MOTION TO REFER TO A SELECT COMMITTEE.

On the order of the day for going into committee on this bill.

MR. PARKER said: Sir, I believe that having affirmed the principle of a Loan Bill, the earnest desire of all of us is to see that that loan money is applied in such a manner as shall eventually

advance the best interests of Western Australia; that is, that this money shall be expended judiciously, and expended in such a manner that, after all the money has been spent on the works approved by this House, our population, our wealth, and our revenue shall have proportionately increased. I believe that no one desires to borrow money simply with the view of expending it, and afterwards to find that it had been so injudiciously expended that our last state was worse than our first, and that we should find the colony so depressed as to be obliged to go into the money market to bolster up a spurious prosperity. I do not think any of us desire that. Such being the case, I think it is highly desirable that all the items of this Loan Bill should be carefully investigated, that every inquiry should be made, that every information possible should be given to the House, so that we may be able to arrive at a just conclusion as to the desirableness of each particular work, and as to the eventual amount of good that will result from any particular work. Sir, I cannot see how that information can possibly be given to us in a committee of the whole House. Probably the hon. gentleman who is in charge of this bill may be able to give us the opinions of certain persons as to the lands through which this or that railway will run, and as to the probable cost of the line, and the extent of the traffic that may be expected. I dare say the hon. gentleman will be able to do this; but the only really effectual way of obtaining information is by having a select committee, and taking evidence upon these subjects. The only evidence that can be regarded as reliable is evidence that is subject to cross-examination. The hon. gentleman in charge of the bill may give us the written opinions or the written statements of certain persons with regard to these matters,—statements which it would be impossible for us even to consider in a committee of the whole House, much less subject to the test of a cross-examination; and, any opinions or statements of this kind are almost valueless unless the persons making them are subject to cross-examination. If we refer the bill to a select committee all phases of opinion would be represented on that committee, and every witness would be subject to the

most rigid cross-examination. It may be said it would be an unusual course to refer such a bill as this to a select committee. So far as the late Legislative Council was concerned, and our practice in the past, it would not be unusual. I believe that all our Loan Bills and all questions of public works have always been, in the first place, referred to select committees. That was the practice in the Legislature recently defunct. So far as other Legislatures are concerned, I may say that in New South Wales no public work can be undertaken out of loan money until a Joint Committee of both Houses has sat upon the proposed work, and taken evidence and reported to the House upon it. With regard to Victoria, in consequence of the success of the New South Wales Act—which has saved that colony many hundreds of thousands of pounds—they have there adopted the same principle, and no railway can be undertaken without undergoing the same investigation. South Australia, only at the last session of its Legislature, carried a resolution for the adoption of a similar Public Works Act. So that we find in all these colonies no public work can be undertaken until such information as I have referred to has been obtained, and the evidence furnished to the House. Therefore it appears to me it would not be at all an exceptional course to refer this bill to a select committee. We find that in the Imperial Parliament very important bills indeed are referred to select committees, with the full assent of the Government. And the Government in this colony have consented to refer very important bills to select committees to be reported upon. Even this session we have had a very important measure, the Audit Bill, referred to a select committee. Of course we know that in England they have no such things as Loan Bills for the construction of public works; but, when a Railway Bill is brought before the House of Commons, it has to pass through the ordeal of a select committee, where the bill is thoroughly fought out on both sides, and evidence taken on oath. In referring the present bill to a select committee, I am not asking anything that is opposed to the policy of the Government. That policy we have already affirmed on the



second reading of the bill—that is, that we shall borrow a certain sum of money to spend in the construction of public works. That is the policy of the Government. I do not take it that the policy of the Government is that every item on this Schedule should be adopted and that the precise amount of the loan shall be £1,336,000, no more and no less. That is not the policy of the Government. The policy of the Government is that we should borrow money and expend it on public works, and I presume expend it judiciously. Therefore I cannot see any reason why the Government should oppose the proposition I now make, that the bill be referred to a select committee. The Premier told us some time ago that there is a desire on the part of the Government that we should be represented in Sydney at the forthcoming Federal Convention, but he told us, and rightly, that the Government intended to look after the business of the country before they went abroad. But it would be a very unfortunate thing, if in our desire to attend that Federal Convention, we should hurry through our business here, and injudiciously make up our minds to borrow a large sum of money to expend on works that will be unproductive and land us in difficulties. I hope therefore that the Government will see—and agree with me—that the wise and prudent course to adopt will be, not to attempt to hurry this important bill through the House, simply in order that our delegates may get away to Sydney. Surely the House is entitled to a great deal more information than is now before it before it should commit itself irrevocably to all these works. With regard to these railways, for instance, take the Mullewa line, which, I believe, runs a distance of something like seventy miles [THE PREMIER: Fifty-eight]; I cannot think that the Government have even had a rough survey of that line, or anything like a proper estimate made. If such a line can be built and equipped for £100,000, I think the Government will deserve very great credit indeed. In saying that the Government cannot have obtained the necessary information, I am not blaming them at all; they have only been in office about a month, and it has been impossible for them to have obtained it. There are other works on this Schedule

with regard to which we ought to have the fullest information before we pass this bill. When I mentioned on a recent occasion that the result of the way in which the last loan money was frittered away by the late Government was to lead to a great amount of depression, I think the Commissioner of Crown Lands said that if we had been able to borrow a further loan there would have been no depression. I should be sorry indeed if we are going to bolster up our credit and our prosperity by keeping up borrowing. Our policy should be so to expend our loan money that it may give us some return, so that we may be in a better position to go into the money market again. To simply borrow money in order to bolster up our credit and to maintain a fictitious prosperity would in my opinion be a most unwise and injudicious policy. I trust that members will bear in mind that this proposed loan, if floated at 4 per cent., will entail an increased annual charge upon the revenue, including the sinking fund, of about £67,000. Added to that, there is the probable loss on working expenses connected with these railways and other works, which may be reckoned at another £20,000. So that we may look upon an additional charge upon the revenues of the colony of nearly £100,000 annually. That is not a small sum, for a colony like this, to add to our annual charges. I do not fear the amount if the money is so expended as to attract population—a population that will settle permanently on the soil. But if injudiciously expended, simply to attract a floating population, who will leave us as soon as the money is gone, and leave us to bear this heavy charge the best way we can, then I do think it would be very unwise to borrow money for such a purpose. I observe from the Estimates that the Government intend to obtain the services of an Engineer-in-Chief, of some eminence in his profession. Now I think it is a great pity that that Engineer-in-Chief had not had an opportunity of reporting to the Government upon these proposed works. I am fully aware it would have been impossible for the Government to have done that before this bill was laid before the House. If, by referring the bill to a select committee, we defer the final consideration of these works for some little time, I do not think

much harm can ensue. On the other hand a great deal of good may ensue, for in the meantime we may have this professional adviser of the Government to report upon these works. If that is done, I do not think the time lost would in the end prove to be any real loss to the colony. To call him in after we have passed this bill, and fixed upon these works, would be rather late in the day. It would be very much preferable if we had his report, his opinion, and his advice before we embark upon any of these works mentioned in the Schedule. Sir, I now move, as an amendment upon the original proposition, that this bill be referred to a select committee. In doing so, I trust the Government will fall in with our views, so that we may have every information before us with regard to these works before finally committing ourselves to them. I believe we are all animated by the one idea that this money when borrowed should be expended in the best interests of the colony.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): Sir, the proposition of the hon. member for York is not unexpected, for he was good enough to tell us that he intended to move it. Of course the Government are in the hands of the House in the matter, but I hope that the supporters of the Government will rally round the Government and not let this amendment be carried. The policy of this Government is contained in this Loan Bill, so far as its public works policy is concerned, and in the Schedule of the bill. What would be the advantage of our referring it to a select committee? Supposing this select committee were to report adversely to the policy of the Government as represented by this bill, supposing they were to report that the items in the Schedule are undesirable and should be abandoned, in what position would the Government be in? They would simply have to resign—[Mr. PARKER: No]—because the Government stake their existence upon the Schedule of this bill.

Mr. PARKER: Upon every item in the Schedule?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): The material items of the Schedule. The House has affirmed these items already, in my opinion. The hon. member's object of course is delay. These are the tactics of the Opposition. If the

hon. member had his way, it would take another twelve months to obtain all the information that would satisfy him. The supporters of the Government, I believe, are desirous that we should push on with this policy of public works as soon as possible; and the result of passing this bill will be that the Government will be in a position to raise this money and to enter upon these works. It will not be possible for the Government to construct these railways until surveys are made, and, under our law, a Special Act is necessary before their construction can be undertaken. There is only one railway amongst them of which we have plans and surveys; all the others will have to be pegged and surveyed, and we hope that before next session we shall have nearly all the information necessary for us to proceed with the Special Acts. The hon. member quotes what has been done in the other colonies, and the practice there. The House must remember that those colonies have been in existence under Parliamentary Government for 30 years, whereas we are only just starting. The hon. member referred to Joint Committees of both Houses; I would point out that those Joint Committees deal with works and measures before they are agreed upon and adopted by the Government, and not after; but here we have adopted the Schedule of this bill. That is a very different position. It seems to me that if this important bill, the most important bill we have brought forward, were at this stage to be referred to a select committee, the only result would be—unless the committee reported generally in its favor—that it would amount to a direct vote of want of confidence in the Government, for, as I have already said, we have staked our existence upon this bill and the works enumerated in it. The hon. member has referred to the last loan of £525,000, which he thinks was very badly expended, and was a mere scramble. I believe the hon. member himself was on the select committee that prepared the Schedule of that Loan Bill. [Mr. PARKER: I was not.] At any rate, I believe he made no opposition to it. [Mr. PARKER: Oh, yes, I did]. As to the reports of the Engineer-in-Chief, those we hope to obtain when that officer is appointed; and of course they will be furnished to members

before any of this money is spent on these works. All the House is asked to do is to authorise the Government to raise this loan. Members will have an opportunity hereafter of dealing with these works, when the Special Acts are placed before them, and the Loan Estimates; so that the House has every security it can require. I can only say, so far as the Government are concerned, we are very adverse to having this bill referred to a select committee. We can see no good to be derived from it, and on the other hand we can only see delay; and we do not want any delay at the present time. We want to go on with the business of the country, and I believe we have a sufficient number in this House to stop the endeavor of the hon. member to have this bill referred to a select committee.

**MR. PARKER:** I think, after what the hon. gentleman has said, we may arrive at a satisfactory solution of the matter. I understand him to say now that all he wants is the authority of the House to raise this money. In Victoria, when they have a Loan Bill, they do not specify each particular work, and if the hon. gentleman will agree to lump all these railways together, I am perfectly ready to let the Schedule go.

The **TREASURER** (Hon. J. Forrest): We are not prepared to alter the Schedule.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion): No doubt it would be a very graceful proceeding on the part of this Government to assent to a lump sum of £1,336,000, which the hon. member opposite should have the pleasure of spending as he liked. I am not prepared to do so myself. The Government have placed these works before the House, and have staked their existence upon them. The hon. member has referred to what I said the other evening, that if we had been in a position at the time to borrow more, when we had expended our last loan, there would have been no depression; and the hon. member insinuated that what I meant was that the credit and prosperity of the colony was to be bolstered up by loans. I altogether differ from the hon. member in his version of what I said, or intended to convey. What I said was that if at that time we had been in a position to

go into the money market to borrow more money it would have been in the interest of the country to have done so. It was just because we were not in a position to do so that things turned out as they did. It was simply owing to a half-hearted policy. With regard to the hon. member's present tactics, what would he gain by referring this bill to a select committee? Looking at the position of parties in the House, looking at the numerical strength of the Government, and the numerical weakness of the hon. member's own side of the House, what does he think he would gain, so far as defeating the objects of the Government are concerned? He certainly would gain delay. But I do not think this House wants any further delay, nor the country either. I hope members will not allow themselves to be misled—I do not use the word in an offensive sense—by the hon. member, but proceed with the business of the country.

Amendment—to refer the bill to a select committee—negatived.

**THE SPEAKER** left the Chair.

#### IN COMMITTEE:

Clause 1—Power to raise money for certain purposes:

Agreed to.

Clause 2—Sums raised, how to be applied:

Agreed to.

Clause 3—Contributions to sinking fund to commence four years from the date of the first issue of debentures or inscribed stock:

**MR. LOTON** asked the Premier if he could give any reason why the contributions to the sinking fund should not commence before four years after the issue of the debentures?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) said this was the date always fixed in all our previous Loan Bills.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL** said he rather regretted there was to be a sinking fund at all. He thought we should have enough extra taxation by the time this loan was raised, without providing for a sinking fund. He thought we should leave it to a future generation to repay this money. He knew that the principle of providing a sinking fund was generally a good one; but if this colony in 50 years time could not pay £1,336,000

without providing a sinking fund he was sorry for it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Principal and interest charged on revenue:

Agreed to.

Clause 5—"The Governor may from time to time, by warrant under his hand, authorise the Colonial Treasurer to advance and apply to the purposes set forth in the said Schedule, any sums of money not exceeding in the whole the sum hereby authorised to be raised, and any sums of money so advanced and paid shall be retained by the Colonial Treasurer out of any moneys coming to his hands under the authority of this Act."

MR. PARKER said it seemed to him that in this clause power was given to the Governor to expend this money upon any of these works without any authority from the Legislature. They had been told by the Premier that all that was asked now was the power to raise the money, but this clause went a great deal further than that; it gave power to the Governor to spend the money. They were told the House was to be asked to pass Special Acts and to have Loan Estimates submitted to them, so as to get their sanction for the expenditure of the money. But this clause empowered the Governor to spend this money without any such formality. It said clearly that the Governor might from time to time, by warrant under his hand, authorise the Colonial Treasurer to advance any sums of money not exceeding the whole amount of the loan.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): It is the same in all the other colonies.

MR. PARKER: I doubt it. I do not know where the Attorney General gets this clause from. It seems to me contradictory to Clause 2, which says that the money is to be expended "in conformity with the annual Estimates of expenditure of loan moneys sanctioned by Parliament." There is no sanction of Parliament wanted under this clause.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the clause was perfectly plain. There was no intention to hide what it meant. The Government were not likely to rush to the Governor the moment this bill was passed for warrants to spend any of this money out of current

revenue upon these works. But when the loan was raised it was very material that some of these works should be proceeded with, and, in the event of the loan money not being immediately available, this clause authorised the Colonial Treasurer, under the Governor's warrant, to advance the money out of some other available funds, "and any sums of money so advanced and paid shall be retained by the Colonial Treasurer out of any moneys coming to his hands under the authority of this Act." The clause was plain enough. It was only to save time.

MR. PARKER: Does it not authorise the Government to spend the money without any further reference to this House? It seems so. The day after this bill passes, there is nothing to prevent the Governor authorising the Colonial Treasurer to advance (say) £150,000 for harbor works at Fremantle.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said it seemed to him a very desirable clause to have, because it left the hands of the Government free to a certain extent, so that in the event of this loan money not being immediately available, some of these works—surveys of railways for instance—might be proceeded with, without delay. That was all it meant. They were not going to wait for the authority of that House before they spent a halfpenny of this money. Why should the not be allowed to proceed with some of these works at once, if necessary, so long as the money eventually came out of this loan? No Government could sit down and administer the Government of the country if, simply because the expenditure had not been authorised by Parliament, no money could be spent, in any emergency. The Government must have some latitude as regards unauthorised expenditure; but any Ministry that went in for that sort of thing must be pretty sure of its ground. Unforeseen circumstances must occasionally arise, and the Government must be in a position to meet them as they arose. Of course the Government would have to answer to that House for any unauthorised expenditure.

MR. PARKER said this clause went further than that; it gave power to expend money without coming to that House at all. As soon as this bill was passed, the Government could undertake

any of these works at once out of any money they might have in hand, and, once a work was commenced, it was perfectly clear they could not drop it then.

Mr. SCOTT said he understood the Government had pledged themselves that no work should be proceeded with without their coming again to that House, either with a special Act or with Loan Estimates. Surely, they must place some confidence in the Government, otherwise he did not see how the business of the country was to be proceeded with. The Government had given the House a pledge that none of these works would be proceeded with, until the House had an opportunity of dealing with them again.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said the present Government could not pledge future Governments, and he thought the principle of this clause was a bad one.

Mr. KEANE did not think any Governor would issue a warrant for any expenditure upon a work that had not already been authorised by that House.

Mr. LOTON said that whatever view members might take with regard to this clause, it certainly did appear to him to give extreme power to the Ministry of the day, who, after all, would advise the Governor in the matter of issuing these warrants. He presumed these advances, if made at all, would be made out of current revenue; but, if the available current revenue should not be sufficient, there was nothing to prevent the Government going to any financial institution and pledging the revenues of the colony in order to obtain these advances. Was it right, and was it the intention of that Assembly to give any such power to any Government? He did not cast any reflection upon the members of the Government bench in the least, but the power was one that was liable to very great abuse. There might be a time when any Government might find itself in considerable straits for want of money, and, under this clause there was nothing whatever to prevent their going into the market and pledging the credit of the colony to any extent within the limit of this loan. He could quite see that it was undesirable that the hands of the Government should be altogether tied, but could they not be satisfied within reasonable limits? He must say he was not satisfied with the clause.

Mr. RICHARDSON thought that when that House authorised the raising of this loan and sanctioned these particular works the Governor would be quite justified in issuing these warrants, but only up to the amount here authorised,—so that, after all, the money would not be spent without the authority of the House.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—Short title:

Agreed to.

#### SCHEDULE.

##### Item 1:

*Railway from Perth to Bunbury, from Boyanup to Mininup Bridge, and from Boyanup to Busselton, £368,000.*

##### THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest):

Mr. Randall, it will be expected, I have no doubt, by members, that I should say something with regard to this item, and I am very willing to do so; I shall be very glad to give all the information that occurs to me. This railway is an old friend with a somewhat new face. It has been many times before this House, so that no one can say they have not had a considerable amount of information with regard to it. In fact, *Hansard* for some years past has been full of the Bayswater-Busselton Railway. I find that as long ago as August, 1886, it was before the House, and again in August, 1887, and in April, 1888; three times it was thoroughly threshed out in this House, and there is scarcely any member of the old Council who has not made a long speech on the subject. That being so, perhaps it will not be expected of me to say a great deal on this well-threshed-out subject. I have myself had something to do with it, as members will see from the report laid on the table, and the map hanging up on the opposite wall. When I wrote that report in May, 1888, I hardly expected I should have had the pleasure and honor of advocating this railway, from this bench, before this committee. The report was written by me in response to a request from His Excellency the Governor, and as it gives some useful information, perhaps I may be allowed to refer to it. It will be seen that I took a favorable view of the country between here and Bunbury. I find I reported then that the area of available land which it might be hoped would be

turned to account in the event of this railway running through it was about one million acres, of which 600,000 acres were fee simple land, and 400,000 acres unalienated Crown lands. But as this included some inferior land, I reduced the available area to half a million of acres which could be turned to good account if a railway were constructed. That was between here and Bunbury. I also described the rainfall over this country as averaging about 35 inches a year, and stated that the average temperature was about 65°. I pointed out that the country was gifted by nature with a magnificent climate and a plentiful rainfall, and that, having a fairly productive soil, it was capable of supporting a large peasant population in the future. I also reported that between Perth and Bunbury about fourteen running streams were crossed, and that they might be all termed permanent streams; at any rate, water was plentiful, and might always be obtained by sinking a few feet. I said the soil upon this area was varied, and that a large portion of the country was admirably adapted for fruit cultivation, which with easy means of communication with a market would make it profitable to grow. I then said: "As can be easily understood, a railway running through a country well-watered, with many springs and water-courses issuing from the Darling Range, would greatly encourage the occupation and cultivation of the lands along such railway, and it must be borne in mind that occupiers of land in this locality will have great advantages over those in the portions of the colony less favored by nature, inasmuch as they can grow so many things necessary for their own use." I need not go on any further. As members are aware, the soil of this part of the country is rich in some parts, in other parts fairly good, and in other places poor; but it is all capable of producing, by cultivation, a great many of those things we require for daily use. It possesses a delightful climate. It is a country in which people can live and enjoy a pleasant life, make for themselves comfortable homesteads, and do fairly well. I find that from an estimate I have made there are at present some 8,000 people living between here and the Southern Districts. There were 5,000 in 1881, ten years ago, when

the Census was taken last. Of course I have taken a radius of a good distance on each side of this railway—30 or 40 miles; and within that area there is located about one-sixth of the entire population of the colony; I include the Blackwood, Murray, Wellington, and some portions of the Williams in this calculation. I ask whether these 8,000 people do not deserve some consideration on our part. Up to the present time this colony has raised and spent a million and a third of money for public works in various parts of the country; but very little of that money has been spent in these Southern Districts. Still, although a politically active people, they have not complained much. But they desire now, and demand with all the power they have, to be considered in this new loan policy; and, my opinion is, they have a perfect right to be considered. Look at the Eastern Railway, and see what advantage it has been to those parts of the colony that are served by it. One settler told me the other day that before that railway was built he used to send about 5 tons of produce to market, but last year he sent 100 tons. If one individual has done so much in the way of developing his land and its resources, because of the presence of a railway, why may not all these people living along this line of road between here and the Vasse have the same chance of developing the resources that exist around them? As to the traffic on the road at the present time it is somewhat difficult to arrive at it, there being two or three different outlets for it. But apart from all other traffic, I think that our rich jarrah forests along this line, and in close proximity to it, would alone justify the building of this line. If there were not an inch of good land the whole distance, I think these magnificent jarrah forests would be a sufficient justification for the construction of this railway. I have no wish to go over old ground. The desirability of constructing it has been carried by this House, and almost unanimously. [Mr. HARPER: A portion of it.] The scheme as a whole, though only a section of it was to be undertaken at first. It was carried by a majority of 14 to 9, the whole scheme as proposed by Mr. Neil McNeil. The hon. member for York has of course changed his mind

with reference to the scheme. I have this time looked up what he said, and will give him chapter and verse, so that there may be no mistake about it. It will be found in *Hansard*, Vol. XII., p. 433. The hon. member then said this railway would run—

MR. PARKER: What railway? That resolution only referred to the first section.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): The hon. member's words are:—"This line would run through a great quantity of land which belonged to Government, which was not alienated from the Crown. It was not like the 'Eastern Railway'—I am quoting the hon. member for York—"which from Clackline nearly right up to Beverley ran through land belonging to private individuals. A great deal of the Government land on the route of the proposed railway was admirably adapted for the cultivation of fruit trees and cereals. If they could only induce settlement in this country by small landed proprietors it would prove not only a benefit to the railway but a blessing to the colony, as they would be able to supply a great deal of the produce which was now imported. On the route of the railway line there was, they all knew, one spot which was called 'Paradise,' from the grand character of the land, its admirable supply of water, and its wonderful productiveness as regards fruits. It was the desire of all the members of that House, he was sure, to see the colony progressing by the settlement of its land. Railways, they all knew, induced settlement of the soil and increased population, and the best line they could make was the one proposed." That was what the hon. member for York said in 1887: "The best line they could make with this end in view"—the settlement of the soil and the attraction of population—"was that one proposed." I could not say more myself. While on this subject, I should just like to give the House some statistics with reference to the postal service of the Southern as compared with the Eastern Districts, as we all know that the quantity of postal matter carried affords a very good guide and index of the progress and

activity of a place. I think these figures will show that these Southern Districts show up very well in comparison with the Eastern Districts in this respect. In order to appreciate the comparison it is necessary to bear in mind that they have a daily mail to the Eastern Districts, and only a bi-weekly mail to the Southern Districts. I find that the number of letters from the Eastern Districts last year amounted to 250,997, as compared with 241,501 from the Southern Districts; the number of newspapers being 156,000 as compared with 142,000; the number of packets 26,000 as compared with 27,000 from the South; and the number of post cards 5,000 as compared with 8,500. So that if the amount of correspondence is any index, it is very clear that there is something going on in these Southern Districts. I may also mention, as another proof of the value of railways and the way they tend to the opening up of the land, that I have been informed that the W. A. Land Company have sold 169,000 acres of their land at an average of 13s. 4d. an acre, and that they are in treaty for the sale of 4,000 acres more. This land, as members are aware, has been lying idle since the foundation of the colony, and would be lying idle now had it not been for the opening of the country by the Great Southern Railway. It has not been lying idle because of the high price placed upon it by the Government, for this land was open to the world at 10s. an acre, or for special occupation at 1s. per annum for 10 years. Yet there it remained for the last sixty years, and there it would have remained but for this railway to Albany. In a few months we hope there will be an agricultural area at Katanning, comprising 50,000 acres of excellent land, in a good climate. If this development is the result of railway communication in other parts of the colony, why should it not also be so in these Southern Districts? I venture to predict that in a few years the whole face of the country from Clackline to Albany will be completely transformed, in consequence of the railway; and I also venture to predict that if we build this railway to the Southern Districts it will transform the face of that part of the colony, and that all along the Darling Range we shall see the country cultivated, timber mills erected, and

everybody will wake up. I like to quote the remarks of the hon. member for York; they are always to the point. Here again, in *Hansard*, Vol. XI., p. 407, I find the hon. member saying this,—and I put it forward as an argument which I now gladly adopt. He said—and he was then advocating this same line of railway: “In all old countries the principle adopted as regards railway construction was that the existing traffic justified the construction; but in new countries a different policy was usually adopted. It had been held and proved that railways created traffic. That was the principle upon which we embarked upon the construction of our Eastern Railway.” I quite agree in every word of that. It is our duty in a new country like this, with its immense undeveloped resources, not to sit down and wait for traffic, but to create the traffic. In other parts of the world, in the United States of America, and in Canada, they did not wait until the land was settled before they built railways. With them a railway was the pioneer, and settlement followed. In that way they have turned the whole country into flourishing settlements. I am not going to try to show that this line will pay from the very first; it is not to be expected. But if we believe, as the hon. member for York has told us, that railways increase production and encourage settlement and stimulate industries, then I think we are certainly justified in constructing this line. This colony surely cannot be the only colony in the world where it will not pay to build railways. I have thought that matter carefully over, and I cannot bring myself to believe that if we build these railways we are going to ruin ourselves, or injure the colony in any way. In this matter I believe that the loan policy we have put forward has the support, and the strong support, of the majority of this House. I feel that this House is determined to stand by the Government in giving the colony such a push on the road to progress and prosperity as it never had before. I hope and believe that our action in this matter will be such that hereafter we will be glad and proud to look back, and say we were not unmindful of the responsibility cast upon us, and that the people of the colony will not have cause to be ashamed of those who

first took upon themselves the management of its affairs in the early days of self-government, and that they will acknowledge that in the days of small things there were some plucky people amongst us, who had faith in the future of the colony, and who were not afraid to embark on a bold policy in order to make the country a place worth living in, and a pleasant place, and a prosperous place, and a place worth going to. I think I have now said all I need say at the present moment with reference to this line. I know the country intimately; I have travelled over it, and walked over most of it; and I believe it is a country that will support a large population in every reasonable comfort. All it requires is an easy and cheap means of communication to make it prosper and to make it thrive. I now leave the matter in the hands of the members of this House. I only ask them in considering the matter not to forget that one sixth of the population of the colony are looking to them for this railway. These people have had to encounter much toil, much difficulty, and much disappointment for many long years; and I hope that this House by its action to-night will show that they are mindful of the claims of all parts of the colony, that they are not unmindful of the claims of the people of the Southern Districts, who, in the past, have not had that consideration from the loan policies of the Government which other parts of the colony had. [Mr. R. F. SHOLL: Question.] There is no question about it. I ask members to give the matter their careful consideration, for I feel certain that if their votes to-night result in this railway becoming an accomplished fact, it will be another step, and an important one, in the progress and development of this part of Australia.

MR. LOTON took it that the Government intended them to understand that the amount set down for the construction of the various works on the Schedule were sufficient to cover the cost. If this line of railway, starting from Perth and ending at the Vasse could be built in a satisfactory manner, and equipped, for the amount here set down, all he could say was that personally he should be agreeably disappointed. But he very much doubted whether it could be built



for anything like this amount. The Premier had pointed out the difficulties of these Southern people in the way of railway communication, and that as rate-payers and contributors to the revenue they had a right to consideration. In that he perfectly agreed with him; and, so far as he was concerned, he did not in any way tend to disparage the quality of the land between here and the districts through which this line would run. He was not there to attempt to condemn the country in which we live; nor was he there to put an inflated value upon it. No doubt it was capable of maintaining a very considerable population. There was a fair amount of moderately good country; but the whole of it, or nearly the whole of it, will require a large expenditure of money before it could be made profitable to the investor. He did not know whether it was the intention of the Government to proceed with the works on the Schedule in the order in which they appeared; he noticed this was first on the list. Although not in accord with the public works policy of the Government to its full extent, he thought the question they had to consider was how much money could we afford to risk in the construction of new railways? [The TREASURER: To the extent set down in this Schedule.] I am not prepared, myself, to go to that extent. I think the Government are going to an unreasonable limit, at the present time. The Premier said they would not spend this money all at once, nor perhaps borrow it all at once; but, let the Government finance this loan as they may, he was rather afraid there would be some very heavy charges to be met hereafter, and we should find our revenues pledged to such an extent that there would be very little left for ordinary public works. The main reason he was opposed to borrowing all this at the present time was that the Government could not spend it to the best advantage within a reasonable time after borrowing it; they could not spend it to advantage within three or four years. We had not the people to do the work. The greater portion of the people who would carry out these works would come here and simply remain here while the works proceeded, and then leave us to pay the piper. It was all very well for the hon. gentleman to

talk about what had been done in the way of railways in Canada and in America and other countries; he would ask him what were the populations of those countries compared with ours? Or, he would ask him, what was the extent of railways possessed by the other colonies compared with their population? Did we not already compare favorably with any of them in this respect? Yet here it was proposed to spend another three-quarters of a million upon additional railways. Really it seemed to him that the Ministry's intention was to go in for a sufficiently big loan to last them during their term of office, thinking, no doubt, that they would have a very good following so long as this money lasted. He would say again, this money could not be judiciously expended, it could not be profitably employed, for some years to come. We should have very good times no doubt for two or three years; but, so sure as that, we should have a time of depression to follow those good times. He was only expressing his own views in this matter; he did not know that he was expressing the views of his constituents—they had left him to exercise his own judgment. But, expressing his own views, he thought if the Government would only listen to reason they would find they were going too far in borrowing all this money at the present time. If the Government would tell them which of these two lines of railway they considered most expedient, he would be very glad to listen to them, whether the Yilgarn line or this Busselton line. They were both speculative undertakings to a very great extent, and the country at the present time was not in a position to take upon itself responsibilities of this speculative character in both quarters. These were his views. He was sorry they were not likely to have more weight in that Assembly, though he was certain there were many members who, though they would not admit it, believed in their hearts that the Government were going too far with this loan.

MR. PARKER: I wish to ask the Premier what is the distance this line is supposed to run from Perth. What is the distance, in the first place, from Perth to Bunbury?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): 111 miles.

MR. PARKER: And from Boyanup to Minninup Bridge?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): 11 miles.

MR. PARKER: And from Boyanup to Busselton?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): 25 miles; 147 miles altogether.

MR. PARKER: May I ask how this sum of £368,000 is made up—the sum set down for the construction of the whole line?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): The estimate that has been made by the General Manager of Railways as to the cost of the line to Bunbury is £283,736, leaving a balance of £84,724 for the remainder of the line.

MR. PARKER: Will the hon. gentleman tell us whether he has any estimate for the construction of the line from Boyanup to Mininnup, and from Boyanup to Busselton?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): We have the General Manager's estimate of the cost of the line to Bunbury, and upon that I have founded the estimate for the other two sections. It is an average of £2,500 per mile for the whole distance.

MR. PARKER: Will the hon. gentleman lay his estimate on the table?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): I am not prepared to do that.

MR. PARKER: Will he say whose estimate it is?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): I have already told the hon. member that we have the estimate of the Government Engineer as to the line to Bunbury, and I know that the line from Boyanup to Mininnup, and the line from Boyanup to Busselton are easier lines. I know that from my own personal knowledge of the country, and I have no hesitation in placing the cost of these two lines at the same amount per mile as the line to Bunbury.

MR. PARKER: Then the estimate is your own estimate?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): To that extent it is.

MR. PARKER: Does the hon. gentleman's estimate include rolling stock?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): It does.

MR. PARKER: Is he satisfied that these works can be constructed for this money?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): I have taken it from the best information at my disposal.

MR. PARKER: Is this one of the works upon which the hon. gentleman's Ministry will stand or fall by?

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Forrest): That I am not prepared to reply to.

MR. PARKER said it was certainly highly complimentary to him to find the leader of the Government searching so diligently through the pages of *Hansard* for any remarks which he (Mr. Parker) had ever made with regard to this line of railway; but he would remind the hon. gentleman that in no instance had he ever advocated the whole line. On the first occasion he advocated its construction as far as the Jarrahdale junction only; on the second occasion he believed it was to Pinjarrah; but he never advocated the whole line. It was quite true that the principle of constructing the whole line was approved, but he had never advocated the whole line. As to the land, no doubt there were spots of land that would occupy a population in the cultivation of fruit and products of the dairy, but he doubted whether they could successfully grow cereals or other agricultural produce to compete with other districts of the colony. In fact, he had been told that the settlers of the Murray District could not even supply the local mill at Jarrahdale with hay, and that the Company had to get their hay from the Eastern Districts. The manager himself told him he had to get it from York, because he could get it cheaper than he could in his own district. These Southern Districts were evidently more fitted for the growth of fruit, vegetables, and dairy produce, than agricultural produce. It appeared to him the main question they had to consider was, whether the traffic was likely to yield any return for the construction and the heavy working expenses of this line, in view of steamer competition? They knew that the Eastern Railway, with more freight than it could accommodate with its present rolling stock, and with no rival steamers to compete with,—they knew that line was worked at a heavy loss. Could it then be supposed that this line,

which would have to compete with the steamer traffic, and where there were so many outlets for the traffic, was going to pay anything like working expenses? If we were losing £14,000 a year by the Eastern Railway, he should say we should lose at least double that by this line. He should certainly say that £25,000 a year would not be too high an estimate of the loss the country would sustain in the working expenses of this line. The hon. gentleman said it would induce settlement. We had already built some 600 miles of railway for the purpose of inducing settlement. We should very soon have 7,000,000 acres along the Great Southern line thrown open for settlement, and an immense quantity of land alongside the Midland Railway. In his opinion we had already quite enough land available for settlement; what we wanted was a population to settle upon it; and, for his part, he should have much preferred to see this money devoted to colonization purposes, in connection with the settlement of these lands. The hon. gentleman said we had magnificent jarrah forests, which alone would justify the construction of this line. Did he think this timber would be sent by railway to be shipped at Fremantle, when it could be shipped direct at Bunbury? They knew the local market for jarrah was a very limited one, and the demand could easily be supplied by existing lines, and, in this respect, what was gained by the Southern line would be lost by the Eastern. If it was desired to benefit the people of the Southern Districts—and he admitted they deserved every consideration—what he should like to see would be this Boyanup railway extended inland to the Blackwood District, and make Bunbury the great port of export for these districts. In his opinion such a line would do ten times more good for the Southern Districts than a line like this running along the coast. In the Eastern Districts, as he said the other day, every single import must be sent by the railway, and all the produce of those districts must come down by the railway. But in the case of these Southern Districts all their imported goods would be shipped and landed at Bunbury or the Vasse jetty at their doors, and not landed at Fremantle and then sent along this line of railway. To a great extent the same remark applied

to the sending down of the products of the districts to market. But such a line as he suggested would be the same to the Southern Districts as the Eastern line was to the Eastern Districts; everything would go by it. The hon. gentleman said that in new countries railways were made to create traffic, rather than to meet the demands of existing traffic. They all knew that. But it was a principle that could be carried too far. That was a different thing to building railways 50 years in advance of the requirements of the country. The hon. gentleman also referred to the Canadian line, but he did not tell them that that line was built under a special arrangement with Vancouver, with the view of linking that territory with the Dominion territory; he did not tell them that it was built with a view to federation, and under special arrangement. He certainly was greatly surprised at the estimated cost of this proposed line, £2,500 a mile. He was fully under the impression, that no railway in this colony up to the present time, equipped with a proper amount of rolling stock, stations, etc., had been built for anything like that amount. Even the Great Southern Railway, which was regarded as a very economically built line, had cost a great deal more. He hoped and trusted that the estimate of the Government need not be exceeded; but he very much feared it would be found that when the work came to be tendered for, a considerably further amount would be required. He would only ask the Government this: if this item were agreed to, and they found that the work could not be carried out for the sum here mentioned, he would ask them that before proceeding with the work they would come to that House again and ask it to sanction the larger expenditure.

Mr. KEANE said he would only detain the committee a short time for the purpose of calling attention to the figures which had been quoted by the hon. members for York and the Swan to the improbability of the work being carried out for the sum named in the estimate before them. He need only refer hon. members to the offer made some two or three years ago by a Melbourne firm, who were willing to construct the whole of the line, build stations, and find everything, except engines and waggons, for

the sum of £2,150 per mile. The Government estimate was £3,000 a mile, or, omitting the engines and waggons, the construction would cost about £2,000 per mile, and he felt convinced that when the tender for the work was let, it would be found to be much lower than even that amount. He mentioned this because it seemed to him that many hon. members were under the impression that the work could not be carried out for the sum named in the Schedule; but—knowing as he did something about it—he would be very glad if the Government would give him the contract at that price.

MR. RICHARDSON said he did not propose to detain the committee long. Three select committees had already sat in connection with the matter, and a large number of reports and speeches on the subject would be found in *Hansard*. Some hon. members had, however, tended—by their remarks—to mislead the committee. The hon. member for York, for instance, had stated that it would be absurd to build the line because it ran through country which produced little or nothing. That same hon. gentleman also said that the proprietors of the Jarrahdale mills had to send to York for fodder because a sufficient quantity was not grown in the vicinity to meet their demands. Such, however, was not the fact, for at the present time he believed there were hundreds of tons of fodder stored in the district; but the proprietors of the mills preferred to bring their chaff from York even if it cost them more than they could get it from the people in the neighborhood for. Some said it was on account of quality, but that was not so. The proprietors of the mills knew that the people of the district had no other possible outlet for their produce, and by buying elsewhere for a time, they endeavored to bring the producers to their own terms. There were, however, some spirited men in the district who would rather store it than sell it at what they considered an unfair price. There was plenty of produce in the district now, but those who could afford to do it preferred to wait until later in the year, when they could obtain a better price than was possible immediately after the harvest. Then it was said there would be no traffic for the line. Probably there was not now one-fifth the traffic there would be if the railway were

built. Railways, as could be seen from their past experience, created traffic. Still at the present time there was some. Last year 2,490 tons were carried by sea from and to Bunbury; there were 2,680 passengers by sea; and about 1,000 by road, but of course this did not represent the whole of the road traffic. The way the Premier gauged the traffic by the mail service returns, seemed to him a very fair way of getting at it for it was well known that the number of letters which passed very fairly showed the state of business between any two places. The hon. member for the Swan said that they were losing £14,000 a year on the Eastern line, but he did not at the same time point out that these figures included the Geraldton-Northampton and Walkaway lines, which, in these returns, were all lumped together. Then said the hon. member, "If we are losing this sum on a certain length of line and we double the length, the loss will be doubled." Such, however, did not follow. Let them take an analogous case. Suppose a station manager found he was losing £200 a year with 5,000 sheep, would it stop him increasing the number to 20,000 for fear he would lose £800. He mentioned this to show that we really required a longer length of line so as to lessen the working expenses as regards the whole. With a longer length of line they would not require to duplicate their central stations; they would not require more traffic managers, or heads of departments to work the line. All that would be wanted would be a few extra drivers, stokers, and station masters. They had been informed of the enormous cost of working the Eastern line, but that was greatly owing to the gradients, and no matter what increased traffic there was, there was increased haulage and a consequent increased cost to overtake it. On the line before them the cost of haulage would be very small indeed, for there were none of these heavy gradients to overcome. Another point was that the cost of construction would not be half that of the Eastern line, and therefore, the interest on the outlay would not be half. Again the construction of this line would materially decrease the cost of living in Perth and Fremantle. Milk was now 6d. per quart; butter seldom under 2s. per pound, and bacon and

cheese in proportion, and in a fruit growing country grapes were now at a price—6d. per pound—that was absolutely prohibitive. They were warned and cautioned against over production and against opening up further country by means of railways which would bring about such a result; but he thought it would be admitted that large production lessened the cost. Take an instance of a family of five persons: If to them milk was reduced by 2d. per quart, and butter by 6d. per pound, and other articles of this class of articles by similar amounts, it would mean to such family a saving of 4s. 6d. per week, which was £11 14s. per year. The taxation represented by the amount this line would cost, were the population increased by 10,000—which was not an extravagant estimate—would be 5s. 3d. per head. In this way the family he had instanced would contribute £1 6s. 3d. to the Railway, and save on the other hand £11 14s. They had been told that there was a loss of about £14,000 on the Eastern line, and that they must expect to make a corresponding loss on the line now before the committee. Hon. members must, however, recollect the indirect gain. He found that last year the Eastern Railway carried 52,000 tons gross. Before the railway was built, the settlers in these districts used to pay £3 or £4 per ton for freight, whereas they now paid from 10s. to 35s. Taking the average at 25s., the saving to the settlers was about £2 per ton, and that on 52,000 tons, showed a gain to the people of over £100,000. Notwithstanding this they were advised not to make any more railways for fear other people might gain in the same way. He need say no more, except that if such were the benefits that accrued from railways, the more we had of them the better.

MR. THROSSELL said that after the evidence that had been put before the committee, and after reading the report on the land by the Premier, he had come to the conclusion that this line would tap land equal to that in the Eastern Districts, and that being so, it was his intention to support the line. From this report on the land, it appeared that there was along the route through which the line would pass a vast area of fee simple land, and, probably, this was among the

best in the district. He thought in regard to this that the policy of the Government had not been bold enough, for some scheme should have been brought forward to enable them to buy up this fee simple land, and so enable the country to participate in the enhanced value. The Eastern Districts had been twitted with having a line themselves, and then being opposed to the Southern Districts having similar benefits. The reason objections came from the Eastern Districts was that they wanted evidence as to the quality of the land. That they had now, and it would be ungenerous of them to further oppose the line. The great fault in the policy of the Government was that while they proposed these additional railways, they did not also bring forward a scheme for settling the people on the lands along them, and if the Government had devoted £100,000 of the loan to such a scheme, he would have heartily supported it. He hoped some plan would yet be devised to enable the poor man to settle on the land, for unless assistance were given him he could not, owing to the nature of the country, do much good for himself. As to the line itself, he would have preferred to see it stop at Bunbury, for, in a letter which he had recently received, the writer said: "The line from Perth to Bunbury is a necessity, but the other sections will be white elephants, pure and simple." Still, after the evidence he had heard, he felt bound to support the Government proposal.

MR. COOKWORTHY said that according to the hon. member for York a scheme of colonization was of far more importance than this railway. Now only recently to his knowledge several gentlemen had gone to look at the country around Bunbury. After inspecting it they said the land was good enough, but they saw no way of dealing with their produce when they had grown it. The people of the Sussex District had had no aid from the Government, nor did they want it. All they asked for was a railway. As regards the hon. member for York's opposition he would ask the committee whether they believed the hon. member for York in 1891 or the hon. member for Perth in 1886-7. He preferred him in the latter capacity. In those years, 1886-7, there was a general consensus of opinion that the line should be built, and were

they going to reverse that decision now? He believed that had there not been the agitation for Responsible Government the line would now have been an accomplished fact, and he felt sure that it would have done the Southern Districts much more good than the change of Government. Reference had been made to the evidence given by him before the Agricultural Commission. It was said that he had stated that he would not like to take debentures in the railway? Would any other hon. gentleman do so? The only difference between himself and other gentlemen was that he had said what he thought, but they kept what they thought to themselves.

MR. PARKER: You said it would not pay "for a generation."

MR. COOKWORTHY said he could assure the hon. member that he did not say so. There were several inaccuracies in the evidence; and if the Commission really wanted to get a correct opinion they should have given the witnesses copies of their evidence to correct and verify. When that Commission visited the Sussex District he did not look upon it in a serious light at all. He looked upon it something in the light of another Commission that had visited the district some years previously, connected with an inquiry into the relative merits of jarrah and karri and other timbers, and who made an extraordinary report. He could only attribute the conclusions they arrived at to the exhilarating effects of the pure ozone—he would put it that way—which they breathed while in the Sussex District. He did say to the Agricultural Commission that the line to Busselton would not pay, and that for some years; but did the Eastern line pay? If railways did not pay, they promoted the settlement of the soil. What hon. members would now like to take up the Eastern Railway because it did not pay, and revert to the old order of things? The taxation on the £1,250,000 already spent was hardly felt, and he did not think that with the increased progress the colony would make, the taxation on the amount now proposed to be borrowed would be felt. With regard to this railway he was sure the committee would not go back on the past action of the Legislature; but would pass this item by a large majority.

MR. TRAYLEN thought he had made it clear on a previous occasion that he was fully in accord with the policy of the Government in so far as this line was concerned. He only differed from them as regards their loan policy in respect to the amount we could safely borrow, without incurring additional taxation. When it was simply a question of how the loan should be spent, he felt he could support this particular item. This railway would serve old settled districts, and he considered that those who had been here and borne the heat and burden of the day were entitled to every consideration at their hands. He believed the line would create traffic in time, but that it would not in the first instance pay its working expenses. On the other hand it would do much to develop the country, add to the advantages of the residents of Perth, and generally advance the interests of the colony. In these circumstances, he was glad to support the item.

MR. R. F. SHOLL would not like the item to pass without saying a few words in opposition to this railway, though he did so with every confidence that he should be in a minority. He was opposed to it for more than one reason. Number one was that he did not think it was a desirable work, for he did not think the good to be derived from it would in any way compensate for the money it would cost. They had heard a great deal about the quality of the land. He believed there were some good bits of land between here and Narrogin, but that land had been there since the colony was founded, and it had never been cultivated to this day. The Premier said there were 500,000 acres which could be turned to good account. There might be, or there might be not; in any case he did not think they would be justified in building this railway in order to open up another 500,000 acres of land for settlement. There were already hundreds of thousands of acres available, and very shortly there would be millions more. The district, it was said, was adapted for fruit growing. Were they going to build a railway to bring down a few tons of fruit to market all this way, when there was plenty of good fruit growing on the Eastern Railway? This railway, again, would connect two ports. He did not

think it was a policy that had been adopted anywhere else yet to build a railway between two ports connected by sea, and with steamer communication already established. He could understand it if there was a large population, and a likelihood of a large passenger traffic, but not simply to bring down produce, when it could be brought by sea. There was nothing to justify them even in expecting any large amount of produce to be brought into market by this railway. The evidence given before the Agricultural Commission did not lead them to think so. That was the opinion of, not one witness but many, who resided in the district. The hon. member for the Vasse had said that his evidence had not been correctly reported, that he never said he did not think this line would pay "for a generation." But the hon. member admitted that evening he said he did not think it would pay for some years to come. There were other portions of the hon. member's evidence which went to show that he had very little faith in this line at that time. The hon. member was asked by the Commission if he would undertake to send up a hundred fowls a month at a shilling apiece? He said the difficulty they had was to get anybody who would undertake to ship them. But, said the Commission, that is just where a railway would be useful. The hon. member's answer was, "Well, I don't know whether it would pay to make a railway to send up a few fowls." The hon. member was not the only witness in the district who gave evidence on this point; the other witnesses supported him. He would sooner believe the hon. member's views, given calmly before the Commission, than his views as given to them that night, advocating the interests of his constituents. The day would come when there would be a land tax, especially upon land belonging to private individuals who made no use of it; and he believed that applied to a good deal of the land which this line would serve. It was very clear we could not afford any more taxation through the Customs, and he saw nothing for it but a land tax. He did not know what the hon. member would then say. The sooner they had a land tax the better, in his opinion, would it be for the colony; they would have less demand for railways that would never pay.

MR. HARPER said he rose to protest against the policy of the Ministry in absorbing all the borrowing powers of the colony for the next ten years. The railway now before the committee would be of very little benefit to the country for many years to come. Granting that the land was of first class quality—and he had no doubt it was—they all knew it cost immense sums of money to bring it under cultivation. He thought he would not be far out in saying that one acre in the Southern Districts would cost as much to bring into a state of cultivation as five acres in the Eastern Districts. Still he thought the inhabitants of the Southern Districts were entitled to a guarantee that a railway should be built, and if a section of it, say as far as Pinjarrah, were undertaken, leaving the remaining portion to be completed as soon as circumstances warranted it, he felt sure the country would generally favor it. The hon. the Premier had said that these Southern Districts had not clamored for their share of past loan moneys, but he forgot that immense areas of valuable timber land had been given away to assist them, and this he considered quite equal to giving them borrowed money.

The item was then agreed to.

Progress was then reported, and leave given to sit again on the following day.

#### CENSUS BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the House was aware that at the Conference recently held between the colonies it was arranged that a Census should take place throughout Australasia, at the same time that it was taken in the United Kingdom. This bill was necessary to give the Superintendent of Census power to carry out the work. It was merely a formal bill, and he now asked the House to read it a second time.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt), in moving the second reading of this bill, said the preamble explained its objects very fully. Under our present law, if some gentleman holding a seat in either House were called upon

to administer the Government for a short time, he would necessarily have to resign his seat. It would be inexpedient, he thought, in case the President of the Council, or the Speaker of that House, or any other gentleman being entrusted with the Administration for a short time, that his seat should become vacant; and this bill provided that under the circumstances he had named the seats should not be vacated. The second section of the bill provided that Ministers having been re-elected once on their taking office, need not go a second time to their constituents should they change their portfolios. What he meant was this: supposing, for instance, he changed his position of Attorney General for that of Commissioner of Crown Lands, it would not be necessary for him to be re-elected, having once been re-elected when he took the position of Attorney General. The bill also provided that no person could take the salary of two offices. With these few remarks he moved that the bill be read a second time.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### POSTAGE STAMP ACT, 1889, AMENDMENT BILL.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved the second reading of an Act to amend the Postage Stamp Act. The bill, he said, was a short one, and one which need not evoke any great amount of discussion. In the original Act there was a definition of what was a fictitious stamp, which, although it was made applicable to the colonies did not apply to the United Kingdom, and it had been suggested by the Post Office authorities in London that the amendment contained in this bill, making the definition applicable to them, should be made. It was only a small matter, and he moved the second reading of the bill.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at 11:40 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 10th February, 1891.

Agreements with Holders of Special Timber Concessions—Crown Claims Ordinance Bill: second reading; adjourned debate—Apportionment Bill: second reading; adjourned debate—Protection to Parliamentary Printers Bill: second reading—Privileges Bill: second reading—Standing Rules and Orders—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. C. Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 3 o'clock.

### PRAYERS.

#### AGREEMENTS WITH HOLDERS OF SPECIAL TIMBER CONCESSIONS.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT moved, That there be laid upon the Table of the House copies of the Agreements made with the holders of the Special Concessions to cut timber, enumerated in Schedule 8 of the Report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the year 1889. He said: I may state that I only require those relating to the concessions contained in Schedule 8 of the report of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for 1889. I do not require those relating to the ordinary timber licenses. I wish particularly to have those of the W. A. Timber Company at Lockville, the Rockingham Timber Company, Messrs. E. V. H. Keane, M. C. Davies, and H. J. Yelverton. It is not my intention to occupy the time of the House with any lengthy remarks on the present occasion, as I understand it is the intention of the Government not to oppose the motion. When these returns are laid upon the Table the time will arrive for extended comment, and of which I will avail myself. I might, however, just say now that we have handed over for a lengthy period, varying in each case, many thousands of acres of our best forest land. On examining them they are unequal in their incidence, but are, in some important particulars, equal. For the most part the largest advantages appear to have been given to persons outside the colony, and a minimum to those inside, and the provisions inserted in the conditions for the protection of the people of this colony have been but imperfectly observed, if not altogether unobserved. Hon. members will see when