

MR. HJGHAM said he would not be quite satisfied to see the motion discharged, because as the construction of the railway workshops at Midland Junction could not be for some time, any succeeding Parliament should have full reports on the question of the site.

Question (for production of papers) put, and negatived on the voices.

#### ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

MR. RASON (South Murchison), on behalf of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan), moved that the order be discharged.

Question put and passed, and the order discharged.

#### KALGOORLIE MUNICIPAL LOANS REAPPROPRIATION BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): In moving the second reading, said: I do not suppose any remarks are wanted, further than to explain that at the time it was decided to raise a loan for street improvement in Kalgoorlie, certain streets were specified, but Kalgoorlie is growing so rapidly that by the time the loan was completed other streets became more important. The citizens have agreed, and I am directed to ask the House to agree, to consent to this alteration in the allotment of the money.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

##### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:40 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th October, 1900.

Urgency: Fremantle Asylum, a Mad Assault—Question: English Mail and Late Fees—Question: Noxious Weeds, to Legislate—Kalgoorlie Municipal Loans Reappropriation Bill, third reading—Land Act Amendment Bill, second reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill (Federal Members, to disqualify), second reading, in Committee, reported—Coolgardie-Norseman Railway Bill, second reading (resumed), Division, negatived—Distillation Bill, in Committee, reported—Adjournment.

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

##### PRAYERS.

#### URGENCY—FREMANTLE ASYLUM, A MAD ASSAULT.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I beg formally to move the adjournment of the House, in order to call attention to a very serious event which has recently taken place in the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum. It appears that a woman, Catherine Clifford, who was living in the bush some little distance from Perth, went out and unfortunately lost herself. For some times she wandered about the bush, and as a result, probably, of the shock and exposure arising from this, she incurred a mild form of lunacy. This progressed and developed, until at last she became somewhat of a nuisance to the neighbours; the consequence being that the police finally took charge of her, and she was removed to the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum and treated as a patient. She remained there, and apparently got no better for some time; and the other day (as late as the 21st July) she was reported by the Medical Officer, Dr. Hope, as being very quiet but stupid. On the 26th September she was visited by her husband, who on arrival at the gate of the Asylum was told, to his great astonishment—he believing she was in normal health—that she was unconscious and suffering from the effects of an assault perpetrated upon her by one of her fellow-patients. On going in to see his wife, he found her lying in bed in an unconscious condition. Her eyes were blackened from the effect of a blow, one being closed; and her face was cut and bruised, and generally knocked about. Still, at the same time, she did not appear to be really dying. On the 28th

September, Clifford received a telegram from Dr. Hope, stating that his wife was dead. I am not prepared to say that the death was the result of the assault. The assault does certainly appear to have been a violent one, and it may have had the effect of precipitating death. The facts of the case, as far as I can gather them, really appear to be these. She was placed in a room together with another patient of violent and homicidal tendency. The other patient was placed in a strait waistcoat, but apparently the garment was defective, and the result was that this patient got her arms loose and committed this assault upon Catherine Clifford. As far as I can ascertain, no inquest has been held in connection with the death of Catherine Clifford, and the matter has not been inquired into in any shape or form. Certainly it does appear to be a very serious matter that a patient should be so terribly assaulted and die within a few days, this occurring through want of proper supervision; because it seems to me that if proper supervision were exercised over the patients in the asylum it would be impossible for a lunatic like that to escape from the strait waistcoat or to commit an assault of that character. Besides, I think the system of classification should be such as to make it impossible for a violent patient to be in the same room as one whose complaint is apparently innocuous. I want to say also while I am on the question that I have given notice of a motion, as members will have observed, asking for a Select Committee to inquire into the two asylums; because, entirely apart from this case, there can be no doubt to anyone who has seen the establishment at Fremantle that it is absolutely unfitted. Its usual appearance and aspect would be more in keeping with a 17th century Bedlam, and more particularly is that the case with regard to the men's quarters. The rooms are dark and gloomy and ill ventilated in the extreme. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) visited the asylum with me some months ago, and I think he will be in a position to confirm what I say with regard to the architecture of that establishment. [Mr. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] In addition to that, the practice of having from 17 to 30 in one ward is a very bad system indeed,

and militates to a great extent against proper organisation. It means this, that any one patient can get up in the middle of the night, make a noise, and turn the institution upside down. This does occur occasionally, and I am surprised that there is any percentage of cures at all in the institution. In the male portion there is a series of cells for refractory patients, unlined, unlighted, unventilated, very small, opening on to a passage from which the light of day is always excluded: they are an unsightly, noisome and unwholesome set of cells. The case of Catherine Clifford is a serious one, and if there is any fault on the part of officials whereby this terrible tragedy has been permitted, the matter should be fully inquired into; but no inquest has been held, and apparently the whole affair has been hushed up and blown over. The husband of this unfortunate woman came to me to-day; he is an old man, 54 years of age, and I never in my life witnessed a more pathetic spectacle than the sight of this old man pouring out to me his tale of woe. He is an old man, aged and decrepit, and to all appearances has lost his only friend possibly in the whole world; and if hon. members had seen the old man break down and shed tears for the loss of his wife, I am sure they would have sympathised with him also. I caused Edward Clifford to get a declaration signed, and it deals with the bald facts of the case. It reads as follows:

I, Edward Clifford, of Perth, in the colony of Western Australia, labourer, do solemnly declare that in August, 1900, my wife, Catherine Clifford, was taken from my abode and conveyed to the Lunatic Asylum, Fremantle, being of unsound mind. She was reported by the Government Medical Superintendent on 21st July as being very quiet but stupid, and on the 22nd September as being in about the same condition. On the 25th September, on visiting her I found her unconscious, with her eye blackened and closed, her face very much cut and bruised, and was informed by the Chief Officer that she had been assaulted by a violent maniac who was confined in the same room with her. On the 29th September I was informed by telegram that my wife was dead, cause of death not being stated. Attached hereto is correspondence. And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Ordinance made and passed in the eighteenth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, No. 12, intitled an Ordinance for the Abolition of unnecessary Oaths, and to substitute declarations in lieu thereof. (Signed)

EDWARD CLIFFORD. Declared at Perth this 4th day of October, 1900.

The declaration is signed by William J. George, Justice of the Peace. The correspondence attached to the declaration is to the following effect. First, there is a letter from Dr. Hope, saying:

In reply to your letter of the 19th inst., I beg to inform you that there is no improvement in your wife's condition. She is very quiet, but stupid.

I mention this to show that the woman's terrible condition did not arise from any violence on her part. On the 22nd September the doctor again wrote to Mr. Clifford as follows:

In reply to your letter of the 20th inst., I beg to inform you that your wife remains in about the same condition as when I last wrote to you, and I think it would not be advisable to take her out at present.

Clifford received no intimation as to his wife's health until the 28th September, when he received this telegram:

Your wife died this afternoon; reply *re* burial.

These are all the facts, in a few words. It appears from the declaration that this unfortunate woman was only 42 years of age, in the prime of life, and that she has been done to death at the hands of a violent woman. That is the only conclusion anyone can arrive at from the facts told to me. It is a terrible state of things that a patient in an asylum should be submitted to such a gross outrage as this. It is not a matter in which I need request an investigation, but it is a case which will itself suggest that it is a proper one for an inquiry, and if an inquiry should not be held then I think it is a case in which hon. members should demand an inquiry. I have done my duty in bringing this matter before the House, and I hope the Government will take steps to prevent such an occurrence taking place in the future.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I beg to second the motion. I took that declaration this morning, and I used as much care as I possibly could to satisfy myself that the man who made the declaration was speaking that which he believed in his own mind to be the truth. If the statement made to me—I have not heard all the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) has said—is true, then certainly a searching examination should be made into the matter. What I understood from Mr.

Clifford is that his wife was not a paying patient, and that is all the more reason why the Government should protect those who suddenly or by any means may lose command of their reason. The facts as told to me are that the woman was placed in company with a violent patient—a well-known violent maniac—who had to wear a strait-jacket to restrain her, and this unfortunate woman (Mrs. Clifford) was left there to watch. The strait-jacket was left in such a way that the violent lunatic struggled out of it, and murdered this woman in the lunatic asylum. I do not believe the Premier has anything to do with the lunatic asylums, but I think on inquiry, if it is found that there has been any wrong-doing, no verdict that the House could place on the delinquents would be too strong. I feel sure the Government will do what is right in the matter.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): This is the first that I have heard of this matter. The gentleman may have approached the Colonial Secretary: I do not know whether he did or not, but the Colonial Secretary is in charge of these matters.

MR. VOSPER: He is rather an ignorant working man, and I do not think he would know where to go.

THE PREMIER: This man seems to have gone to private members instead of to the Minister; and it seems to me that in a matter of this sort it would have been better to investigate it, to some extent at any rate, before it should be published, at the instance of a private member, throughout the colony. I am absolutely ignorant of the facts; I have never heard of them before; and I do not think this is the right way to proceed in a matter of this sort, before we have had an opportunity of investigating the circumstances. We have only an *ex parte* statement of a person who probably does not know much about the matter. The man himself was not there when his poor wife died, but he may have heard something of the circumstances of the assault; still I do not think anyone should express themselves strongly, in regard to people being murdered, such as the member for the Murray (Mr. George) talks about, and of punishing the delinquents before we have heard the facts. The first thing is to get at the facts, before we give any

expression in regard to the matter. We shall be very glad to at once find out the circumstances under which this woman died. I think it is rather irregular, any way ; certainly it is not right. The poor woman is dead, therefore nothing we can say can bring her to life again ; and the first thing we should do is to find out the facts, before offering any remarks in regard to them.

MR. GEORGE : If the facts are right, my contention is right.

THE PREMIER : The hon. member talks at random.

MR. GEORGE : No ; he does not.

THE PREMIER : And makes statements, when on inquiry people may be found not in blame at all. Let us find out what the facts are, and then hon. members can express themselves strongly if they like. If anyone is to blame, none will be more ready to place the blame on the right person than the Government. I do not think this is the right way to proceed. First of all this poor man goes to the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) who, we know, is the receptacle for complaints from all those in distress, because every man in distress seems to go to the hon. member to have his grievance published in his newspaper.

MR. VOSPER : I am very proud of the fact.

THE PREMIER : That is no reason why the House should be adjourned, and I hope the House will not be adjourned, but that this matter will be looked into.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison) : This is a case that emphasises what I have frequently said in the House, that the buildings and appliances in connection with the Lunatic Asylum are far past date. A good many times in the House I have called attention to this, particularly when the Estimates have been before us ; and really the buildings and the necessary kind of treatment the unfortunate persons who are compelled to dwell there have to undergo is preposterous, to say the least of it. The whole surroundings make it impossible for the best warders in the world to give much relief to persons in this condition. This is a case in which, from the want of proper conveniences, this unfortunate accident, I prefer to call it, has occurred. In a properly conducted asylum with proper appliances, such a thing could

scarcely have occurred at all. Really it is time, in the interests of these unfortunates — because who is to say who will be the next ? — something should be done. This is not a case in which the individuals themselves are to blame : they do not bring these inflictions on themselves. It is a complaint which does not belong to any class of society, and we know that anyone dear to us might be placed in the same situation. I am sorry to say that I have some friends in that institution at this moment. I have been compelled to very deeply regret the conditions under which I have again and again visited that asylum. I think the Government should take some steps to put the institution in a better state than it is. I hope the Government will certainly make an investigation into this case, not simply because of the misfortune itself, but because of the immense difficulties under which the warders and managers of that institution have to carry out their work. They cannot help themselves, often. I know that to be so. I have sufficient knowledge to satisfy myself that we do not know when an accident of this kind may occur again. I hope the Government will take steps, not only to find out the cause of this trouble, but to put the institution on a proper basis. We have been talking about this matter for years : we have spent a large sum of money at Whithy Falls. The asylum at Fremantle is more like a prison vault of the 16th century than a lunatic asylum.

THE PREMIER : A large amount of money has been spent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : The sooner the place is blown up into " kingdom come," and the persons removed to some more suitable place, the better. The cottage system is far the best for nine-tenths of the persons in that institution, and where there are violent cases, proper cells should be prepared. There are no such places at Fremantle. There is no cell in a proper condition to accommodate a violent lunatic, and the whole place is inadequate. I hope the Government will take to heart this serious state of things, and do something for those who have to spend their time in this institution.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle) : I hope the Government will take some notice of this case, and have an investiga-

tion as soon as possible. I am a visitor of the asylum, and I frequently have to call attention to the want of classification in that building. I do not think you could find a more humane and better lot of officials in any establishment: they do all they can for the patients, and I cannot understand how the circumstances mentioned by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) could have occurred. The officials use all endeavours to keep the institution as well as possible under the circumstances, and in the buildings they have at their hands. Since the removal to Whitby Falls it has been possible to classify to some extent, but not to an extent to be a lasting benefit. The surroundings are not as they should be for a lunatic asylum, because there is no outlook that is pleasant, and in the interests of the public and the officials, I hope the Government will take action as soon as possible and have an investigation.

MR. VOSPER (in reply): It appears to me that whenever a member brings a matter of this kind before the House, he is invariably told he is doing wrong; as if Parliament were not the proper place and vehicle for motions of this description. In the case of the unfortunate woman Clifford, we are told the husband ought to have appealed to the Colonial Secretary; but I venture to wager that if he had, he would never have found admission within the precincts of that gentleman's office. I have not that sublime faith in appeals to the Colonial Secretary which the Premier seems to have. The Colonial Secretary is only a species of chief clerk, who does not appear to have a will of his own.

MR. GEORGE: Cheap clerk! He gets £1,000 a year.

MR. VOSPER: What I said was "chief" clerk; and the Colonial Secretary is not cheap, but dear at any price in his present position, because he seems to be simply an automaton, the strings of which are pulled by the Premier.

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. VOSPER: The Premier has attacked me for bringing this question before the House.

THE PREMIER: I said no word against you.

MR. VOSPER: I want to tell the House a fact in connection with the utility of appeals to the Colonial Secretary.

About two years ago papers were laid on the table of the House in regard to the Fremantle Asylum, showing that certain nurses had been guilty of wanton cruelty to patients; and, if my recollection serves me right, two of those nurses were dismissed. Amongst the patients named in the papers which were laid upon the table as being victims of this systematic cruelty was a relation of the Colonial Secretary himself, and yet, according to the papers, for nine months in the department over which he had supervision, this cruelty had been going on without any interference, or, so far as I know, without the Colonial Secretary knowing anything about it. When a Minister can be so ignorant of the working of his department that one of his relatives is treated with gross cruelty for nine months on end, I ask in the name of humanity and common sense where would be the advantage of appealing to a man like that? I am accused, as usual, of trying to make sensational declarations; but if the Premier will look on me as an ordinary commercial man, he will see that it does not pay me to bring these matters before the House, and give the daily papers the first chance, but that it would be to my interest to hold my tongue and publish them in another journal. These matters, however, are of such a character that they should be brought before the House immediately. The crying need at Fremantle Asylum is some medical supervision. It is a scandal and a disgrace to nineteenth century civilisation that the official who has supervision should hold half a dozen billets, and not have time to attend to one. In a country like this, where we have so many unfortunate persons in the asylum, we should have a first-class medical supervisor brought from any part of the world necessary, because the present official has so many other duties of multifarious character to attend to, that it is easy to see the result must be the neglect of these unfortunate people. The removal to Whitby Falls means practically no reform at all. One of the wards there is intended for the accommodation of 17 people, and it is well known that cases of dementia, even the most harmless, may suddenly change to violent mania, and the other 16 occupants might be murdered in their beds. What is done in modern asylums

is that each patient has a room and is looked after individually; and so long as the present system prevails in our asylum, the patients will be subject to insults and assaults, and, instead of curing them, the tendency will be to make them confirmed lunatics. I regret very much the Premier should so much resent action of this kind being taken. I am glad of the promise of investigation, but I cannot thank the Premier for having attacked me for doing my plain duty.

**THE PREMIER:** You are too thin-skinned.

**MR. VOSPER:** I ask leave to withdraw the motion, and trust that a searching investigation will be commenced forthwith.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### QUESTION—ENGLISH MAIL AND LATE FEES.

**MR. WILSON** asked the Premier:—1, Whether he is aware that the postal authorities announced in Wednesday morning's paper that the mail for the "Arcadia" would close at the General Post Office at 10 a.m., and for late fee letters at 10:45 a.m.; and that merchants on sending their late fee letters to post found that the late fee closing had been cancelled, and the Post Office refused to take letters after 10:15, notwithstanding the fact that the mails did not leave Perth until the 11:30 train, thus causing serious inconvenience to the mercantile community of Perth. 2, That no provision was made for receiving late fee letters either at the General Post Office, the Perth Railway Station, or on board of the steamer. 3, Whether he will take steps to prevent such an occurrence in future.

**THE PREMIER** replied:—1, The first notice of closing late letters was cancelled in consequence of a second notification from the agents that the R.M.S. "Arcadia" would leave Fremantle at an earlier hour than that previously given. Subsequent to the cancellation, and at the last moment, a further notice was received from the agents that the steamer would leave as originally notified. No late letters, however, were refused, but all were accepted up to the last moment of closing the bag. 2, Late letters cannot at present be posted at the Railway Station, or on board the steamer, inas-

much as there are no means of enclosing them in the mails. 3, Arrangements are being made to overcome these difficulties. The General Post Office did not make the notification in Wednesday morning's paper. It was evidently copied from the notice in the Postal Hall. These notices, which are in all cases issued prior to the arrival of the steamer, are, of necessity liable to alteration before the hour of her departure from Fremantle.

#### QUESTION—NOXIOUS WEEDS, TO LEGISLATE.

**MR. MONGER** asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the Government intend, in view of the alarming spread of noxious weeds throughout the colony, to introduce any legislation this session amending the Spanish Radish and Scotch Thistle Act.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** replied: Yes. A Bill will be introduced for this purpose in the course of a few days.

#### KALGOORLIE MUNICIPAL LOANS REAPPROPRIATION BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by **MR. MORAN**, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. G. Throssell), in moving the second reading, said: The amendments proposed in this short Bill are such as the experience of the department has found to be desirable, and though some of the clauses are of no great importance, others demand explanation at my hands. Clause 2, which amends Section 17 of the principal Act, gives the department power, in dealing with applications for land, to appoint a board if necessary. The present plan is to deal exclusively with applications by lot; but, under this amendment, all applications coming in on the same day are received as equal, and instead of the department dealing with them by lot, the Minister has power under this Bill to appoint a board to make inquiries, and give the land to the most desirable applicants. This amendment will hardly apply in any great degree to agricultural

land, but chiefly to residential areas on the goldfields. As many as 20 applications have been made for one block, and it is very desirable we should be able to give the warden and the board power in that locality to find out the most desirable applicant, and make recommendations accordingly. It has been discovered, I am told, that bogus applications are sometimes made, one person, with the aid of his friends, putting in six applications, and should one of the six secure the lot, the transfer is made to the right man. This amendment will enable the department to make inquiries and give the land to the person who is thought desirable. Clauses 3 and 4 are rather important, as they to a small extent relieve conditional purchase selectors and grazing lease selectors from making unnecessary improvements where land is not of sufficiently good quality to justify the present statutory conditions. With regard to conditional purchase lands, in the past men have taken up land on the sea coast and other places, consisting of sand and scrub, of no use for agriculture, but fair feeding land; and we desire to give some relief to these selectors. We have, I believe, on our books men who have been paying regularly for such land until the price they have paid exceeds in some cases £1 per acre. We are assured by our inspectors the land is not worth improving beyond fencing or sinking for water; and with this amendment we will be able, where men have paid 15s. an acre and satisfied us that no improvements are justifiable, to give a Crown grant. Some relief is also given in regard to second and third class land granted for grazing purposes or selected. Much of this land is selected from the sandplains and other inferior land, and anyone conversant with the subject knows that in some cases it is simply a waste of money to interfere with the scrub or compel the holder to expend the statutory amount. The Bill provides, not that the Minister shall have the power to grant, but that he shall be able to recommend the Governor to grant, this exemption; so that in every case the exemption would be recommended by the Minister to the Executive Council. Clause 6 deals with homestead farms, a system which is rapidly coming to the front with our

land settlement, and which has been eminently successful; but it has been found that an anomaly exists in this Act, because the principal Act provides that a person shall clear and crop 40 acres of land, which is a quarter of the area of 160 acres. It is a very simple matter along the Avon Valley and the Great Southern, where clearing may be said to be done at a maximum of £2 an acre, which means a total of £80, or including cultivation and cropping, a total of £120. When I was in the South-West a short time ago, I found it was not fair to apply the same conditions to the South-Western districts of the country with regard to clearing as should be applied to the Great Southern and Avon Valley. Gentlemen who know anything about the South-West know that it will cost at least £5 per acre, and up to £20 per acre, to clear land in the south-western parts of the colony. That would mean that under this Act the selector in the Avon Valley and along the Great Southern would have to expend £120, while his brother selector in the South-West would have to expend from £200 to £800. The amendment we are now proposing is introduced with the object of putting all selectors as nearly as possible on a level, and instead of compulsory clearing of 40 acres it provides for the compulsory expenditure of £3 per acre on the 40 acres. That is that in each case the holder will not have complied with the terms of the Crown grant until he has expended (in addition to the cost incurred regarding the house and other improvements) £120 in actual clearing and cultivation. I can only say I am heartily in accord with that, and I think it will be only fair if this amendment is passed. But here again it is not the Minister who acts, but it is the Minister who recommends the Governor, for we will have protection against anything approaching favouritism. Clause 8 is rather important, as it contains Section 148 of the principal Act and deals with pastoral leases. The chief amendment makes clear upon what grounds the pastoralist can claim compensation, and shows that the compensation can only be claimed upon the land comprised in the pastoral lease. That has always been the practice of the department, and I believe that never in the history of the

department had any other interpretation been placed on the Act; but a late decision of the Supreme Court in a certain case gave a different interpretation, and in order to avoid such mistakes in the future this amendment is inserted. It also does away with the proviso at the end of Section 148. As the Act stands at present it places the Government in a wrong position. That proviso says the Government have to pay the pastoral lessee any amount over £10 awarded by the court of arbitration, the Government then taking the selector and giving him five years in which to pay this amount. It is quite clear that after the decision is given, which under the principal Act is final, we are entirely at the mercy of the small selector, if he decides that the amount given against him is too much for him, and throws up the land, and the Act does not exempt the Government from paying the amount to the pastoral lessee. If the amount is too much for one selector, it is too much for another; therefore, although we have not disposed of the land, it is to all intents and purposes as good as freehold to the pastoral lessee. Then, again, the measure provides for a possible fraud, which I am glad to say we have never had any experience of; but with the measure as it now stands, it is possible for the pastoral lessee and the would-be selector to put their heads together, and for the pastoral lessee to say "I am going to claim for so much, and do you not refuse to give it." The amount would be a bogus one, and under the present clause it would be final if the small selector decided to accept it. The department would be let in for that, and the property might be thrown on our hands after all. Doing away with this proviso is only going back to the old order of things which existed before the new Act was introduced. The position then will be this: a selector will have to pay the resident magistrate or the lessee himself, as he used to do, instead of recovering from the Government, and if he fails to pay, things will remain *in statu quo*. The next clause I may notice is Clause 10, which is an entirely new one, and deals with what are known as residential areas. By Section 153 of the principal Act, the Governor has power to set aside land upon such terms as may be decided upon,

to meet the demand springing up for homes for the people, especially on the goldfields. Quarter-acre blocks have been laid aside, properly surveyed, and under these conditions they are open to leasehold for 21 years at 10s. per year, the idea being to bring the same principle down to the working man, wherever he may be, which now exists for the farmer; that is, that he may come to the Government and claim the Government as his landlord. He may not be able to buy land or bid at auction, but will go to the land agency and ask what homesteads or quarter-acre lots are open, and he may make his application and secure a holding. In this case we have laid out blocks most successfully on the goldfields, in Fremantle, Claremont, York, and Albany, and we have a lot of land available. That principle has been attended with a very large amount of success indeed, but it is possible, as in the case of other good things, that it will open the door to abuse, and this amendment has been inserted to guard against that. Under the regulations a person gets the land on lease for 21 years by taking possession of it and residing upon it. A block can be transferred to a man eligible to hold it, but the property cannot be sold, neither can it be sublet, nor can any business be run upon these blocks. It will readily be seen that this is fair, because if a man gives two or three hundred pounds for a block of land with only a street dividing it from residential areas acquired from the Crown, it would not be fair for a person paying 10s. a year for a block to have a shop or a hotel to compete against that man. The areas are residential areas always. Reference has been made to the fact that we have been infusing into Western Australia a large male population whose families are left in the other colonies. With a view to meeting the demand which has arisen, we have thrown open these residential areas; but now comes the point. As time goes on we find that these residential areas may spring into great value, and although they are held under lease, influence may be brought to bear upon a weak Minister of Lands, and in a weak or generous moment the Minister may set aside the lease and let the land go at a nominal sum to "the poor working man." Of course I need hardly say it is the "poor



working man" who is always brought forward. We are very anxious indeed to protect the poor working man and to provide him with a home; but it is our duty to protect ourselves from the speculator. And I may say the Government have already been approached from one district with a request to cancel these leases and give them to the occupier—that is the "poor working man"—at a nominal rent. It is quite clear that if we were to give way on that point, fortunes would be raised in districts that are boomed. In other districts fortunes may be lost, but in some districts fortunes may be made. If the areas are sold, they should be sold at full and fair value by open competition, and the Government, and not the man, should derive the benefit. To illustrate what I mean, by a reference to the Collie coalfields, if all we hear of the Collie coalfields is true (and I believe it is all true), it is clear that working men's blocks will be wanted, and they will be required at all times as at the beginning of the development of the field. We are in a position to select sites admirably suited for the toiler, to place him in as close proximity to his daily labour as possible. If that mine is going to last for all time, labour will be wanted for all time. A man has power to sell his improvements, but has not power to sell the land and go his way free; and in a weak moment the Government may allow him to acquire the title deeds. Supposing businesses were to be erected upon residential areas, a man would have to take up all the evils of living far away from his daily labour. It is desired to protect him from that, and for that reason this clause is introduced which makes it impossible to deal with this land or to sell it. The clause says: "No lands on which residential leases are granted under this section or on which residential leases have been or may hereafter be granted under regulations in that behalf, shall be sold or granted in fee simple." That is to say, a man takes up the land on a 21 years' lease. We are not laying aside a large area entirely for residential areas, because it is quite clear that, if we did so, a man living a long distance away from his church or place of amusement would be penalised by having to walk to his place of worship or to his cricket field, in the

same way as he would be if he had to walk a long distance to his work. We are setting aside in large numbers, or there are being laid out, reserves for miners' homes and reserves for post offices, as the case may be; that is if the distance from the town justifies such a course. That is the reason why Clause 10 is introduced into the Bill. I hope the Bill will receive careful consideration at the hands of hon. members, some of whom are acquainted with the conditions on the goldfields. They will see on consideration that this particular clause is very necessary in order to protect the department and the Government from abuse. We are told by our agents that some of the blocks are worth £100, £200, and £300, and we are willing to meet the working man. When blocks which are worth £100 are to be leased for 10s. per annum, and these blocks are likely to increase in value, the temptation arises for the working man to acquire a Crown grant at a small sum. There is temptation for the speculator to join with the working man and bring influence to bear on the Government to grant this land for a small sum. If we are not careful, fortunes will be made, and if money is to be made in this line, I claim, as Commissioner of Crown Lands, that it will be a great reflection on my judgment if I do not make that money for the Government instead of allowing the speculators to do so. We shall do our best to protect the working man. There are many men who will go straight to the Government officer and say, "I want my quarter-acre lot for myself and family," and the Government will provide it for him. But if we are not very careful, what we desire to be a great blessing for the working man will be a great means of speculation. I do not wish to be misunderstood or thought to dwell too strongly on this point, but I think I should say there is reason for great care. We must put it out of the reach of the working man or any other person to make a speculation out of this land. Why should we give any block away for £20 which is worth £200, when it may be exchanged to somebody else for £100 and then put up for auction and sold for a larger amount? I mention this so that members can give the matter careful consideration. I have read in the papers lately that a petition

is going round, and someone has taken the trouble to post a number of papers to me with the paragraphs marked, showing that a petition is going round to be presented to the Government to issue Crown grants at small sums to the poor man. I get chapters of Henry George, about the unearned increment and the glorious principle of keeping the unearned increment for the State and not giving it away to private people, sent to me. That is all very nice, but I am afraid that, when the temptation comes, even the working man will not be able to resist that temptation. Henry George's principle will then go to the wind, and somebody else will get the unearned increment. I should have a great deal said against myself and the Government and the department, if I did not take care to protect the Government and the department from what might be a great scandal. The last clause of the Bill provides that in case of forfeiture and in some outside places where the blocks are not gaining value, the Government may re-enter. I have said enough on this matter, but I would again say that already the speculator has come here, even the working-man speculator. They have put in applications because they say they want a home. So soon as they have been fortunate enough to secure the land, they ask permission to sub-let at once. The owners of the blocks will be paying ten shillings a year for them, and they ask for permission to sub-let to some brother worker at a large profit over the ten shillings. Again, having acquired the block, they will hawk it about for sale, and say: "Give me £10 or £20 and I will transfer my right to you." I hope to meet that by regulation. At the present time we give six months for the applicant to enter on a quarter-acre block. If a man is working near a goldfield or a coalfield and is desirous of getting a block, he is anxious to get on to it as soon as possible. At present he is allowed six months' grace to go on to that block, which means that it gives the man six months time to find somebody else, if he does not want it, to give him a bonus for the land. We propose in this Bill to give 31 days' grace, or one month, but in genuine cases a man will take up the land in less than 31 days. If from some unforeseen cause a man cannot do so, he has only to make representations for longer grace,

and he will get it. I have said enough about the Bill, and I ask hon. members to give it their consideration. The Bill has only been distributed to-day, and perhaps some hon. member will move that the debate be adjourned.

**MR. MOORHEAD** (North Murchison): Before the suggested motion is moved, I beg to call the Minister's attention to some confusion that may arise on the proposed amendment to Section 148. It will be within the knowledge of the House that recently a case was heard in the Supreme Court which no doubt has prompted the Minister to submit this amendment to the House; and I think it must be a subject of congratulation to Mr. Murphy, who has had the satisfaction of paying something like £300 in law costs, to recognise that the intention of Parliament, in passing Section 148 of the principal Act, has not been carried into effect. In other words, induced by representations set out in the Act, a man made application for a particular portion of a holding under the Act, on a pastoral lease; and under the wording of the Act, a claim was set up by the pastoral lessee for improvements. The difficulty the Court had was in construing what was meant by "improvements" under Section 148, in the words "the fair value of any lawful improvements existing or appertaining to the land applied for." Now the Minister comes forward with an amendment which makes confusion worse confounded. The section of the principal Act reads as follows:

A pastoral lessee in the occupation of his lease shall be entitled to claim from any person, who under this Act selects any portion of the pastoral lease, the fair value of any lawful improvements existing on or appertaining to the land.

When the Court came to construe these words, it gave such an interpretation to the section that the lessee was entitled to claim for the value of his fence, which may be existing 40 or 50 miles from the spot selected. The proposed amendment reads:

Section one hundred and forty-eight of the principal Act is amended by inserting, in line five, immediately after the word "land," the words, "but upon the land comprised in the pastoral lease."

Let us see how the words work in, and see whether there is sense in them. I

will read first the section and then the words proposed to be inserted:

A pastoral lessee in the occupation of his lease shall be entitled to claim from any person, who under this Act selects any portion of the pastoral lease, the fair value of any lawful improvements existing on or appertaining to the land.

"Appertaining to the land" is not struck out; and the amendment goes on as follows:

Existing on or appertaining to the land, but only land contained in the particular lease.

First there is redundancy. You have in an earlier portion the words, "existing on," and what necessity is there to repeat the words "in the land comprised in the lease existing on"? In an earlier portion the words "existing on" may be left out, or they may be left out of the addition to the section.

THE PREMIER: I think it was held that they could go beyond the boundaries of the lease. The object is to restrict it to the lease itself.

MR. MOORHEAD: First there is redundancy, there being no necessity for the second words "existing on" the lands comprised in the lease. What is the meaning of the words "appertaining to the land comprised in the lease?" Some confusion arises by the words "appertaining to." I only submit my interpretation of the section as it will read if the proposed amendment is put in, and I do not make my remarks in a carping spirit, for I applaud the action of the Minister and his coadjutors in trying to rectify what is a palpable mistake; but what I wish to bring under the attention of the Minister is that the section would be more clear and less difficulty would arise in interpreting what is meant, by recasting the amendment and leaving out of the section the words which are redundant. Again, under the Act of 1898, and dealing with Clause 8 of the proposed Bill and the clause which says "be struck out of the proviso of Section 4 of the principal Act," that is an extraordinary proviso, and no doubt it opened the door to fraud of an extensive character. It simply meant that if an applicant did not pay the money, and the Crown were the parties to whom the lessee looked for the remuneration fixed by the Court of Arbitration, they had to pay it. It was true the Government had

to take the land as security; but what would be the good of the land if the selector did not go upon it? Would it not be easy for the lessee to have set up one of his own boundary riders and made a claim through him, and if the Court of Arbitration fixed a little sum quite adequate to the requests of the lessee, he could pay it. That proviso, therefore, opened the door to fraud; and how is it proposed to be met? By simply striking out the proviso, and there is no provision in the Act as to who is to pay. In the amending Act, it is true the Government are exonerated; but there is no provision made as to the party who is to pay under the circumstances. If the principle be good that the Government should step in to assist the applicant, I know of nothing to set aside the principle or show it is wrong. From what I gather from the observations of the Minister—and I listened to them with great attention, and pay him the compliment of saying he is the only member in the House who appears to understand the Land Act—I think he still means to assist the intended applicant. But there is no provision in the Act to substitute any means by which the Crown can come to the assistance of the intended applicant in the event, for instance, of the Court of Arbitration fixing the sum at £500. In Murphy's case, which has become historic, and which I hope will ultimately be laid before the Minister, for the mistake was that of the Government's own draftsman, the claim was for £500. Murphy was a miner who had made a little money and intended, like others, to settle down; but where was he to find £500? Clearly, if the Government intend to make the Act effective, they must retain the principle of assisting the intending applicant. I agree with them in doing away with the proviso which opened the door to frauds of a gigantic character. I have only to say, in conclusion, that I shall be happy to assist this measure through, because I view it as a very proper amendment of existing legislation, and I hope it will be followed while our friend the Minister is in office, by a codification of our land laws.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I do not feel myself qualified to comment on the whole of the Bill, because so far as it affects the pastoral lessee and

the farmer, I must confess I am almost in complete ignorance; but I regard the Bill as valuable because of the contents of Clause 10. We know that for a long time past, especially on the goldfields, the grossest abuses have been carried on in connection with what are called "residence areas," and, as the Minister has said, the working man is made a species of stalking-horse for the speculator behind him. Almost every year we hear of petitions being got up and agitation fomented for the purpose of getting land set aside as residence areas, and every day almost there are applications for the Crown grant for these lands. It is perfectly safe to say that if the Government, through any mistaken generosity, accede to these requests and give Crown grants, they will put the working man in a worse position than he was originally. The first thing that happens is that he sells out to a capitalist, mortgages the land, or sub-lets it, and the result is that valuable land is sold for a merely nominal sum, and the revenue thereby cheated, and all the evils of landlordship established. It is highly desirable to put a stop to this, and I venture to say there have been some hundreds of acres of valuable land alienated from the Crown in Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and elsewhere, which, if it had been let on some such system as is now proposed, would have been a source of heavy revenue to the State, and a distinct benefit to the working man on the goldfields. This shows that the Government always adopt the policy which is first advocated from the Opposition benches, although in these particular cases the Government have been rather tardy in seizing on the principle advocated by Opposition members. It is not within my parliamentary recollection, but I remember the fact that the then leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake), as far back as 1894 or 1895, moved that no lands whatever should be alienated on the goldfields, but should be let on long leases, so that the Government, instead of deriving a large return from the sale of land, and thereby destroying an avenue of permanent revenue, should have a revenue as long as the State exists. Had that been done at that time, the State would now be in receipt of a large income from the goldfields; and even at this late hour I am glad the Government have determined on adopting

the leasing principle. It is rather a pity some clause is not introduced to deal with the question of the resumption of gold-mining leases. Some little time ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister of Mines on this question, and certain facts were laid before him which went to show that in many cases those resumptions led to a great deal of chicanery on the part of capitalists and other holders. A gold mining lease, in my opinion, is held for the purpose of enabling the leaseholder to obtain gold, and if he fail to obtain gold or neglect to obtain gold, it is clearly, in the spirit of our gold-mining law, his duty is to surrender the lease to someone who will get gold. But what happens now? A gold-mining lease, which is idle and worthless, is held until the holders get a chance of the Government resuming for the purpose of cutting it into blocks, and the leaseholders get valuable blocks in exchange for that which they, by their action, confess to be a valueless gold mine. Nothing is more atrocious than this. If the mine be very valuable they have a right to work it, and if it be of no value, it can be of no value to them, and yet the State is called on to give valuable land for what is confessed to be absolutely valueless, from the point of view of the lessee; and I should be very glad if the Government could see their way clear to introduce a clause into the Bill which would regulate this crying evil. It appears to me we should not be continually giving away good freehold land in exchange for worthless leaseholds; and the system proposed in the Bill has been in vogue in Queensland, in a modified form, for many years, and has worked successfully there side by side with the freehold system which obtains on our goldfields. All the trouble in Queensland in connection with goldfields land has arisen from the fact that sometimes land has been allowed to go in fee simple. Gympie and Charters Towers are the principal gold-mining centres in Queensland, and in Gympie it is impossible to acquire a piece of freehold land. If you want land in the centre of that town you must take up a business site, which can be registered and held for 21 years at a nominal rent. These business sites are transferable from one person to another; so that, so far as the effects of trade are

concerned, it is just the same as a fee simple, but it cannot be mortgaged or sub-let, and must be occupied by the actual person who holds the lease. There is no such thing as landlordism in Gympie, and the best sites are as cheap as the worst sites; though I do not think that is altogether admirable, because the Government might easily have a graduated scale.

THE PREMIER: Some people would pay more for the better sites.

MR. VOSPER: Yes, they would; but the Government have not seen fit to adopt that plan, and I suppose it is too late now.

THE PREMIER: Cannot a holder sub-let?

MR. VOSPER: No. Then on the outskirts there are residence areas, held on miners' rights, which cost ten shillings a year; and the applicant simply holds the land as long as he continues in actual possession.

MR. MOORHEAD: The court has held the land can be transferred.

MR. VOSPER: Residence areas can be transferred, together with the improvements; but the transferee must reside in the same way as the old owner, and must pay the annual fee for the miner's right. Outside that radius again, all round Gympie there are large areas of very valuable agricultural land included in the goldfields district. In connection with these lands there is a system of home-stead leases of from 50 to 150 acres of land for agricultural purposes. That land is obtained by paying an annual license in the same way as for business sites and residence areas, the only difference being that the holder is charged more rent in accordance with the value of the property. To illustrate the difference between the systems, we can look at what has occurred at Charters Towers. There, through some accident, a large number of the best business sites have been granted in fee simple, and the result is that the Mills United Gold Mining Company have taken up in the form of blocks all the streets surrounding those sites. The company have got the blocks still held by the Crown, and they mine underneath, but the freeholders can resist the attempt of the company to mine under their land, and the result is that the company are laid under a contribution

in fully paid up shares, for the surrender of the land. For years past there have been disputes between the freeholders and the company, and these have led to considerable dissatisfaction; and the result is that the company are obliged in their operations to leave huge masses of reef standing, and go on until they come to Crown land. Thus valuable ore is lost to the proprietors, with no benefit to the State, and the proprietor of the surface rights has no possibility of sinking a shaft for 2,000 feet in order to take up a quarter of an acre, which would not pay him, considering the low returns of gold.

THE PREMIER: Cannot the company buy the land?

MR. VOSPER: But the parties cannot agree as to terms, and the result is lawsuits and difficulty. All this shows the importance of inserting some provision in the Bill to prevent the same errors in this colony. Some of these days we shall have other towns established in Western Australia, equal in importance to those I have mentioned, and when that happens, I hope the Government will take care the annual rental of the towns goes into the coffers of the State instead of into the pockets of private individuals. No matter how bad a landlord the State may be, it is almost certain to be better than a private individual. The lands are Crown lands, and they should return revenue to the country, and I have always regretted the alienation of goldfields land. I congratulate the Government on the introduction of the Bill even at this late hour, and the measure will have my cordial support.

On motion by Mr. MITCHELL, debate adjourned.

#### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

[FEDERAL MEMBERS, TO DISQUALIFY.]

##### SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading, said: This is a small Bill of three short clauses, and the object and whole scope of the measure is to prevent members of the Federal Parliament having a seat in the local Parliament. Clause 2 provides that no member of either House of Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia shall at the same time be qualified for nomination or election as a member of either House of Parliament in

Western Australia. Clause 3 provides that when a member of either House of the Parliament of Western Australia is elected a member of either House of the Commonwealth Parliament, he shall, on taking his seat in the Federal Parliament, vacate his seat in the local Legislature. The provisions are reasonable, because I do not think we want members to be in both Houses. There is a special provision that even a Minister of the Crown in a State can be a member of the Federal Parliament. There is nothing to prevent us, however, from saying that no member of the Federal Parliament shall be a member here.

MR. MORAN: There is the same Bill in South Australia.

THE PREMIER: In most of the colonies they are adopting this provision. I think Queensland is not doing so; but as regards South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, I believe I am right in saying they have adopted this Bill. The Bill in its present shape has certainly been passed in South Australia, and has already received the royal assent. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. VOSPER: One man one billet.

THE SPEAKER: We have not the necessary majority present to pass the question.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): While we are getting the necessary quorum, I wish to draw attention to what I think will be an essential amendment when we go into Committee. Clause 3 merely provides that a member of the Federal Parliament shall vacate his seat. But we want some machinery, some declaratory clause, by which the seat itself shall become vacant, and the Speaker or the President, as the case may be, may issue a writ.

THE PREMIER: Oh! the member will resign.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is not certain. I may also mention, and I think the Attorney General will appreciate the point, that it is quite possible for a seat to be vacant, and yet that there should be no power for the Speaker to issue a writ for the election of a new member.

THE PREMIER: We can pass a resolution to the effect that so-and-so having taken his seat in the Federal Parliament, his seat in the local Parliament is declared vacant.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We have no machinery for doing so in this clause or in the Bill.

THE PREMIER: We can do it by our own Act.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think it necessary to have some declaration that the Speaker shall be empowered to issue the writ, on such member taking his seat in the Federal Parliament. I mentioned to the Attorney General in private conversation that this point should be considered; because, if we simply pass an Act that declares such seat vacant, a man vacates his seat because he takes a seat in the Federal Parliament, and yet we have no power to issue a writ to appoint someone else to take his place.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): Before this Bill passes, as it apparently will, I desire to express my very strong regret that it should be introduced here and in the sister colonies. I am satisfied that it must be wrong that all the colonies should adopt this class of legislation. It does seem to me to rest entirely with the electors to say whether they will or will not have representing them a man in both the Federal and the local Parliaments. It appears to me that if the electors like to send a man to both Parliaments, they only should be the judges of their own action. I venture to think that if we have members of the Federal Parliament sitting in our State Parliaments, we shall keep our State Parliaments more closely in touch with the Parliament of the Commonwealth than we could otherwise do.

THE PREMIER: A member sitting in both Parliaments would perhaps receive two salaries.

MR. GEORGE: The salaries are not much, after all.

MR. JAMES: That is a matter which could be arranged; but I do think this departure a very great mistake indeed. However, the Bill will no doubt be passed unanimously.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): I confess to holding views somewhat similar to those of the member for East Perth (Mr. James), for the reason that in Western Australia I think it will perhaps be somewhat difficult, if we keep up these two large Houses of Parliament, to find eleven members to go East as well. Besides, it is exceedingly important to

keep this Parliament closely in touch with the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and to keep members of the Commonwealth Parliament in practical touch with the electors of this colony. The only difficulty to my mind, and it appears a grave one, which the member for East Perth might consider, is the time of sitting of the two Parliaments. Unless the sessions of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments can be arranged so as not to clash, then there is no use in arguing this question at all. It is useless for a man to hold a seat in two Parliaments which are sitting at the same time 1,500 or 2,000 miles apart. Then, again, the answer to that is, the electors would know of those circumstances, and therefore they would be the best judges. Had my views in the matter been consulted, I should not have recommended that this Bill should apply to the first Federal Parliament. I should have allowed circumstances to dictate a correct course in this matter. It is quite possible we may have five good Ministers in this colony, and it might be possible for one or two of them to go away for three or four months. [Several MEMBERS: No, no.] It would be possible to send the whole five away.

MR. GEORGE: The country would be none the worse.

MR. MORAN: Such federal representatives would know this colony well, and their services might be of considerable value. As far as I am concerned, I think the legislature might have been left a year or so longer without such an alteration as is contemplated by this Bill. However, I shall not oppose the Bill in any way at all.

THE PREMIER (in reply): In regard to this matter, I may say it was discussed at the Federal Convention; and there is no doubt the opinion of the Convention was that members might sit either in the State or Commonwealth Parliament; and this applied even to Ministers. Provision was made to that effect; in fact, I believe I moved it myself on behalf of some others who desired it; and it seemed to me at that time it might be possible that even Ministers of the States should be allowed to sit in the Federal Parliament. But that does not seem to be the general opinion of this colony. People here evidently think it is

not desirable. Personally, I do not feel strongly on the subject. In the 44th Section of the Commonwealth Act it is provided that Sub-section 4 does not apply to any offices of any Ministers of State for the Commonwealth, or to the other persons named; so it is clear that the intention there is that the electors can select as members of the Commonwealth sitting members of the State Parliament, if desired.

MR. GEORGE: Is it practicable?

THE PREMIER: I think it would be practicable; because it is generally understood that if the site for the federal capital be selected in a cool part of Australia, as very likely it will be, the sitting will be held about Christmas time, during the long vacation, as the House will be full of lawyers, and they will want to have the session during that vacation; and it would be possible, the State Parliaments sitting in the winter time and the Federal Parliament in the summer, in some cool part of Australia near Kosciusko or somewhere up that way. The Government in bringing in this Bill have not done so because they feel strongly about it; on the contrary, the matter to us is one of indifference; but there seems to be an opinion, as far as we have been able to gather—[MR. MORAN: There is no opinion]—that members should not sit in both the Federal and State Parliaments, and that also seems to be the opinion in the other colonies.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): I do not profess to be a great authority on these matters; but reading this Bill, first referring to Clause 2 and then to Clause 3, I find that by the former clause no member of either House of Parliament of the Commonwealth shall at the same time be qualified for nomination or election as a member of either House of Parliament of Western Australia. According to Clause 3, when a member of either House of Parliament of Western Australia is elected a member of either House of the Commonwealth Parliament, he shall vacate his seat in the Parliament of Western Australia on taking his seat in the Parliament of the Commonwealth. That shows me plainly that a member of either House of our present local Parliament can nominate for the Federal Parliament and be elected thereto, and continue to hold his

seat here until the sitting of that House of the Federal Parliament for which he may have been a successful candidate. I do not know if there is any particular harm in that.

**THE PREMIER:** If he be not elected, he can continue to hold his seat in this Parliament.

**MR. MITCHELL:** I say, if any member wants to take his seat in the Federal Parliament, he should first resign his seat in this House. [**MR. GEORGE:** Hear, hear.] I can quite understand some hon. members: they want to have two hands on the fiddle, or two strings to their bow. They say, "We shall have a try for the Federal Parliament, and if we happen to lose the election, we can still hold our seats here." Before any hon. member can be eligible for nomination for the Commonwealth Parliament, he should be compelled to resign his seat in the State Legislature.

**MR. MORAN:** What about the City Council?

**MR. MITCHELL:** I do not want to talk about the City Council. I have never been a member of that.

**THE PREMIER:** We do not want to deprive the electors of such members' services.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have counted the number of hon. members present, and I find there is an absolute majority.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Members of Western Australian Parliament to vacate seats on sitting in Federal Parliament:

**THE PREMIER:** In regard to what the member for Murchison (Mr. Mitchell) had just stated, if a member of this House desired to enter the Federal Parliament, to make him resign beforehand might be much against the wishes of his constituency. His constituents might perhaps be willing that he should represent the whole colony in the Federal Parliament, and unwilling to lose his services if that could be avoided. It was not always that a member desired to represent his constituents, but it very often happened that a constituency was most desirous of being represented by a certain member. It was only reasonable to leave that to

the member, and if he had the confidence of his constituents, and they desired him to continue as their member, he could do so. It was not apparent why such member should resign before becoming a candidate for the Federal Parliament.

**MR. MITCHELL:** If electors wished to keep such member, they would not like his standing for the Federal Parliament. An hon. member should not try to have two strings to his bow. If one wanted to go to the Federal Parliament, he should throw himself out of this Parliament.

**MR. JAMES:** What the hon. member was drawing attention to was, he thought, that under Clause 3, if a member of a State Parliament were elected a member of the Commonwealth Parliament, his seat in the State Parliament would become vacant on his taking his seat in the Commonwealth Parliament.

**THE PREMIER:** Probably he would resign before.

**MR. JAMES:** If that were so, under our Constitution Act that seat would not be declared vacant, and no new election could be held until the State House met again. Whenever a vacancy occurred by resignation or acceptance of office, we should have to wait until a resolution was passed before the seat could be declared vacant.

**THE PREMIER:** The same would be the case if a member took a contract.

**MR. JAMES:** Undoubtedly; but the question of whether a member was taking a contract was open to litigation and discussion, and he thought the object of the House was to, as far as possible, avoid this matter being determined in courts of law. The vacancy ought to arise at the election. When an election took place in this country we knew about it, but an election might take place in some other part of Australia without our having any knowledge of it. Evidence would be required that the person had taken his seat in the Federal Parliament.

**MR. MORAN:** Let the seat in the State Parliament be vacated on the day of the opening of the Federal Parliament.

**MR. JAMES:** The member elected to the Federal Parliament ought to vacate his seat in the State Parliament. An election here was something within our cognisance and within our own jurisdiction, but, something which took place in the sister colonies would be different.



**THE PREMIER:** This proposal was the same as that which had been adopted in Victoria, and South Australia.

**MR. JAMES:** Victoria and South Australia were much closer to the Federal House of Parliament than Western Australia was.

**THE PREMIER:** It was very unreasonable to suppose that a man would not resign his seat. Provision could not be made for every contingency.

**MR. JAMES:** This proposal was based on the assumption that a member would not resign, and it would be wise to make a provision that on election of a member to the Federal Parliament or on his taking his seat in the Federal Parliament, when the State Parliament was not sitting, the seat in the State House should be declared vacant, and a writ should be issued at once.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH** moved that the words, "on taking his seat in the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia," line 4, be struck out, with a view of inserting in lieu, "and, the President or the Speaker, as the case may be, shall issue a writ for the election of a member to fill the vacancy."

**THE PREMIER:** We would have to get evidence that the writ had been signed, and all the rest of it. The return of the writ would be to the Governor General.

**MR. MORAN:** And then the man might be unseated in a recount, two or three weeks subsequently.

**MR. GEORGE:** We had to take all those chances.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** There was no power in our Electoral Act to deal with a man who vacated his seat and was not pleased to send in his resignation, unless the House was sitting. When the House was sitting the House could declare the seat vacant.

**THE PREMIER:** Supposing a man became a lunatic, it would be the same.

**MR. JAMES:** Those were exceptional cases.

**THE PREMIER:** This was exceptional. The natural assumption was that a man elected to the Federal Parliament would resign his seat in the State Parliament.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** This clause had its existence in the idea that a man might not resign, otherwise the clause would not be necessary. The words which

he proposed to be struck out were absolutely unnecessary, and in fact unwise.

**THE PREMIER:** Really we were trying to be too particular.

**MR. MORAN:** Hear, hear.

**MR. GEORGE:** We could not be too particular.

**THE PREMIER:** This Bill was the same as that adopted in South Australia and Victoria, and exactly the same as that introduced in New South Wales.

**MR. GEORGE:** That was no argument.

**THE PREMIER:** And their Bill had received the royal assent.

**MR. GEORGE:** That did not matter.

**THE PREMIER:** Surely there was no reason why we should alter it. There were lots of things in our own Constitution Act which were the same as this. For instance, if a person became a lunatic or came under the disqualifications named under our Act, how did we get his resignation? It was necessary to have evidence brought before the House and to satisfy the House that he was under this disqualification, and then a motion was moved. Under this clause, supposing we did come across a person who, having been elected to a higher position like that of membership in the Federal Parliament, refused to send in his resignation, we should want to be satisfied he had taken his seat. The Speaker or President would certify to that, and we could pass a motion for the seat to be declared vacant. We could not pass a law to meet all cases; cases which were never likely to arise. The reason why the words "on taking his seat" were inserted was that a person might keep on for ever and not be disqualified, if we did not insert some limit.

**MR. GEORGE:** Under this clause it would be necessary to have evidence that he had taken his seat.

**THE PREMIER:** When the hon. member talked like that, it made one feel that he was wasting his time.

**MR. GEORGE:** The Premier was wasting the time of members.

**THE PREMIER:** The Bill was quite right as it stood, and he asked the House not to touch it. There was nothing more in this Bill in regard to the points that had been raised than there was in regard to several cases under the Constitution Act; and if they came across anyone who would not resign, they could soon deal with him

by a certificate of the House to which he was elected, received from the Speaker or the President. Members had better not alter the Bill, and he was sure the hon. member opposite (Mr. Illingworth) had not given sufficient attention to the matter. It was, as he had said, a facsimile of the Bill in three of the other colonies.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): If he were permitted by the rules of the House, one would like to ask the Premier whether he had his men ranged in line to vote on this question. Because, if so, they might just as well know and need not discuss the matter. What had been done in the other colonies had nothing whatever to do with this colony.

THE PREMIER: O, yes.

MR. GEORGE: No. The other colonies had land booms which had burst, whereas they had not. The other colonies got rid of their Premiers within three or four years; but this colony had the beneficent influence of one Premier for 10 years, and would never get rid of him until he died, and he would never die. If the Premier had followed the example of other colonies, he would have resigned long ago. What was the royal assent? It meant that the Ministry of this or any other colony having got a Bill passed, caused it to be transmitted home and the royal assent was given to it. If the royal assent were not given, there would be a jolly row kicked up by the colony that sent the Bill. There had been cases regarding this House where members had actually left the colony, and yet they had not resigned, and the Government took no notice. At the present time there was a seat vacant, the constituency being unrepresented, and there was another case in which a member left Western Australia to go and fight his country's battles. He believed that up to the present time leave of absence had not been asked for, and the subject appeared to be neglected by the Premier. What the Premier said could not take place had actually taken place, and it was likely to take place under this Bill. Another reason why it was not desirable that a member of this House should be a member of the Federal Parliament was, that members of Parliament of this colony required to be in close touch with their constituencies, and how could they be in

close touch with the constituencies, if for three or four or five months they had to be away from the country? He considered the matter a great constitutional one, and if the Speaker would give a ruling on the point, he would be much more inclined to listen to that ruling than to listen to so much bombast by the Premier.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

Amendment put and negatived, and the clause passed.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

#### COOLGARDIE-NORSEMAN RAILWAY BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 19th September.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood): It is, not my intention to say very much on the question of the Coolgardie-Norseman Railway, because I think enough has been said almost by the Premier himself to convince hon. members of the necessity for this work. It has been the policy of the Government, I believe, for many years, to undertake only such works as they consider will pay, and it has been conclusively shown by the speakers, especially by the Premier, and the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), that there are all the elements of success about the Coolgardie-Norseman Railway. I think the estimates placed before the House by the Premier conclusively show—and I think we can confidently follow his estimates because they have never been in error in the past—that the line will be a success. I take it as contrary to all accepted facts on the question of railways, which was attempted to be shown us by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), that railways are a curse to the country—at any rate that is what he tried to show us. He tried to prove to the House that directly a railway reached a town, at any rate a goldfields town, the gold gave out—at any rate the gold output diminished and the town went down. If these are the progressive ideas of the

members for the goldfields there is not much encouragement for the people in this part of the country to push forward railways to the goldfield districts. Some objection had been raised to the railway going from Fremantle. As far as I can see, the railway to Norseman is inevitable either from Esperance or Fremantle, and the question is which is going to injure Fremantle most.

MR. HIGHAM: Do not say Fremantle.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Well, I will say this part of the country. Which is going to injure Fremantle most, the line from Coolgardie or the line from Esperance? I say Esperance. In the next Parliament we shall have a large proportion of goldfield members, who are out of sympathy, or were out of sympathy, with this part of the colony until federation was settled, but I think federation has wiped away that feeling between the goldfields and the coastal districts. The members from the Eastern goldfields, members who live in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie or further north, all seem to be banded together in a sort of freemasonry. Their interests seem to be the same; they do not care twopence where the district is. There seems to be a community of interest amongst them, and they will combine to a certain extent against the coastal districts. If there be any injury to this part of the colony from that line, it will be when it is taken from Esperance to Norseman, and that I think nothing will stop.

MR. VOSPER: It is inevitable in any case.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I say so, and let us take the lesser of two evils, the line from Coolgardie to Norseman, which will remain for many years, and, at any rate, satisfy the Norseman people. I hope that in the course of a few years the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie people will find their interests identical with those of the people who live in the coastal districts, and that we will not hear of the extending of the line from Norseman to Esperance.

MR. VOSPER: Do you think the construction of this line will delay the construction of the Esperance line?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I do think so, because the Norseman people, at any rate, will be

perfectly well satisfied, and the line will go a long way to allay the feelings of anxiety on the part of the Coolgardie people to press the line forward to Esperance. People from the fields are investing their easily-earned wealth in the coastal districts of the country, and the more we get into contact, the less anxiety will there be on the part of the goldfields people to throw this part of the country over. I do not see the dangers now I saw six years ago.

MR. MORAN: Six weeks ago!

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: As between two evils, I am of opinion the lesser is the line from Coolgardie to Norseman, and I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): After the very lucid and exhaustive speech of the Commissioner of Railways (Hon. B. C. Wood), I feel somewhat diffident in raising any protest against the building of this railway; but, at the risk of being classed amongst "croakers" and "do-nothings" of the colony, I still raise that protest, and in reply to the taunt of being a "croaker" or a "do-nothing," I simply point to my past career in the colony, and say that, at any rate, I may be proud of the work which has passed through my hands. The Commissioner of Railways says the proposed railway has all the elements of success; but I shall endeavour to show the House that I do not think the line possesses those elements, at any rate so far as the bulk of the colony is concerned. In regard to estimates never having been exceeded in the past, I am afraid the Commissioner's acquaintance with his office is so short that he has not had time to digest the records, or he would have found that in very few instances have the estimates placed before the House been anything like approached by the actual cost of the work. The railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie was built below the estimate, simply because it was a gamble and nothing else on the part of the contractors, who saw what the Government and the Government's responsible officers could not see, or, if they saw, could not make a note of. What the contractors saw was that the element of traffic from Southern Cross to Coolgardie was a great factor, and they were justified in accepting a sum of money which was

absolutely absurd compared with what the actual cost of the railway must have been. Other estimates have been laid on the table during the last five years, and would, if they were referred to, be found to have been exceeded, and scarcely a man breathing in this or any of the other colonies can make a reliable estimate on ordinary business lines in connection with work of this sort unless he has a much larger amount for contingencies than is laid down by the rules which govern the engineers of the Government. The Commissioner of Railways says this line is inevitable, and that is perfectly true. Many things are inevitable, but there is no reason why we should hurry the day earlier than the circumstances of the country demand, or push events quicker than natural causes would bring them about. The Commissioner says the next Parliament will bring a lot of goldfields members who will be very little in touch with this part of the colony. That is an argument I am sorry the hon. member used, because I believe that if we are to accept what has been stated by gentlemen on the goldfields, and also federalists in the coastal districts, all differences between the coast and the goldfields have been wiped away, and we are all Western Australians trying to push Western Australia along for the benefit of the whole country. It is idle for the hon. member to say there will be a lot of goldfields members who will not be in touch with us on the coast, because if that statement were true, it would simply show that the people on the goldfields are absolutely devoid of gratitude and unreliable on questions of State, which rise far above those of individuals or localities. The Commissioner says he does not see the dangers now he saw six years ago. I must congratulate him on the fact that six years have brought some enlightenment to him, and I hope the next six years of his career will make him a better man than he is to-day. In dealing with the Norseman railway, I must confess that if I looked at it from a business standpoint, and entirely from the position of the colony, and the sacrifices the colony has made in connection with railway construction—

**THE PREMIER:** Sacrifices!

**MR. GEORGE:** Yes, sacrifices which the colony has made in connection with railway construction.

**THE PREMIER:** Absurd!

**MR. GEORGE:** When I say "sacrifices," I do not want the Premier to say "absurd" without hearing the reasons. It was a sacrifice on the part of the colony to boldly enter the desert and make railways when they hardly knew, but simply hoped, there was a possibility of lines paying. They faced the situation with hope, and the result, as it happened, justified the action; but, if it had been the other way, then the country would have been called on to make sacrifices, and, therefore, I am justified in using the word. Looking at the matter from all points of view, a line made from Coolgardie to Norseman commends itself more to my view than a railway from Esperance to Norseman, because the economy in connection with a line from Coolgardie to Norseman will be considerably more than it would be in connection with a line from Esperance to Norseman. The necessary materials can be carried far cheaper along our present line to Coolgardie than by steamer or sailing vessel to Esperance, and thence right across that district to Norseman. Furthermore, if we were to start a railway from Esperance to Norseman, it would mean that we would have a railway working there, similar to the short line at Bunbury a few years ago, or the line at Geraldton, when practically there had to be separate railway administrations at two different places, which could only be reached by the heads of departments after a very long journey. We all know that if there is to be a successful administration, either in regard to our railways or our private business, there must be close communication between the heads of departments and those who are subordinates.

**MR. MITCHELL:** A railway will give that communication.

**MR. GEORGE:** We could not get that communication if the railway were built from Esperance to Norseman, because then the only way the chief of the Railway Department could reach the line would be either by going to Esperance by sea, or going to Coolgardie and taking a long coach journey. That has been stated by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), and that is a point we must consider. We must have easy communication for the chiefs of the railway staff and those gentlemen who control the

administration; and I would also point out that the making of a railway from Esperance to Norseman necessarily means there must be extensive repairing shops at Esperance for railway plant, both locomotives and wagons. The locomotives and rolling-stock of all classes, when they have been at work for a very little time, require repairing, and there must be workshops placed at Esperance on purpose to deal with them. But if we construct the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, we can bring all our rolling-stock to the nearest workshops, whether these be established at Coolgardie or Fremantle. It is far more economical for the colony that this rolling-stock should be carried in the way I have indicated, rather than there should be established a new set of repairing shops at Esperance. Another point is that if freight be simply carried one way and nothing but empty wagons return, the freight that is carried on the single journey has to pay the rate which will cover the cost of bringing back the empty wagons. That has been proved times out of number, and at one time there were differential rates from Northam to Coolgardie; the rates on that line being much larger per mile than on other portions of our railway system, and the reason alleged by those in power, and who knew and had the responsibility, was that from Northam eastward to Coolgardie, and thence to Kalgoorlie, no traffic came back. Empty trains, therefore, had to be brought back, and the forward traffic had to pay extra freight to pay for the bringing back. From Coolgardie to Norseman, we have been told by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), there will be back traffic, principally of firewood, and it is said that traffic of itself will be sufficient to pay for the empty trains. These are the words the hon. member used, and I refer to them in order that I may make the point that it is better to build a railway, if at all, from Coolgardie to Norseman. If the line were built from Esperance to Norseman, what back traffic could there be? We have been told, and we can learn it from papers laid on the table of the House, that practically there is no possibility of any back traffic. It may be said, and possibly will be said, that smelting works will be erected at

Esperance, and thus back traffic created; but, if that be so, why do gentlemen who understand this question from a mining point of view much better than I can pretend to do, not make any mention of it? We were accustomed to hear of smelting works some years ago, when the Government were spending any amount of money at Esperance. We heard there were going to be large smelting works, because the proper place for such works was at the sea coast, for the simple reason that it would be cheaper to bring the fuel there, and there would be every appliance at a much less cost than at the mines.

MR. MITCHELL: The Fremantle people annexed those works.

MR. GEORGE: I am not dealing with Fremantle. When I come to Fremantle, if the hon. member will then interrupt me, I will tell him what I think about Fremantle; but to do so now would take too long. With regard to what has been mentioned about smelting works and back traffic, we know that the bringing down of ore from the Eastern goldfields to Fremantle has been done at a rate very much less than that charged for similar traffic going up from Fremantle to the fields; and the only possible traffic from Esperance to Norseman was at one time stated to be this low-grade ore. As far as I can understand the speech of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), the Norseman goldfield is essentially a low-grade proposition, and as a low-grade proposition he was dealing with it the other evening; and he dealt with it on the supposition that the ore would be actually treated on the spot, and not treated at Esperance; and that knocks the stuffing clean out of any argument as to bringing that low-grade ore from Norseman to Esperance. Then without that low-grade ore we have absolutely nothing in the shape of back traffic. So far as I have understood from gentlemen who have traversed that country, there is practically no firewood to be brought back, and if there were, what sort of a revenue could be derived from a back traffic in firewood from Norseman to Esperance, when the population of Esperance, even in its most palmy days, could not, I presume, have exceeded more than one thousand; and it is hardly likely, at the present day, to reach even that figure,

because although we have seen during the last few days that there have been extensive land sales at Esperance, we do not know who have been the purchasers, or who have been pulling the wires; and I think it is fair to assume that those purchases have been for speculative and not for reproductive purposes, and there is not likely to be a large increase of population at Esperance. Therefore, I contend that there can be no force whatever in any argument to the effect that the back traffic from the Norseman to Esperance will be of any particular value. For the reasons I have tried to state as well as I am able to-night, if I were compelled to vote on the question of a railway, I should vote for the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman; but so far as the Norseman railway is concerned, it is not justified. I do not say it will not be warranted as the years go by; but it certainly is not justified, it certainly is not warranted, at the present time. What did the Premier tell us with regard to it? He told us that it was all auriferous country right from Coolgardie to Norseman. If that be so, I should like to ask hon. members who understand this mining question far better than I can pretend to do, how is it that the only mines which exist from Coolgardie to Norseman southward end practically at Londonderry? I am not sufficiently acquainted with Londonderry to say whether the mines there are, or are not, a great success; but at any rate, from Londonderry right down to Norseman what do we find? We find a place called Red Hill, a little to the eastward of this projected line; and so far as I can understand from practical miners on the field who have invested their hard earned wages in local mines, it cannot be denied by any man that Red Hill has not been a conspicuous success as a mining centre. What do we find at Widgemooltha? We find that the largest mine there was the Cardiff Castle, and the information which is guiding me in this matter was obtained from people who were for a number of years practically in charge of this mine—men who worked the mine entirely to the satisfaction of their employers, as is proved by the fact that those men at the present day are holding better positions under the same employers in a different

part of the colony. These men's savings, as they earned them, they invested in equipping prospecting parties, and they have prospected Widgemooltha for miles and miles, and have thrown up their claims because in their opinion as practical miners the country is of very little use. The Minister of Mines goes a little bit better than the Premier, and he is a little more cautious; and I think the reason is that while he has been in office he has learnt to analyse the reports placed before him, and to bring common sense to bear upon them, and he is not dazzled by the glorious sunshine of prosperity which leads the Premier away from the tracks of ordinary life. And the Minister of Mines did not tell us that was all auriferous country from Coolgardie to Norseman: he simply said it was all auriferous country from Widgemooltha to Norseman. He did not say much about Widgemooltha itself. Now what does this practically come to? The distance from Coolgardie to Norseman is 108 miles. From Coolgardie to Burbanks is 5 miles. No one disputes the fact that there are mines at Burbanks. From Burbanks to Londonderry is about 5 miles, and there are mines at Londonderry; and we find from the various speeches made during this debate, and from other sources of information, that from Londonderry down to Widgemooltha is 42 miles. The Premier says it is auriferous country, but the people who have prospected it and have had to do with it say it has timber: it may have something more, but if so, they have not been able to find that something. From Widgemooltha to Norseman is 56 miles, and that is what I believe miners call "country." We are asked by the Premier to believe that all this country is auriferous. We have been told by the member for Coolgardie that if this railway is built, workmen will be able to prospect this country better, and to find out more of its resources. Let me ask this House, and through it the colony, as to the prospecting which found Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Menzies, and many another field, was that contingent upon the railway, or upon the pluck, the spirit, the enterprise of the men who made this country, namely the miners? Let us take the country from Menzies northward: we find the railway ends

at Menzies. Was it the railway that found Leonora, Mount Margaret, Laver-ton, or any of those neighbouring mining centres? No. It was the same spirit which animated our mining prospectors during the last few years in this colony, and which has carried them from one part of the colony to another in search of the golden metal which many of them have not found; and I make bold to say, and I defy contradiction, that so far as the district from Widgemooltha to Norseman is concerned, the spirit of enterprise not having left our miners, if the country had been payable auriferous country, as the Government would have us believe it is, those miners would have found out the fact long ago without waiting for a railway. And I therefore say that the railway cannot be justified by such an argument. Then we are met by a statement made by the Premier, and made lately by other Ministers and lastly by the Commissioner of Railways: that the railway will pay. Will it pay? Let us look at the figures for a few moments, and I will endeavour to show the House the position as it appears to me. Of course I may be wrong in my figures. That is always possible for the member for the Murray. At the same time, with regard to this matter I hope to be able to prove, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" such as the Premier and the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), that I am right on this occasion.

THE PREMIER: Do not cry over it.

MR. GEORGE: I have no intention of crying. Men of my type do not cry.

THE PREMIER: But there are tears in your words.

MR. GEORGE: I cannot help being unwell; and since the Premier talks about tears in my voice, let me tell him that during the past few days all my family and myself have been suffering from illness. It is only a sense of public duty which brings me here this evening; and it ill becomes the Premier to sneer at a man because he happens to be unwell and yet is willing to fight.

THE PREMIER: You do not seem so very unwell.

MR. GEORGE: No; I think there would be more fight in my dying kick than there is in the right. hon. gentleman. I never was a squealer. He told

us in very airy tones the other evening that the line would cost about £250,000. How did he get those figures? I have not the political X-rays, and I cannot get inside his mind; but as the Premier refers us to an estimate placed before this House last year in reference to the Norseman railway, I am justified in referring to the same estimate, which I find was made by Mr. Muir, the inspector of engineering surveys, a gentleman whose reputation as a man reliable in his profession is not confined to this colony. He made his reputation before he came here, and so far as I am aware, has not done anything in this colony to imperil that reputation. What is his estimate? £290,000; and the Premier, in order to lessen the figures, and to try to show that the railway will pay, very kindly says we have tanks already in existence; therefore we can deduct the £50,000 allowed for water conservation. But Mr. Muir, in his report which I have here, says distinctly: "The route proposed will run close to the three tanks, which are capable of holding each three million gallons of water." And yet in his estimate Mr. Muir puts down £50,000 for water supply. That sum was not to build the three tanks already built, because Mr. Muir says the tanks are there. If the Premier will refer to the report, he will find this is so. Mr. Muir continues: "There are several very good catchments along the proposed route, and the £50,000 I have included in my estimate will, I think, be sufficient to provide an adequate water supply." If that means anything at all, it means that in addition to the three tanks to which the Premier referred, £50,000 is required to make an adequate water supply for the Norseman railway. Therefore, it is not fair for the Premier to pare down this estimate for the purpose of trying to win votes in this House. The estimate of the engineer who has gone into this matter, who has supervised the survey and seen the work through, is £290,000, exclusive of rolling-stock. If we take that £290,000 as being the cost of the line, it is no use building the railway unless we equip it with rolling-stock; and although the Premier may borrow from one end of the Treasury chest to help another, he cannot borrow at the present time from one portion of the railways of this colony to provide rolling-stock for a railway which

has yet to be built; and if the Premier had had a longer experience of railways than during the few days for which he held the office of Commissioner, he would have known that there can be no justification for any railway in any part of the world unless the sum which is raised for its construction includes everything that is required for its equipment. What will the rolling-stock for this line cost? At the very lowest estimate it will cost £75,000; and if it costs £75,000 for rolling-stock, that rolling-stock, when once provided, must never be taken off that railway. If it be taken off, there will be congestion of the traffic, and if there be congestion of the traffic there will be a decrease of the revenue. It is idle for any hon. member to try to argue in such a manner as has been attempted by the Premier. Add that £75,000 to the £290,000, and we get £365,000 as the total cost of building the line and equipping it with rolling-stock, which, when once provided, we dare not allow to go off that railway. Therefore, as reasonable men wishing to carry on this traffic without loss, and wishing to do justice to the country we are opening up, we should be perfectly unfair, perfectly ridiculous, if we were not to add something to this estimate for contingencies. With regard to the estimate of Mr. Muir, there is practically no estimate made for contingencies. I know that if we had the original estimate we should find there was provision for contingencies, but for certain reasons it does not appear on this. If to £365,000 we add 10 per cent. for contingencies—because there never was a line built yet without contingencies—we shall find we have £400,000. In relation to this additional rolling-stock, we are told by the member for Coolgardie that it will be small and not worthy of the attention of the House, but I put the amount at £75,000. Perhaps it may be said that is the estimate of the member for the Murray, and an estimate that is unreliable. Yet what do we find in connection with the Engineer-in-Chief's Department? The amount laid down for rolling-stock is £500 per mile at the port of delivery. Where is the port of delivery for rolling-stock in connection with Western Australia? Fremantle. The sum is £500 per mile, according to

the Engineer-in-Chief's own figures, from which there is no getting away. I do not think it is enough, but still that is the figure. £500 per mile for a distance of 108 miles equals £54,000. Then the stock has to be run up from Fremantle to the line at Norseman. There is also another thing to be taken into consideration. When this estimate was made the price of iron in the old country and the price of steel all over the world was very much less than at the present time. Scotch warrants worth 41s. twelve months ago, were worth 85s. three weeks ago in Glasgow, and that is really the iron market which is governing the whole of the steel markets throughout the world.

MR. PRESSE: What were steel rails then?

MR. GEORGE: Possibly they could have been bought for about £6 a ton or a little more, and I believe they are now being sold at £8 or £9. That is assumption, because I do not know, but I do know that the governing power in connection with the steel trade throughout the world is the Glasgow pig-iron market, and those other figures cannot be denied. Then there is another thing which my friend the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) has reminded me of. The price of coal has gone up; but that has simply been the means of raising the price of pig-iron, so I may leave that on one side. When I find on these estimates rails and fastenings put down at £89,000, I am fairly justified in saying that, if the rails and fastenings had to be purchased at the present time, you would have to add from £25,000 to £35,000 to the estimate given a year ago. It is idle for any member, however high and honourable his position may be in the political world, to reduce the estimate of £290,000 to £250,000 for the purpose of getting the measure passed by the House. If the right honourable gentleman would only consider this matter in the same way as he would if he were in business for himself, I am certain the figures would give him such a shock that if he had any hair which has not yet been turned grey in the service of the country, it would be white to-morrow. Having brought up these figures to £400,000, I will just bring the figures down a little, for the purpose of asking what the



position would be if we took the figures supplied by the Premier and the member for Coolgardie. We are being led astray—of course unconsciously; and if I say anything that may savour of disrespect to either of those two estimable gentlemen, I hope they will pardon me. The member for Coolgardie said: "We will take running expenses at 70 per cent.," and that is about a fair estimate, as far as I can judge. Taking the running expenses at 70 per cent., it will be necessary that the gross earnings shall not be less than £30,000 per annum in order to pay interest, expenses, and 1 per cent. sinking fund. Let us take £30,000, and what do we find? We find that 70 per cent. of £30,000 is £21,000, leaving £9,000 to pay interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund. The Premier takes £250,000 as the cost. Taking 4 per cent. of that, we get £10,000, and 1 per cent. for sinking gives £2,500, making £12,500, instead of £9,000 as mentioned by the member for Coolgardie. Therefore on the basis of 70 per cent. working expenses, if we are to raise £12,500 for interest and sinking fund, the traffic must bring in not £30,000 but £40,000 per annum. Take Mr. Muir's estimate of £290,000, *plus* rolling-stock £75,000; and add for contingencies £35,000. These make £400,000. Four per cent. on £400,000 is £16,000, and 1 per cent. is £4,000. Therefore we have to raise £20,000 on the ratio given by the member for Coolgardie, and the traffic must bring in £67,000 per annum and not £30,000 per annum, or else it will be unable to pay working expenses, interest, and sinking fund. Therefore I ask members (whether they quite agree with my figures or not) to be very careful before they take any estimate which may be given in connection with this matter by the Premier, because he has given you figures which show that the traffic must bring in £40,000. The traffic must bring in £67,000 per annum, or else we must be out of it. Let us look at the traffic in connection with which we have to raise £67,000. How are we going to raise that amount? Let us look at the traffic. Mr. Morgans states that Burbanks, five miles out of Coolgardie, requires 20,000 tons of firewood and coal per annum.

MR. MORGANS: I did not say that.

MR. GEORGE: You were reported to say it.

MR. MORGANS: I did not say it.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member is reported to have said it, and I suppose the reporter made a mistake. But suppose we take it as 20,000 tons. I say that the Burbanks traffic referred to by the Premier has very little to do with this matter so far as revenue is concerned. Why? Because as far as this firewood and coal are concerned, the distance from the source of supply is so small that it would be far cheaper to cart the stuff to where it is required than to put it on the railway let it run a few miles, and then cart it to the mine. I say with regard to firewood and coal for Burbanks, that whoever made that statement, we must put it out of our minds, because it is a non-existent quantity so far as revenue for the railway is concerned. I think the Premier stated that there were 3,000 tons of merchandise at present required for Burbanks. Supposing we take that 3,000 tons at the highest rate which is likely to be paid for its carriage to Coolgardie by rail—

THE PREMIER: I was showing how good it was.

MR. GEORGE: The right hon. gentleman was showing to this House that there was a place called Burbanks. He wanted to show the House and the country that because there is a place called Burbanks it would mean an immense revenue to the country. This important traffic is not of sufficient importance to cause this country to plunge into the expenditure of £400,000. With regard to the 3,000 tons of merchandise required by Burbanks, I appeal to the late Commissioner of Railways whether six shillings a ton is not a fair rate for five miles of traffic.

MR. MITCHELL: Eight miles.

MR. GEORGE: Perhaps the hon. member is not quite so conversant with this matter as I am.

MR. MITCHELL: I am quite conversant with it.

MR. GEORGE: I am not particular to a mile or two, but 6s. would cover the rate up to ten miles on the average, and taking it at that rate the amount of revenue on the 3,000 tons would be £900 per year. Then the member for Coolgardie tells us, or he is reported to have told us, that a battery requires ten times

its own weight of timber, stores, etc., per annum. We were told by the member for Coolgardie that there were 201 heads of stamps at or about Norseman. A very liberal allowance per head of stamps to cover battery, engine, and plant is three tons, and that would give 603 tons. Multiply that by 10 and we get 6,030 tons of traffic from Coolgardie to Norseman. Let us add for storekeepers' items 2,000 tons and we get 8,000 tons. What is a fair average for 108 miles? Thirty shillings per ton, taking one item with another, and that on 8,000 tons would give £12,000. The total, therefore, upon that basis of calculation taken from the Premier, comes to £12,900, towards £67,000 per annum. But it may be argued that there is something else; firewood and the back traffic. Certainly. It may also be said there are the passengers. Certainly. But I have a deficiency of £54,000. I may be wrong, but I want to be liberal, and I will take £14,000 per year as being the likely revenue from passengers. That leaves £40,000 which has to be made up of something. Can it be made up by firewood? That is the question. Will the carriage on firewood cause the Norseman railway to bring in £40,000 a year? Assuming that it brings in £40,000 a year, what is the absolute practical conclusion we have to come to in connection with the matter? The building of the Norseman railway will not cause one single mine at Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie, or any other place supplied with firewood or props, to consume an ounce more of firewood or one single foot more of props. Therefore, if you are to get £40,000 a year out of the Norseman railway, it simply means that while you are taking that traffic in one direction you are diverting it from a railway which already exists. How can it be called plain or profitable business to go and build a line for the purpose of cutting your own throat by diverting traffic from a portion of a line already in existence.

MR. MITCHELL: What a fool he would be to do that.

MR. GEORGE: I do not like these interjections. The hon. member forgets that his remark reflects on his right hon. leader. I believe it is the Premier who wishes to build the line, and the member for Murchison (Mr. Mitchell) says the man is a fool who would do it. Let the

hon. member have his opinion. Look at the population to be served by this line. There are at Burbanks 1,200 people, at Londonderry 500, at Norseman about 1,000, altogether 4,000 at the outside. What is the result as far as Norseman is concerned as to the payable nature of its gold at present? We are told by the Premier that Norseman has produced half-a-million of gold. We are told last year it produced £172,000 worth. And I speak feelingly on this matter. I believe that during the past year, as far as the mines are concerned down at Norseman they have not been paying, because I know mines in Norseman which owe not only the member for the Murray but others large sums of money, and the mines have not paid their debts, or the bailiff has gone in and the debenture holders or somebody else have got hold of the mines. I have proved that the line will not pay, and I think I have proved that the railway is unjustifiable. Can the country, in the present state of its finances, afford to build the line? Can the country which has taken a leap in the dark, which has no experience to guide it, can it afford to take the risk and the chance which we are asked at the present time to take? In a debate at the latter end of August it was clearly proved—certainly it was not denied by the Treasury benches—that the liabilities of the colony, the money actually borrowed, the liability for works undertaken, ranged over 14 million pounds. I ask if we have the right to plunge the country, in connection with a railway like this, into a further expenditure of half-a-million? I say the country cannot afford it, and at the risk of being called a “do-nothing” and “balderdash” I am not going to vote for the railway; I cannot conceive anybody outside a lunatic asylum or the Treasury benches voting for it either. Take the Coolgardie Water Scheme. We know there is a big liability there, and it has never yet been shown by the Premier where the money, which was re-appropriated from that work, is to come from. Take the Harbour Works: in connection with those we are nearly at the end of our tether, and the Premier has not shown us where he is going to get the money with which to carry on the works. Take the workshops, the question which was grappled with, and strongly grappled with, in this House

last night: it will take £200,000 to erect those shops. Where is the money coming from for that work? The Premier does not answer, and I am sure the House does not know. Take another instance far more important, which requires the full consideration of the country. What are we going to do for rolling-stock in the immediate present? Those of us who are engaged in industrial pursuits want trucks now, and there is a difficulty in obtaining them. We know those in charge of the traffic at present tell us there is a shortage of rolling-stock, which is culpable in the colony; so culpable that the *fiasco* of four or five years ago, when the member for Wellington was Commissioner of Railways, fades into insignificance. We know from the responsible heads of the Railway Department the trouble in regard to trucks. We can apply for trucks, but it is difficult to get them. As has been explained during the last few days in the Press, this situation was fully known to the late Commissioner of Railways, and it should have been known to the Premier for the last twelve months. We have a right to ask what has become of the £500,000 which was voted last year for the purchase of rolling-stock, and of which only £50,000 worth has reached the country. The rolling-stock may have been ordered, but it has not been brought to this country. I am certainly averse to voting money in connection with more railways, because the country has sufficient mileage to manage at present, and I am still more averse to building railways which will have the effect of robbing the present railways of the trucks and locomotives which they need. Let us take the question as a matter of policy. What is the effect of the Bill? We were told by the Premier that the passing of this Bill would not give any authority to spend money; it was only affirming the desirability of the line. We are all aware that it is desirable to build the Norseman line; we all know that there are other lines which it is desirable to build, but the question we have to ask ourselves, and if we are true to our trust and true to the country we must ask the question, is it desirable to further extend our present lines when we have neither rolling stock, or money to build the line with. If we do build the line the bulk of traffic will

be taken from existing lines. This is where I think I may pin the Premier on his question of policy. The passing of the Bill is not giving the authority to spend the money. This reminds me of the story which we all heard in our childhood, and which perhaps if we have children to-day we tell them. I refer to the story of the wolf and Red Riding Hood. It did no harm to Red Riding Hood to go along with the wolf for a while, and the Premier seems to be in the same position. It is desirable to build the line, not for the purpose of swallowing Western Australia, but for the purpose of getting a line built to suit his political views, and he has no care whatever in regard to the wolf of public debt swallowing up Western Australia and holding us in its grip. We are told that this line will largely develop, encourage, and stimulate the mining industry all along the route. I think I have shown there is no question in regard to that. When the mining industry ceased at Londonderry it started at Widgemooltha and failed. It will never make a start from Widgemooltha till they get to Norseman, and when we get to Norseman what position are they in? They have machinery there equal to that on any goldfield in Western Australia. The Premier says this line will pay, but the capitalists and the people who feel the pulse of expenditure, as closely as the captain of a ship watches his barometer, have said, "We have had enough of it." If that is not so, why are there so many defunct companies down at Norseman. The only people who have any remembrance of the mines are those who have sent the mines goods and have not been paid for them. Then we have another argument from the Premier. He says the railway will stimulate and encourage the mining industry along the route. It will give the producers of the Avon Valley the first chance of the market. The Premier wanted to get the vote of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who is always talking about the Avon Valley. I say if the railway is built it will not be built for the Avon Valley. The Avon Valley is not Western Australia; the Avon Valley will not cheerfully put its back up to support Western Australia; the Avon Valley will only bear its share of the expenditure, and

no more. This seems to be playing with the House as if we were a lot of children. The Minister of Mines—I admire him for his loyalty—is a most loyal colleague. He says we want a vigorous public works policy, which is best for this country, and which has been so successful in the past! Most of us have reached along the journey of life when we can remember certain actions which we could perform when we were young. Some of us were able to run a mile in a little while, but we would not attempt to go a hundred yards now; and because people could run 100 yards in 10 seconds thirty years ago they would not attempt to run that distance now they are a few years older. Because we have struck rich gold in this country such as the world has never seen, it does not prove that we shall always go on in that way. If we do go on building railways as it is proposed, soon we shall have in Western Australia a network of lines, so that it will be unnecessary for anyone to learn to walk, they will be able to step into a train and go from one street to another. These arguments are puerile. We are told that the Government do not change their opinions. They do not change their opinions, but the Government change their members. The Premier is a man who is respected throughout Australia; he is known in Great Britain and many other parts of the world; he is respected there as an explorer who went through this auriferous country where gold has been found, but he never found any; and he tells us that the country is auriferous, that he has inspected it, and that his opinion has never changed. He has not altered his opinion, and we are to take the railway and build it. I think with regard to this railway we might well pause before we commit ourselves to any more expenditure. I may say on this occasion, whether this is my last session in this House or not, there is only one item that I can see at present that will cause me to vote for the expenditure of public money, and that is the thorough equipment of our railways. If the Premier chooses to bring in a Bill for the purchase of £500,000 worth of rolling-stock—nay, a million—I am prepared to support it. As far as my support is concerned, whether it be little or much, I am prepared to give it to the

Government on that; and I further say to any member of the House who considers the matter, that the Railway Department is the largest department of the public service of this colony. It is absolutely the life of the country, and I am sure there is no Railway Department more sparsely kept with rolling-stock in Australia than this one. I am dead against this railway, and some of the other railways which I believe it is proposed to submit to this House. For the reasons I have given, I do not think the country can afford to build them; and even if the country can afford to do the work, the country has no right to deal with the matter just now. The only point on which I shall support the Government as to the further expenditure of money is in regard to rolling-stock, which the country needs and must have, or we shall be in an awful mess. It is unfair to the country, it is unfair to the public and to those who are responsible for the carrying on of the railways, and it is unfair to members of this House who wish to get the railways into a good position, that we should have voted £500,000 for the purpose of purchasing rolling-stock last year, when only £100,000 has been spent.

MR. PIESSE: The hon. member knows the order was sent forward.

MR. GEORGE: I said before that the Premier has been blessed with loyal colleagues; he has loyal colleagues on the benches now; but he has had no more loyal colleague than the hon. member who has just interjected (Mr. Piesse). That hon. member is desirous of mitigating the blame which really belongs to the Premier, but I, at any rate, am not prepared to mitigate it, because I believe that if we looked into the archives, we should find that while the late Commissioner, acting on the advice of his responsible advisers, has asked for rolling-stock times out of number during the last two years, the exigencies of the Treasury have caused matters to be put on one side. It is loyalty to his late chief that actuates that hon. member now, but he is not only sacrificing himself, but sacrificing the efficiency of the department over which he has presided, and is adding tremendously to the difficulties with which those managing the railways have to contend.

MR. PIESSE: That is all wrong.

[A pause ensued.]

THE PREMIER: I think I have the right of reply, but nobody seems to want to speak.

THE SPEAKER: The usual thing is that the member who moves has the right of reply, and is the last speaker, but there is no Standing Order in our House as to that. What I have stated, however, is the custom.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): Very little is required to be said at this stage of the debate; the whole of the ground pretty well has been covered, and we may take it for granted that every member of the House, and most people outside the House, are most anxious that railway facilities should be given to every part of the colony, if that can be done with safety to the country, and without involving any great loss. I say "without involving any great loss," because there are some railways which it may be desirable to build if we were in a position to build them, even though some little loss at the first was inevitable. But the longer we look at this Norseman railway proposal, and the more light there is thrown on it—though I do not know personally—and taking the evidence put before the House on former occasions, and on the present occasion, there is every reason to very carefully consider whether it is desirable or otherwise to build this particular railway. Setting aside the other phase of the subject as to whether at this stage it is desirable to build a railway, or to go into any great expenditure, and looking at the railway simply on its merits, the evidence seems to me, so far as I can gather, adverse to the construction of the line. The cost of this railway can scarcely be less than upwards of £400,000, including rolling-stock, and one question has to be considered, not only in connection with this railway, but in connection with the extension of our railways all over the colony, namely, the question of whether these railways will pay. We must remember that, according to our present system, the further we get from the starting point, say from the port of Fremantle, the lower the rate per mile are the earnings of the railway. I do not want to labour this point, but just use it as an illustration. For instance goods under

Clause "A" from Fremantle to Coolgardie, cost, I think, £1 7s. 3d. per ton, and under the same rate, to carry them on to Norseman the earnings would be £1 13s. 11d., so that for the extra 108 miles over which we would carry these goods we would only get 6s. 8d. per ton. If we carried the goods the same distance, starting from a port, we should get 11s. 4d. per ton for doing the same work, whereas all extensions, and the extension from Coolgardie to Norseman, will only bring in 6s. 8d. per ton. The very best that can be said about this railway, and the very best that has been said by the Premier himself, and also by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), who is deeply interested, and not only interested, but capable of expressing a correct opinion in regard to this particular railway—the most that can be said is that the line may pay under certain circumstances. One point the member for Coolgardie laid great stress on was the quantity of timber and firewood that would be carried. There is an element in that, I admit, of backloading, but the hon. member of course, will know that the timber traffic will be a constantly reducing quantity; that while the timber forests will be cut out in the course of a very few years, the railway will be a continuing cost to the country. If on these extensions, and especially on a line like this, which is only a spur line after all, we could establish a principle of getting something like an equitable rate for carriage, then possibly we might make lines of this character pay; but as we are fixed at present, we are unable to make a preferential rate. I am not arguing at the present moment there should be preferential rates, and we cannot expect preferential rates, and consequently the earnings on this class of goods will be something like 6s. 8d. per ton for the 100 miles, or less than 1d. per ton per mile. At the present moment I am informed on very good authority, there is only one trunk line, and that railway has to carry a burden of a good number of lines which do not really pay. We have brought our railway system down to a very low margin indeed; and I have confirmed doubts as to whether, if our present railway system was properly balanced, there would be any profit at all on the system as a whole. Yet we propose to

add 108 miles of railway to a district which practically leads to one centre only, and to carry goods at rates which cannot pay; and at these rates I fancy it will cost £120 to earn every £100 carried on the railway. That means therefore, that so far from increasing the power of the railways as a profitable concern, we shall load our present system with an absolute loss, which will occur on this particular railway.

MR. MORGANS: That is all assumption.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not think anybody can give a definite assumption on the other side. Let the hon. member calculate the figures, and I do not think the hon. member is prepared to suggest differential rates. The present system costs something like £74 to earn every £100.

THE PREMIER: When did it cost £74? Last year?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am only going by the Government's own papers, and speaking from the last record I have seen. Here we are proposing to have this extension, and the principle I am speaking of applies to all extensions; and on those extensions we are going to run first-class traffic at a penny a mile for the extra distance. Under the present system it is not possible to make any profit at all, and while £120 may possibly be too high an estimate, no profit can be made on the additional line. Supposing the loss be covered, or supposing even a little loss, we want to have justification shown to the House, as to why the country should build a railway which will only barely pay, and more probably will be a loss. We want to know what grounds there are for undertaking this responsibility, because it means a responsibility of not less than £400,000. Further than that, it seems to me that if this railway is to be a factor in the railway system at all, it must sooner or later be extended to Esperance; and to do that would involve the cost of another £400,000 without any material increase in the returns—I mean profitable increase. The extra distance will scarcely give us any particular advantage unless it can be shown—and this is the only point that will make this railway of value—that there will be a large direct traffic from Esperance to the goldfields, and that that traffic will be an advantage to those fields,

and an advantage to the country as a whole. If that could be shown, the railway would assume an entirely different form, because we would be starting from the port of Esperance as a terminal point, and the rates would be entirely different. It would be a matter of less than 200 miles, and the rates would be on the higher scale; consequently, if there were sufficient traffic this railway might be made to pay. We are now proposing to start an extension of the system practically to nowhere; and I say to "nowhere" because this is a spur line, and all who have spoken say there is no danger or expectation of its being carried to Esperance. Well then, we have to rely wholly upon the Norseman traffic, and all the evidence goes to show that the Norseman field is at the present time in a critical position. There is a large number of batteries there which are not in full work; and if that be so, I want to ask the House to consider whether it is desirable for us to undertake this expenditure and this liability. Suppose we construct the line through to Esperance, then we must face a large expenditure for a harbour. Possibly before this railway could be made a paying concern, we should have to spend £700,000 or £800,000, or perhaps nearly a million of money for a harbour, sheds, and the like, involving for their cost a proposed expenditure of perhaps one and a half millions of money before we could put this railway upon a paying basis. This expenditure, however, is not proposed. I want to suggest another phase of the subject. We are asked to pass a Bill which commits us to the building of a railway to Norseman. There is no very great population there, no very great prospect of the railway being a success. But behind that, there is no proposal or suggestion as to how the money is to be raised to build the railway; there is no suggestion that this railway is to be immediately commenced in any case. Then where do we stand? We are asked to pass a Bill for a railway, in this closing session of this Parliament, which cannot be undertaken, perhaps, for twelve months or two years. I ask, is it opportune for us to endeavour to commit and bind the new Parliament of this country to an expenditure for which they will have to raise the money, and which they will have

to carry out? Is it not fair on our part to leave this question for the consideration of the new Parliament which will be elected next year? If it could be shown that we could commence the railway, that the work was urgent and that the money was available, possibly we might be justified in coming to a decision now; but as it is not urged that we should commence this railway early, and as there is no present proposal as to how the money is to be raised, as there are some considerable doubts as to whether the railway if built will pay; I say the proper thing for this Parliament to do is to relegate the question to the next Parliament. Let that Parliament which has to raise the money and do the work decide as to whether it is or is not wise that such work shall be done. That is the only true position for this House to take up; therefore, though I say nothing very definite as to the railway itself, or as to the wisdom of constructing the railway at some time, I say that the duty of this Parliament is to leave this question open for the new Parliament to settle; because there is no very great prospect of building the railway, and there is no arrangement or suggestion as to how soon the money can be raised; and I affirm that the Government will have enough to do to raise the money which they must raise during the next twelve months, and that the new Parliament, which will have to raise the money and do the work, should be allowed to decide the question as to whether they will do the work or not; and therefore I propose from this standpoint to vote against the Bill.

MR. PIESSE (Williams): There seems to be a desire to-night on the part of the House to conclude this debate. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] It is not my intention to deal very extensively with this matter, but I hardly think it wise to allow the debate to pass without a few remarks. I have not come prepared with any long speech, nor with any figures to show whether this line will or will not pay, nor to give very much information concerning it, but simply to give a few facts in regard to it, and to state the reasons why and the manner in which I intend to vote. Hitherto it has been the practice, so far as I am concerned, to help forward the construction of all railways throughout

the colony. I may say I am still desirous of doing all that is possible to assist in the construction of railways, for the reason that they have done so much to develop the country. But there is no doubt that to-day we have reached a stage when, perhaps, we should pause. I do not wish to be put down as a pessimist, because I think most people who know me will agree that my ideas are not pessimistic; in fact, I have always been anxious to see the country developed and to do my best to help it forward. But I think many of the statements made during this debate by those who are capable of judging should prove to us that there is not sufficient justification for the construction of this railway at the present time. To build a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, where there is a present population of something like 1,200, and with a population on the road most of which is actually a very short distance from Coolgardie, namely at Burbanks, at a distance from Coolgardie of six or eight miles, which can well be served by the present system, seems to me unjustifiable. It is evident to my mind that this state of affairs does not justify us in extending the railway to the point where it is desired by the Premier it should go. I wish to say at this stage that I give the Premier credit for every good intention with regard to this matter, and I may say it rather goes against the grain with me to offer an objection to a work of this kind, for the reason that on many occasions when the Premier has come before this House with proposals to construct new lines—in fact, I may say upon all occasions—such proposals have met with very little approval from many hon. members; and if it had not been for the very strong representations the Premier has made, and for the following he has always had, I think it probable that we should not have seen many railways constructed which have been so successful. I remember that in the early days much opposition was offered to the railway to the South, and it was said it could not pay. Subsequent events have proved that it is most successful. At the same time, it is not paying as well as we should wish to see it, but after all it has been a success. So with the Bridgetown line. In consequence of developments

which have taken place in districts abutting upon that railway in respect of mineral resources, very good results have followed the building of the railway. At the same time, those railways are not paying to-day, although the returns are very much better than we expected. With regard to the Norseman railway which is now before the House, it seems to me the expenditure which will be entailed will probably reach the amount of the estimate, that is £290,000. That will be a very large expenditure at the present time; and I think the money could be better employed in further developing our present railway system by the relaying of various roads with heavy rails where this is necessary, and also providing the rolling-stock which is required for the equipment of our lines. In regard to the question of rolling-stock, the member for the Murray (Mr. George), when touching on this subject just now, blamed the Government for its inaction in not providing sufficient rolling-stock. I am not anxious to defend the Premier, although the hon. member has said I have been loyal to the right hon. gentleman. I consider it is right that one colleague should be loyal to another. It was my desire always to be loyal to the Premier when acting as his colleague, and to help him in every way I could. At the same time, I do not on this occasion wish to exonerate the Premier from blame, if there is reason for not doing so. But I join issue with the hon. member (Mr. George) when he stated that it is due to the Government that we are short of rolling-stock to-day. I say that upon representations having been made that further stock was required, the money has been found and the rolling-stock ordered to the extent of £160,000. The hon. member states that £500,000 has been voted; but if he refer to the last Loan Bill he will find that the amount voted is £160,000, and that I then stated that £500,000 worth of rolling-stock would be required; and in anticipation of the requirements, and with a view of obtaining stock, the first order of £160,000 was sent forward, and subsequent indents were prepared or are now in course of preparation which will involve an expenditure of nearly £300,000 more; so that the Government have done all that is possible to try to meet the necessities of the times.

MR. GEORGE: What about the former votes?

MR. PIESSE: All former votes have been exhausted. Something like one million sterling has been expended in connection with rolling-stock; and if hon. members will refer to the return placed on the table, they will find that the total expenditure in connection with rolling-stock is £1,177,000, so there has been a very large expenditure in that direction; and we shall thus find that we have been able, during the last three or four years, to meet ordinary requirements, and that the difficulties which have recently arisen have not been the outcome of delay on the part of the Government in not ordering stock, but have been caused by our having to extend our railways to such distant places as Menzies. One of the arguments used by the hon. member to-night seemed to me to be good: namely, that by extending our railway to Norseman, or to some point distant from Coolgardie, we shall be further affecting our supply of rolling-stock by taking it from the basis of traffic for a longer period than would otherwise be necessary. For instance, it will take three days at least to send trucks to Norseman and to return them to Coolgardie; consequently, the stock will be out of traffic for that period; and that is one of the reasons why I think we should pause before proceeding further with the construction of this railway, especially in the direction which has been indicated. Of course, to be consistent, I should like to state that last year, when this matter was before the House, I find I did not even allude to the Norseman railway, although it was part of the Government programme and was advocated in this House; and if it had been passed in the other Chamber to which it was referred, it would, no doubt, have been the desire of the Government, and as the administrator of that department it would have been my desire, to help forward the construction of this railway as far as possible. But the work not having been authorised last year, we are now at a stage, perhaps, to judge as to whether it is required. Having had a year's experience, we cannot but notice there has been no further development in the district in question to justify our carrying out this work. Therefore, I would accordingly urge upon the



House at this stage to be cautious in regard to this matter, although I would be only too pleased, if there were sufficient justification for the expenditure at the present time, to join with those who are strong advocates of this work in trying to have it carried out at once. We are always anxious to provide these isolated places with railway communication. We have seen the good effect which has resulted from connecting these places with our railway system; but of course in some cases (take Kalgoorlie, for instance) we have had an abnormal traffic. That has been of great service to us and has been the principal source of our railway revenue, and it has no doubt more than justified the extension of our railway to that point. Then we have the extension to Menzies. Beyond Menzies we have a large field which has been recognised as one of the most valuable goldfields we possess, and which will probably become in time second only to Kalgoorlie. We know that the traffic upon the Menzies line—which people at one time thought would not be great—has been very satisfactory. The traffic, however, is not the result of the actual work done at Menzies, but of the work beyond; and if in the instance we now have under consideration we had any prospect of traffic beyond, or of intermediate traffic which would warrant the building of this line, I would be only too pleased to give my vote in its favour. With regard to the extension from Menzies to Leonora, which, of course, was decided upon last year, and for which the material has been ordered, I am sure the whole country is anxious to see that work pushed forward, and we expect to see very good results from it. No one in the House or outside it can find fault with the Government for introducing the measure which authorised the construction of this work. It is not my intention to touch upon the financial matters, because, after all, that is a point which doubtless the Premier well weighed before he went so far as to introduce this question to the House. If he gets sufficient support from the House, he will no doubt be able to find the money. That is a matter which rests with the Treasurer. He himself knows exactly what to do in regard to that question. But I take it that what we are to do is to

consider whether this money could be better expended in another direction; and I think that it could be better expended in another direction. We have already agreed to the immediate construction of the railway workshops at Midland Junction. Of course that was agreed to previously, but by the motion last night it was decided that these workshops should be proceeded with at once. We have always earnestly desired to push on with these works rapidly. They will involve a large expenditure. Then, again, we have the relaying of the railway from the point where the rails were laid to some 40 miles from Southern Cross, onwards to Coolgardie. It is absolutely necessary that this should be taken in hand. Then we have the duplication to make between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. We have also the Boulder line, which requires immediate attention and which, of course, in consequence of the numerous stations, will be expensive. Then we have to provide for the rolling-stock, which is absolutely necessary for the continuance of our traffic in a satisfactory manner. Then we have the construction of the Leonora line, which will be pushed on rapidly as soon as material is at hand. Then, too, we must not forget that by the construction of the Leonora line rolling-stock will be at a greater distance from the seaboard, in consequence of the 80 miles further which the traffic will have to go. It takes now a week to carry traffic from Fremantle to Menzies and back, and it will take three days more than that to carry the traffic from Fremantle to Leonora and back. That will mean a total of ten days. The reason we find the stock to-day is inadequate to the affairs of this country, is not that we had not sufficient stock for the carrying out of work when our railways were not extended so far, and not because our traffic has increased so rapidly, but it is because the stock is much longer upon the road than it used to be; consequently it means that we must have more stock, and the further we extend our railways the more costly it will be to work them. I have no doubt about the working of this line. I believe it can be worked satisfactorily. The water supply would be sufficient for the requirements, because the three tanks which have been mentioned in relation to the railway (and which are

better than those in northern and eastern directions) would probably furnish a sufficient supply until such time as the Coolgardie water scheme is available; so there would be no need of much more expense in the direction indicated by the member for the Murray (Mr. George) when he stated it would require another £50,000 for the purpose of supplying water. With regard to the rolling-stock, it is not necessary to make provision for £70,000, because I quite believe the traffic upon the line will not be sufficient to make so material a difference as to necessitate the purchase of such large quantities of rolling-stock as would be covered by £70,000. At the same time, as I said just now, it would mean the taking away of certain revenue from the general traffic, and it would lessen the traffic and the requirements regarding the quantity of stock upon the lines now working. There is one point attaching to this which seems to be a very important one. It is in regard to the cost of material. We all know it has advanced from 30 per cent. to 40 per cent., therefore in the case of the Leonora line the cost of rails would be much greater than was once anticipated. It seems to me it would be preferable to wait a little while. I do not wish to be set down with those who are called "wait-a-whiles"; nor do I ask for a little longer time for consideration, but as we have so many obligations and there are so many improvements which must be carried out, it would be in the interests of this country to defer the question for another session at least. Then we should be able to judge what further developments had taken place. I would like to help those in an isolated district such as the Norseman district, who have suffered so much in consequence of their isolation and the difficulty of conveying their goods from different points; but after all we must set aside sentiment, and what we have to consider is whether this country is in such a position as would enable us to carry out this work. As I pointed out just now, the Premier can find the money, if this House votes it; and the country can find it. I have no fear on that score, but there are works which are more pressing, and with these facts before us, it seems to me it would be preferable to let this work stand over,

and devote our whole attention, and the time of our officers in the various departments concerned, to the carrying out of the more important works which are so necessary to the successful working of our railway system. In regard to the traffic question, as to whether the line would pay or not, the number of tons given as the probable traffic would lead one to believe it would not pay. But if I thought the development would be likely to lead to increased business in the future, that would not weigh so heavily with me in arriving at an opinion, because we have had evidence of small undertakings reaching larger proportions, and the resources of the districts are of such a character as to justify our building works of this kind. But in this instance we have seen that the mines are not looked upon as being so rich as mines in other places; and a very important point, which was mentioned a few evenings ago, is that there are now 200 head of stamps in that mining district and only a very small proportion of them are at work. I cannot see why these stamps are not at work, because, bearing in mind that there is an unfailing water supply and that there is a wood supply just near to the town which can be easily procured, it seems to me that the mere carriage of ordinary freight to that township would not act as an incentive to the further development of the mines, and would not help it further than it is being helped to-day by the natural advantages of the place. I certainly think we should delay this matter for some time. I would prefer to do this, although I could have taken the other course of perhaps allowing the Bill to pass through this House as before, with the prospect of its not meeting with such a favourable reception in another place. But, after all, it is better to say what one thinks with regard to a matter of this kind, which is of such importance, and rather than vote for the Bill now and leave it to its fate in another place, I would vote against the Bill, which I intend to do.

**THE PREMIER** (in reply): When speaking on this motion the other evening I had not some information which has since come into my possession, and which I would like to give to hon. members. I believe it is not altogether usual in replying on a debate to bring fresh matter

into the discussion, but I do not suppose hon. members will object.

MR. GEORGE: Not a bit of it.

THE PREMIER: I do not suppose members will object to what little information I can give to them, which I did not possess at the time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Give us all the information you can.

THE PREMIER: The manager of the Lady Mary Mine, Norseman, Mr. J. Stephenson, writes thus:

Many of them running from 5dwts. to 10dwts. per ton. Some of them large and permanent. Had railway communication existed, many capitalists who have never seen this field would have run down, and all likely shows would have been developed.

The Lady Mary mine, which I am at present managing, has, during the past two and a half years, yielded between 13,000 and 14,000 ounces of gold, of the value of £56,214 sterling, and has given employment to a large number of men, and kept 20 head of stamps going. A cyanide plant is now being started, and there are about 12,000 tons of slimes to treat. At present only development work is being proceeded with, and the staff consists of 30 men all told, but over 100 men were employed.

The Aleckzander Syndicate, 227 tons for 147ozs. Other crushings have been treated elsewhere of similar value, and they have a lode formation 10 feet wide. Hoffman and party, 273 tons for 154ozs. This is a cement formation of great width. Baden Powell 60 tons for 36ozs.

A railway connecting us with the Northern fields would not only give an impetus to prospecting and development on this field, but would materially assist Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie by giving them a supply of good firewood and mining timber, abundance of which abounds on the route, and the scarcity of which is being keenly felt at Kalgoorlie's big mines at the present time.

Mr. Treloar, manager of the Princess Royal Gold Mining Company, Norseman, sends the following particulars of that mine:

Number of stamps at work, 30; capacity of cyanide plant, 2,000 tons monthly; men employed (exclusive of wood and timber-getters), 175; stone crushed end July, 1900, 26,489 tons; gold yield, battery and cyanide, to end of July, 38,266ozs.; dividends paid, £36,000.

MR. GEORGE: That is two mines.

THE PREMIER: That is the Princess Royal mine.

MR. GEORGE: You have given us two mines. Where is your £172,000?

THE PREMIER: I think it is a very good return. It is worth my repeating

it. [Figures repeated.] That is signed by Mr. Treloar, the manager.

MR. GEORGE: He gives two mines.

THE PREMIER: I wish the hon. member would hold his tongue. He must, or I will make him.

MR. GEORGE: The Speaker may; you cannot.

THE PREMIER: I think the Speaker will.

THE SPEAKER: Order! Order!

THE PREMIER: Mr. Ernest Thomas, the manager of the Norseman Gold Mines, gives these particulars:—"Amount of money expended, £145,802; men employed on wages, in addition to those on contract work, 114; gold produced, between 1,000 and 1,200 ounces per month." I have a report also from Mr. Thomas, giving an estimate of the value of the timber between Coolgardie, Norseman, and five miles on each side of the railway route, and the estimated quantity is three million to four million tons, and to carry that quantity at 5s. a ton railage on that line would mean a million sterling.

MR. GEORGE: Freight?

THE PREMIER: The freight, yes.

MR. GEORGE: 5s. a ton?

THE PREMIER: I think 5s. a ton is not too much.

MR. GEORGE: One million tons? What rubbish!

MR. MORGANS: More than that.

THE PREMIER: Then for another mine, the particulars are: "Number of stamps, 10; number of men employed on mine, 36; depth of main shaft, 320ft.; driving from which no stoping is done, 500ft.; average width of reef, 2ft. 9in." I thought these figures would be of use to members. They show, at any rate, that there is something down there; that there are some mines working there; that there are some goldfields producing gold, all of which go to support the statement which I made the other night when I said that half a million ounces of gold had been produced at Norseman, that last year £170,000 worth of gold had been produced, and that it was hoped that during the present year a similar amount would be produced. It is a curious thing in this debate that the principal opponents of the Bill are those whom we should expect support from. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) seems to have taken up the role not only

of political whip on this occasion, but as general manager of the business—the chief opponent. One might have expected from the goldfields members that if they could not support this line with all their heart and soul, they would not take a very prominent position antagonistic to it.

MR. GEORGE: They love their country better.

THE PREMIER: I wish you would make the hon. member leave off interjecting, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Order.

MR. GEORGE: Right, sir; I will obey you.

THE PREMIER: It is a curious thing that the member for East Coolgardie should have been an advocate for this railway in 1898.

MR. JAMES: Not the Norseman-Coolgardie line.

MR. GEORGE: Mr. Speaker, will you ask other hon. members not to interject?

THE PREMIER: I will explain to the hon. member, and he will see the force of my argument. The member for East Coolgardie was the mover, on two occasions, of a motion for a railway to connect Norseman by railway. I know he favoured the Esperance-Norseman route, but he made some statements which I wish to repeat. Speaking of the reefs he gives me credit for knowing the goldfields well, but I do not pretend to know them well. The hon. member then gives a description of Norseman, and that is the point I want to make. The hon. member who is now the principal opponent of the railway in this House was a believer in the Norseman line on the 28th September, 1898, because he says:

The reefs of Norseman, without any undue comparison with any other part of Western Australia, present a more permanent character than those of any other field, saving and excepting Kalgoorlie. But even there it is questionable whether the reefs at Norseman are not equally as permanent as the reefs at Kalgoorlie. They have been described by every mining man of any repute as true fissure veins; and they are actually the great trunk of the gold-bearing belt of Western Australia.

[MR. MORAN interjected a remark.]

THE PREMIER: Do not get excited. I wish the hon. member would listen.

MR. GEORGE: Is the member for East Coolgardie in order in interjecting?

THE PREMIER: I went out of the House when the hon. member was speaking, and if he will go out now I shall get on very well.

MR. GEORGE: Is it not disrespectful of the hon. member to say that?

THE SPEAKER: I do not think it is.

THE PREMIER: The member for East Coolgardie says:—

The field is being developed down to the 400ft. level, and the veins are of the most permanent character, being well-defined, wide, and of average grade. Right up to date they have returned considerably over one ounce per ton, having indeed returned nearly an ounce and a-half. They are permanent, because they are true fissure veins, and they are extensive because they are developed for 30 miles in length; and they are highly payable, because anything that will return one ounce to one ton is payable on any goldfield in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: It has gone down half an ounce since then.

THE PREMIER: "That is the position of the Norseman goldfield."

MR. MORAN: What a liar I must have been, then!

THE PREMIER: That was the opinion of the member for East Coolgardie on the 28th September, 1898, in regard to this place to which the Government desire to build a railway. There is no question about it, for these remarks were not made off-hand without consideration, and no doubt, by the closeness of the wording, this speech was taken from notes previously arranged—I should say so, at any rate. The hon. member went on to say further, "That is the reason for not starting the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman." One reason, I think the principal one, which he urged, on another occasion perhaps, was the impossibility of carrying the traffic on any railway between Coolgardie to Norseman because of the want of water, the great scarcity of water, and if I remember rightly he pointed out the great difficulty there was at that time in carrying on the traffic for want of water, and he said how foolish to increase the distance to Norseman, thus making the water difficulty greater. Two years have passed away since then: two years of prosperity, I may say, to this colony—of advancement, at any rate—so far as I know, prosperity; and here we have the same member for East Coolgardie who, introducing his speech

on that occasion, said that he did it for the third time. These were his words:—

For the third time since I have had the pleasure of sitting in this House, it has been my duty on two occasions, and it is now my privilege, to bring before this House a motion to consider the question of giving railway communication to one of the most important goldfields in our colony.

That is what the hon. member said. It had been his duty on two other occasions, and it was now his privilege to bring before the House a motion on the question of giving railway communication "to one of the most important goldfields of the colony."

MR. MORGANS: That is quite true.

THE PREMIER: This is the same hon. member who two years afterwards comes forward here in the House as the principal whip to try and catch votes: to do his utmost—to do his level best, as they say—to prevent the Government from carrying out the project for giving "one of the most important goldfields in the colony" a railway!

MR. MORAN: Which is now "burst up."

THE PREMIER: The hon. member has not said that, in his argument. He has not given as a reason that the Norseman goldfield is "burst up": he has gone on other grounds. It will be for the people of the country, for the people on the goldfields, and for the members of this House to say how consistent the hon. member has been in regard to his action, having three times brought it forward.

MR. MORAN: I never brought it forward once.

THE PREMIER: You brought forward the project for giving Norseman a railway.

MR. MORAN: A narrow-gauge tramway.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member's reasons for not giving the ordinary railway were not reasons that I would give, or that any other members of the House would agree to. The reason he wanted the narrow-gauge railway was that he was afraid a broad-gauge line might be used for communication with the Coolgardie goldfields, and would thus injure that part of the country. These reasons which he gave he reiterated over and over again. However, I think I have an

important admission of the hon. member that this is "one of the most important goldfields of the colony."

MR. MORAN: I absolutely deny that member's statement.

THE PREMIER: Here it is, in *Hansard*.

MR. MORAN: But who made that statement?

THE PREMIER: You did.

MR. MORAN: Then I deny him.

THE PREMIER: I have not the slightest doubt the hon. member means what he says now, just as much as he did then. I do not know what he does mean, but I take his words to mean what everyone of us accepts them to mean in the English language.

MR. MORAN: An Irishman is allowed to speak twice.

THE PREMIER: This is the member, the chief opponent of this Bill which the Government have brought forward for the construction of a railway to this important goldfield, in another direction. But I do not care what the direction is: the point I wish to make is that the railway was brought forward for that district. Are we to understand that members will vote against the railway to-night because it does not go in the direction they wish? Hon. members will not be able to say the Government are bringing forward a proposition the object of which is not good and sound. If the objections of the hon. member (Mr. Moran), or any other member, to the proposal are that the railway ought to have started somewhere else—at Esperance or Kalgoorlie or some other place—that does not condemn the project the Government have in view. It means that the main object would be carried out in a different way to what the Government think. I notice that all through this debate there has been a desire on the part of some hon. members to exaggerate not only the cost, but also the difficulties in connection with the construction of this line. When I am advocating a measure, or even opposing it, I never make the conditions worse than the evidence shows, but the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) has, not once but several times, told us that this line will cost half-a-million of money, whereas the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief is £290,000, even

if you added £500 a mile for rolling stock, that would only amount to £50,000.

MR. VOSPER: Say £100.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) knows better than that: he knows that the opening up of a country like this by means of a railway will not cost £100 a mile for rolling-stock; he knows that £300 is about right, but we say £500 for the sake of argument. Some of the railways we have built cost £300 a mile for rolling-stock, and that was in the early days; and, after all, this railway will only have to carry its own traffic, and not the traffic from other places as well. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) has said something about this line being started at the wrong place, and to him it would appear that Kalgoorlie would be better. We have heard something about the injustice to Norseman in connection with the distance that the traffic will have to go from Fremantle, but he would make that traffic go further still.

MR. MORAN: It would be nearer.

THE PREMIER: That is absolutely incorrect. If anyone tells me the distance from Coolgardie to Norseman by the ordinary route by Widgemooltha or by a straight line is longer than by Kalgoorlie, which would mean coming back by Red Hill to Norseman, I can only ask him to look at the map.

MR. MORAN: Your railway takes in Red Hill.

THE PREMIER: I know what I am talking about, and if the route be by Kalgoorlie the distance must be 30 miles longer. However, we will not continue this argument, because it is too absurd. It is said that love sometimes turns to hate, and it seems to me that the love and affection that the hon. member for East Coolgardie once bore towards the Eastern goldfields has turned to something venomous. He seems to be resenting in this House recently some personal injury to himself; he must be suffering from some ill-treatment, and I have no doubt he has been badly treated, as public men generally are; but public men do not resent that, as a rule, but take it as the ordinary physic which public men have to put up with. It is a curious thing, though I have had no experience myself, that when you turn against people

you have been fond of, they seem to be worse on that account. If you have liked people, and turn against them, you seem to hate them ten times more than if you had not known them previously. I can only say the hon. member, until very recently, has earnestly served the people of the goldfields; he has tried his best to develop the resources of these districts and the district he represents, and has done everything he can to promote and assist further development. As I said before, some other spirit seems to have got hold of him now, and instead of trying to assist them as he has done in the past, he is the bitterest enemy in this House, so far as I can see, to everything that savours of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. In regard to Norseman, which was another place he liked so well, and which he called such nice names, he seems now to desire to do his utmost by hook or crook to defeat the object we have in view in giving railway facilities. He seems to take a pessimistic view of everything all over the colony.

MR. MORAN: I do not know whether the hon. member is in order in imputing personal motives to me.

THE PREMIER: I only said it seemed to be so.

#### POINT OF ORDER.

MR. GEORGE: I desire to call attention to Standing Order 132, and will ask the Premier to resume his seat while I do so.

THE PREMIER: I will not resume my seat for you.

MR. GEORGE: It is the rule for an hon. member to resume his seat under the circumstances.

THE PREMIER: Can the hon. member rise to a point of order, when I am addressing the House and saying nothing at all about him?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member may rise to a point of order at any time, but I would like to know what his point of order is.

MR. GEORGE: I claim the privileges of a member of this House. Standing Order No. 132 says:—

No member shall digress from the subject matter of any question under discussion; and all imputations of improper motives, and all personal reflection on members, shall be considered highly disorderly.

The member for Bunbury (Sir J. Forrest) is digressing, and is making what the rule says he shall not make, namely imputations of improper motives against the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran).

**THE SPEAKER:** The right hon. gentleman has just stated he has not imputed any motives to the member for East Coolgardie, and the member for East Coolgardie has accepted the explanation.

**MR. MORAN:** The Premier's words are a bit clumsy, but I accept his intention.

#### DEBATE RESUMED.

**THE PREMIER:** The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) is not content with doing his best to defeat the object of the Government, who are trying to open up this country with railway facilities, but he also has given us, not for the first time, but for the third time of asking, another dose of his financial opinions. I can only tell the hon. member that if he continue that dose he will have to talk to himself, because I fear no one will listen to him. We are having the same wails, the same pessimism, and the same fears as to our finances that we have previously heard from the hon. member. If he had been addressing a Government composed of a lot of political adventurers, or a party of men of straw, who had nothing to lose in the world, we would be prepared to listen to him; but for the hon. member to pose as the financial saviour of the country, and charge the Government side of the House with a course of action which will bring ruin on themselves, and on the people they represent, is to me quite amusing. Whatever our faults may be on the Government side of the House, and no doubt we have a great many in the opinion of some people, I never heard even our most hostile opponent charge us with being unmindful of our own interests. I do not think anyone has charged us with trying to ruin ourselves, and we have quite as much to lose here as the great patriots who are always telling us of our desire to ruin the country.

**MR. MORAN:** I never said that.

**THE PREMIER:** The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) told us this action on the part of the Government was only a political move, but all I can say is that we have been pretty consistent with this

"political move," and kept it up for a long time. A political move is generally for the moment and is then cast aside, but for the last two or three years we have been striving and working at great inconvenience and trouble to ourselves to induce hon. members to agree to this measure, and it must not be forgotten that we have been successful, too. The year before last the House agreed to expend £5,000 on a survey of the line, and last year agreed to spend £60,000 in construction. How is it the House did that then, and will do nothing now? How is it hon. members find out now the work is not necessary and will be disastrous to the country?

**A MEMBER:** Federation!

**THE PREMIER:** My friends opposite will not say that, because they say federation is going to be the salvation of the country.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Wages are up a shilling a day.

**THE PREMIER:** That is all right; but I want to know how it was the House assented to the Bill then, and has just found out that it is not a measure which ought to be supported. As I said just now, it amuses me to hear the Opposition posing as the careful and prudent people of the colony, and holding myself and my friends on the Government side up as reckless adventurers; it is amusing because it is ridiculous. Where are the members for the eastern goldfields in this matter?

**MR. WILSON:** In the Opposition.

**THE PREMIER:** Where are those members who have been so anxious to do everything to promote the goldfields, and are never afraid of telling us what the Government have not done, or will not do?

**MR. MORAN:** They are loyal to the colony.

**THE PREMIER:** They are loyal to the colony! I think it is more likely that we on the Government side will be loyal to the colony than hon. members who have spoken against this Bill. We have more interest in the country than the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), because we were born here, and are bound to it by every tie; and that the hon. member cannot say. I have more interest in the country, and love it better than the hon. member does, or ever will.

MR. MORAN: I have a few ties here.

THE PREMIER: Where are those great goldfields members who are always anxious to promote the interests of the goldfields? I can only say we are getting tired, I am at any rate, of these lamentations. I have heard them for ten years from the Opposition side of the House: members have talked of disaster and ruin, and ruin and disaster. And when all these statements are repeated and rehashed up for years, I can only say it is very tiresome, and not at all interesting.

MR. GEORGE: You were on your knees a few weeks ago.

THE PREMIER: There is one consolation, however, and that is that if hon. members like to go back on what they did last year and the year before, there is no power in the world to keep this railway back for long; because the railway must be built, whether now, or next year, or the year after. After hearing these wallings and croakings as to the financial condition of the country, when I know all about that position and hon. members seem to know nothing, all I can say is that the people of the colony will not listen to them. We have had ten years of such prosperity as no country has seen in a like time. No other country, I believe, has seen the changes for the better that have been seen here. But still hon. members are afraid of the future, and afraid to construct a railway for a hundred miles notwithstanding that all our railway ventures throughout the country, which we have transformed by our policy and made a place where people can live with some comfort—notwithstanding all these things we still hear the pessimistic doctrine that the railway will not pay, and that ruin and disaster will follow.

MR. GEORGE: Wait till you have had "forty years in the wilderness."

THE PREMIER: What has been the result of the policy which the Government and their supporters have carried out in this country? Has it ever brought any disaster and ruin on anyone? Is there a man throughout the length and breadth of the country who would say that he would reverse one single action which the Government have taken in the matter of railway construction?

MR. KINGSMILL: What about Esperance?

THE PREMIER: Can anyone say we have done anything wrong at any time in respect of the railways and works we have built in this country? If anyone wants to know the record of this Government, if he was here in 1890 and is here now—I would say to him simply, "Look around." What is the position of this country? Its finances are absolutely sound; there is no debt on current account; we had a revenue of £275,000 last month—a larger revenue than that of South Australia; and we shall have a credit balance, when the accounts are made up, on the operations of the quarter: therefore we are absolutely sound in regard to our finances, and the community is flourishing from one end of the country to the other.

MR. VOSPER: It is all "sound."

THE PREMIER: The railways are paying [MR. GEORGE: No.] I state, upon the figures presented to us by our department, that the railways are paying their way, and our harbours are filled with ships. Go down to Fremantle and see the transformation scene there, and compare it with the state of affairs in 1890. This is the reply I make to those whom I call the do-nothing croakers in this colony and in this House: Look around and see what we have done. I am almost ashamed, year after year, to have to stand here to try to get authority to construct works which will pay their way, and go to make this a great country. Owing to party politics or to some other cause, there seems to be a desire to try to prevent this country from going ahead, or to prevent the Government or their supporters from making it go ahead.

MR. GEORGE: Give us the butt end next time.

THE PREMIER: However, I do my best for this country. I do not care who denies that; I shall continue to do my best. I have a great many loyal supporters in this House yet, who will, I am sure, stand by me. We have stood shoulder to shoulder for many a long day, and we shall be united still.

MR. GEORGE: Do not cry.

THE PREMIER: The coast is clear in this country. If we look from Wyndham to Eucla, we shall not see even one little cloud on the horizon; and that is the result of ten years' administration by this Government.



MR. GREGORY: The rabbits are coming.

THE PREMIER: I would ask again, are we worthy to control the destinies of this great patrimony that has come to us? If we are going to sit down and look at it, if we are going to leave the country unutilised and undeveloped, if we are from year to year to deny means of communication to the people of Norseman, who are opening up that country and who have founded homes there and built houses, I say we are undoubtedly unworthy of that great patrimony. There is at Norseman a good township. I have been there and know it. They are a good, intelligent, industrious people, with good gold mines and a large district, labouring under great difficulties; and if we are going to deny to such people the advantages of railway communication, what right have we to control the destinies of this country?

MR. KINGSMILL: What about Nan-nine?

THE PREMIER: We will give Nan-nine the railway.

MR. VOSPER: Look at Esperance!

THE PREMIER: I do not wish to speak of Esperance now, though I could answer the hon. member very well. Esperance is not a producing centre like Norseman; therefore it is not in the same category. Norseman is a producing centre: it produced £170,000 worth of gold last year—a very different place from a town which does not produce anything. I ask hon. members to continue the policy which has been carried on in the past. I do not ask them to go full gallop along the road of progress, but to go gradually and surely, and to continue. We have got past the days when we could gallop. We did gallop for five years; we have railways which have been built all over this colony; but that pace is not necessary now. Still, we must go forward gradually and slowly, and must do our duty, not to one part only of the colony, but to every part. Our policy and our duty is clear to anyone who has any faith in the colony, clear enough to anyone who believes in its future. It is a policy of improving our national estate, which is the inheritance which has come to us. And if we sit still and make no improvements, if we do not do justice to every

part of our inheritance, I say again, we are not worthy to have that inheritance. We shall be like the man in Scripture, who went and hid his talent in the earth, and brought it back to his lord and said, "Here is your money; I have kept it snug for you." Is that what we are going to do with this great colony of ours? No. I say we must develop it to the best of our opportunities, and certainly to the extent of giving reasonable facilities of railway communication to a rising and important goldfield. There is nothing new in this debate in the attitude of hon. members. We have had the same sort of thing that we have listened to for years. I could quote from *Hansard* pages and pages of the same sort of talk as the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Mlingworth) gave us to-night. He said the same thing in 1896, the same thing in regard to our loan policy, in regard to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, in regard to our re-appropriations, in regard to everything which had for its object the development and opening up of this country: "It will bring disaster. It will give £50 or £100 a head more than the present debt." All these things we have heard for many years, and still no disaster comes. The country forges ahead; everything is better; there is not a single industry in the colony which is not progressing; we have now what we never had before—a population of over 180,000; our revenue last year was between two and three-quarter millions and three millions.

MR. GEORGE: It ought to have been four millions.

THE PREMIER: Our trade is greater than it ever was before in this country. And this railway which we are about to construct, what will it do? It will open up another province to our railway system, and give fresh and increased markets to the producers from the soil; and it will also do something which is very important too: it will give satisfaction to a large number of our fellow colonists who are there at Norseman, isolated, to whom this colony is only a name, and to whom we and the rest of the people of Western Australia are personally unknown. It will give satisfaction to the people on the Coolgardie goldfield, to the people in Kalgoorlie, and it will open up our country. It will do all this

and be no burden to us; it will pay its own way, and will be no burden whatever on the taxpayer. These are the reasons which actuate the Government in trying to get the assent of hon. members to this Bill. I say we are not asking the House to agree to any new thing. We are asking hon. members to do that which they have done twice before, certainly last year more emphatically than in the previous year, because in the year before they voted for a survey only. But when they voted £60,000 last year for the commencement of the railway, they then thought the railway was justified. If anything had happened since, I could understand the present opposition. At that time last year we had a deficit of £250,000 on current account; the money market was worse than it is now, and we had less money in hand; but still, this House voted £60,000 towards the construction of this work. Since then, there is no deficit on current account, and everything in the colony is flourishing. But still, there are those who seem to have awakened now for the first time to the belief that this work, which has such a good object—to open up a new goldfield, to add to our railway system, to give increased markets to our producers, and generally to promote trade and commerce throughout the colony—is unjustifiable. At any rate, whatever may be the result of this vote, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have tried to do my duty in this matter, that I have tried my best to influence hon. members to vote for this railway; and my last words will be to those who represent the producers of this colony; and I say to them that this is a farmers' railway as much as a goldfields railway, and that if the project were only properly explained to their constituents, those who produce from the soil, they would be assured that the railway is in their interests as well as in the interests of the whole colony. I hope that on the division there will be a majority found for the second reading of this Bill.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	14
Noes	...	...	...	19
				—
Majority against	...	...	...	5

AYES.  
Mr. Darlôt  
Sir John Forrest  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Mr. D. Forrest  
Mr. Hubble  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Locke  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. Moorhead  
Mr. Morgans  
Mr. Pennefather  
Mr. Throssell  
Mr. Wood  
Mr. Rason (Teller).

NOES.  
Mr. Connor  
Mr. Doherty  
Mr. George  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Higham  
Mr. Holmes  
Mr. Hutchinson  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. James  
Mr. Kingsmill  
Mr. Moran  
Mr. Phillips  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. Sholl  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Vosper  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Gregory (Teller).

Question thus negatived, and the second reading rejected.

### DISTILLATION BILL.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-25 o'clock until the next Tuesday.