

Java grass which would quickly spread. In a very short time this grass covered the ground, and it was with great difficulty that it was eradicated. He had had some experience with Java grass, and he thought it was the same weed that the hon. member referred to. It had been suggested that "Spanish Radish" should be added to the Schedule.

HON. J. M. DREW: The very fact that nut grass was not in the country was a good argument for it being included in the schedule, as no injustice would be done. If the grass appeared prompt measures could be taken to eradicate it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It could be declared a noxious weed at any time.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It was a strange thing if nut grass was in the colony that the Department of Agriculture had not made it known. Had the department introduced this weed? The Bill provided that any weeds might be declared noxious weeds at any time and be eradicated. If many weeds were added to the schedule, the Bill might be thrown out in another place.

Amendment put and passed, and the schedule as amended agreed to.

Preamble and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:30 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 13th November, 1900.

Papers presented—Brown Hill Loop Kalgoorlie-Gnumballa Lake Railway Bill, first reading—Returns ordered: Coolgardie Water Scheme, (1) Railway ticket orders, (2) Wages pay-sheets—Roads and Streets Closure Bill, Council's Amendment—Annual Estimates, Committee of Supply; Railways vote and Public Buildings vote passed; Lands vote postponed—Loan Estimate, Committee of Supply, Premier's statement, debate adjourned—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill, in Committee to Clause 14, Division, progress—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Audit of railway accounts, further Telegrams from Eastern Australia; 2, Statistical Office, Report by Registrar General on the working.

Ordered to lie on the table.

BROWN HILL LOOP KALGOORLIE-GNUMBALLA LAKE RAILWAY BILL.

Introduced by the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, and read a first time.

RETURNS (2)—COOLGARDIE WATER SCHEME.

RAILWAY TICKET ORDERS.

On motion by MR. KINGSMILL, ordered (1) that there be laid on the table a return showing full particulars of all railway ticket orders and railway freight cash vouchers issued by officers of the Coolgardie Water Scheme Branch for fares and freights between Perth and Cunderdin, and *vice versa*, during the first four months of this year (1900).

WAGES PAY-SHEETS.

MR. KINGSMILL also moved that there be laid on the table exact copies of all pay-sheets for wages, countersigned by Messrs. H. W. Hargrave, A. F. Smith, and R. Formby, either collectively or individually, in connection with work carried out by the Coolgardie Water Scheme Branch at Midland Junction and Falkirk during the first four months of this year (1900).

THE PREMIER: There would be very little chance of getting the information in reasonable time, and it was difficult to know exactly what the hon.

member meant. If by his first motion he wanted all the railway orders, there might be thousands of them, and the pay-sheets might number so many hundreds, and either copies would have to be made or the originals produced.

MR. A. FORREST: The originals might be brought.

THE PREMIER: Then there would have to be a cart to carry them. Perhaps the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) would point out what were the exact particulars he required.

MR. KINGSMILL said he would have pleasure, if permitted, in waiting on the Director of Public Works and explaining the points on which he required information.

Question put and passed.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL. COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

Amendment made by the Legislative Council considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resumed from 8th November.

RAILWAYS AND WORKS DEPARTMENTS
(Commissioner, Hon. B. C. Wood).

Vote—*Public Works*, £149,053 6s. 8d.:

MR. WILSON, referring to the item "Swan River survey for proposed bridge at the Narrows, £120," said last session a motion was carried that the Government should take into consideration the desirability of constructing a bridge at the Narrows, and preliminary surveys were to be made and a report given to the House.

THE PREMIER: The motion was not very precise.

MR. WILSON: The motion was sufficiently precise for the Premier to take certain steps as to soundings and so on. Some information must have been gathered, as was shown by the fact that £120 had been put on these Estimates for the work of surveying. Was the survey complete?

THE PREMIER said he thought the survey was complete.

MR. WILSON: Then there ought to be a report before Parliament prorogued.

THE PREMIER: There was no money available for the work.

MR. WILSON: The want of communication was felt by people on both sides of the river, and it was to be hoped the Premier would bring down some recommendation before the prorogation. What was desired now was some explanation as to the position of the proposed work.

MR. D. FORREST: As a resident in and near Perth, he protested against a bridge over the Narrows, and moved that the item be struck out. Such a bridge would spoil the beauty of the city of Perth, and was only asked for in the interests of people on the one side of the river or the other, and not for the benefit of the city at large.

THE PREMIER: The item should not be struck out, because the money had been spent. The memory of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) had been somewhat treacherous on this occasion. The motion proposed by the hon. member last session was that: "It was desirable the Government should, at an early date, take into consideration the construction of a bridge across the river Swan at the Narrows"; but the motion actually carried was that "It was desirable the Government should, during the recess, obtain information as to the cost of a bridge across the Swan at the Narrows." The House in no way committed itself to the advisableness or otherwise of this bridge, but merely authorised the Government to find out what the cost might be; and when the Government were able to tell the Parliament the cost, it would be competent to take steps, either by introducing a Bill or providing money on the Estimates. His own opinion was that the information desired would be forthcoming in a day or two; but he had never subscribed to the doctrine or idea that a bridge was necessary at this point, because if there was one thing which was not necessary, and which would altogether spoil the appearance of Perth, it would be a bridge across the Narrows. In order to carry out the work, there would have to be a high-level bridge, otherwise yachting and boating would be interfered with; and the bridge would have to start from a high point on St. George's Terrace

or elsewhere, and would probably cost £100,000. Who was thinking of spending £100,000 on such a work at the present time?

MR. WILSON: Was that the Government estimate?

THE PREMIER: No; that was his own estimate.

MR. WILSON: Say £30,000.

THE PREMIER: Whatever the cost, he was altogether opposed to such a bridge at the present time, and the member for the Canning could expect no sympathy from him. In his opinion, a good steam ferry would serve all requirements for many years. Steam ferries carried carts and other vehicles and passengers across rivers very quickly, and that was surely good enough for Perth at the present time; and the hon. member could not be serious in asking Parliament to authorise a bridge at this point, when such a work would, as he had said, spoil the beauty of Perth Water opposite the city. This was, he knew, a utilitarian age when not as much regard was paid to appearances as to use; but in no way was the bridge necessary now. If the city trams were to run over the proposed bridge, a much quicker transit could be obtained by the present ferry steamers; and there was not the slightest reason why trams should not be carried across on a ferry boat to South Perth, and then continue the circuit, if need be, by the Causeway bridge to the city. When in America he had seen whole trains carried by ferries across not only rivers, but across necks of the sea.

MR. VOSPER: And across big lakes too.

THE PREMIER said he had not seen trains crossing lakes, but he had seen them crossing a neck of the sea at San Francisco, and also over the Columbia River, a quarter of a mile wide; and there was nothing to prevent a good ferry service being established for South Perth. He hoped the proposal would not go further at the present time, though the Government would be glad to supply the information which had been asked for.

MR. WILSON: When the Premier said he was against a work, it was easy to understand that the proposal was "settled" once and for all; but the House had decided that certain information should be given with respect to a proposed bridge across the

Narrows, and as money had been spent in obtaining that information, the House ought to have the benefit of it. As to whether it would be more beneficial to have a steam ferry or a bridge across the Swan River, any practical man would say a bridge by all means. Ferries were used across a river where a bridge could not be put. The Premier must have seen in his travels many beautiful bridges crossing rivers in America, and must have noticed that those structures add beauty and importance to a river. If a bridge were put across the Narrows here, it would add to the beauty of the Swan River. He did not mean such a bridge as that at North Fremantle, but a bridge such as would permit shipping to pass through, be well elevated, and be an addition to the beauty of the river. He (Mr. Wilson) hoped the Premier would give the information asked for before the session closed, because if soundings had been taken, an estimate could soon be formed as to the cost of a bridge.

THE PREMIER: What kind of bridge did the hon. member want?

MR. WILSON: Not a jarrah bridge.

THE PREMIER: A suspension bridge?

MR. WILSON: No; not a suspension bridge.

MR. VOSPER: On this question of building a bridge over the Swan River, he was inclined to agree with the Premier, because apart from the advisableness of building such a bridge, the suggested route for traffic along the river side up to the Narrows, thence across the river and round the other side to Coode street, would be too circuitous for the convenience of passengers. If a bridge were built at all, it should be from the foot of Barrack street in a direct line across the river to Coode street, and not by a long circuitous route such as had been suggested. There was a prospect that coasting steamers might come up to Perth, and any bridge across the Narrows would spoil the river for that purpose. All that was required for the convenience of traffic, in addition to the ferry steamers, was a steam punt running across from the foot of Barrack street to Coode street for heavy traffic.

MR. MORAN: Four or five of these could be seen in Brisbane.

MR. VOSPER: Yes; and in a shallow river like this, a chain punt system of

crossing might be the best. The Government might ascertain alternatively the cost of building a bridge across the Narrows, also building a bridge across from the foot of Barrack street to Coode street, and the cost of a steam punt from the foot of Barrack street to Coode street. His belief was that the cheapest and most useful scheme for many years to come would be a steam punt service.

MR. D. FORREST: If any member in this House advocated the building of a bridge across the Narrows to Mill Point, he was not representing the interests of the city of Perth, because he (Mr. D. Forrest) considered that the proposal of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) was certainly not in the interests of the city, though whatever else it might be he would not say.

MR. KINGSMILL referring to item 191, "Port Hedland Causeway Repairs, £1,000," asked for information as to this expenditure.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This was for repairing damage done to the Causeway by a hurricane.

MR. KINGSMILL asked for some assurance as to when these repairs were likely to be carried out.

THE PREMIER: The work had been done already. The hon. member had not visited his constituency lately.

MR. KINGSMILL: No; but he was continually getting complaints from constituents about this same work.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The money had been spent on the work, and this was a liability.

MR. WALLACE, referring to item 205, "Yalgoo Roads to Field's Find, £100," asked if the Minister could really spare this amount for a work that was so urgent and necessary? Knowing the state of the roads in various parts of the country, and especially about Yalgoo, after the heavy rains, he must urge that a larger sum should be voted for these roads. He noticed that in other places, such as Bunbury £1,100 for roads, more liberal grants were given.

THE PREMIER: That was a farming district. The Yalgoo roads were made already.

MR. WALLACE: Yes; but the late heavy rains necessitated extra expenditure to put the roads in a condition for traffic. He hoped that when the Minister

was distributing the general roads vote, the claim for roads at Yalgoo would be remembered.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS said he regretted that a larger amount could not be spared for the roads in question; but if the hon. member would see him later, perhaps something more might be done.

MR. DARLOT, referring to item 206, "York-Quellington Road to Burges Siding, £400," said he must protest strongly against this large sum being spent for such a small siding as that.

THE PREMIER: This was to make a road to the railway siding.

MR. DARLOT: Having travelled about that country and seen what was going on, he had never seen anything like a decent stock of produce or as many as two teams drawn up at that siding.

MR. D. FORREST: No; because they got rid of their produce before reaching there.

MR. DARLOT: There was no part of Western Australia where a road could be made more cheaply than at that spot, and this sum was an excessive amount to put down for the work. It looked like nothing but a sop to a certain member of another place.

MR. PIESSE: But he was not friendly to the Government.

MR. DARLOT: If this item were struck out, it might make that member in another place sit up, and perhaps purr. The item should be struck out, and he moved to that effect.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This necessary work would open up a large agricultural area in the neighbourhood of York.

MR. A. FORREST: The mover of the amendment had evidently passed the place in the train, and had come to the conclusion that the road was not used because he did not see all the teams at the station while the train was passing.

MR. D. FORREST: Having lived four or five years in that district and knowing that the road was required, he would support the item.

MR. PIESSE: The district of Quellington had been opened up, and a bridge erected across the river near Burges's; and this road was necessary to connect the bridge with Quellington, to transport to Burges siding the produce which at

one time went to York. The original request had been for £1,000, and it was now reduced to £400. Seven miles of road would be constructed.

MR. MONGER supported the last speaker. All who knew the district were aware that the work was necessary.

Amendment put and negatived, and the item passed.

MR. WILSON, referring to item, "Tramways on North-West Coast, maintenance, rolling-stock, etc.," asked for explanation.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The item was for additional rolling-stock, and for keeping the tramways in repair.

MR. WILSON: Who worked these tramways, and to which department was the revenue credited?

THE PREMIER: The receipts went to the general revenue. Where a jetty was used in connection with a railway, the proceeds went to the railway revenue. Where there was no railway, the receipts were credited to the Collector of Customs. Such tramways as these were farmed out. Tenders were called for and the highest bidder paid a certain rental, and he charged the public on a fixed scale.

MR. WILSON: The maintenance should be charged against the department receiving the proceeds.

THE PREMIER: The proceeds were included under "other receipts," and went to the consolidated revenue. The Works Department were responsible for the maintenance and repairs of such tramways.

MR. PIESSE: These works had nothing to do with railways. The jetties at Wyndham, Derby, Port Hedland, and other places were constructed and farmed out; and the repairs were charged in this vote.

MR. SOLOMON, referring to item "Hauling up privately-owned vessels on Fremantle Slip," asked for explanation.

THE PREMIER: The charge for hauling up was paid by the shipowners, and went to revenue; and the expenses of doing the work were charged in the Estimates. The work was not done for nothing.

MR. GREGORY, referring to item, "General Water Supply, Eastern Gold-fields, Wages of Caretakers, Yardmen, Drivers, etc., £3,500," said greater efforts

should be made to find water and provide a sufficient supply. At present wells, when found, were sometimes leased to private persons. This had been done at a place called "the Granites," where a mine manager had control of the water, to the detriment of the public. If a well were put there, it would be appreciated by the people, who would take care that it was well looked after. The Government had done a great deal in the past, but might do a great deal more, and do it more quickly, and thus make life a little more bearable in those northern districts.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The department would take into consideration what had been said, and endeavour to meet requirements.

MR. WALLACE, referring to the item "Yarradino (West Dongara) Water Supply Boring, £1,500," asked what was the necessity for this work, and what progress had been made with it.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This amount has been put down for boring, and the Government could not spend more than appeared on the Estimates.

MR. PHILLIPS: In this district was some of the best country in Western Australia, and it was comparatively waterless. It was said there were coal indications there, and if the Government were boring for both water and coal, and they found good water, that would be of great service to the district.

MR. WALLACE: Was this work necessary? He understood that water was obtainable from the river, and from springs all the year round by shallow sinking, and he questioned the wisdom of spending money in the way proposed. If however the bore was for coal, he withdrew his remarks.

THE PREMIER: In the country between the Irwin and Geraldton were rich alluvial flats; and if artesian water could be found, the value of the country would be increased a hundredfold. Water had been obtained, but was brackish, and so the bore was removed further inland where, if water could be found, the land would be increased in richness; and further, if water were found there it would be an indication that it would also be found all over that district, and possibly at Greenough as well. There were, he believed, some

indications of coal there, and what was required was a system of boring all along the coast, and it was hoped that the work would not only be carried on on the Irwin and Greenough, but as far as the Gascoyne. Already at various places on the coast boring had been tried, not however with much success; but there was no reason why the work should not be persevered in, because if water were only found all the way up to the DeGrey, the producing powers of the country would be altogether changed, and any money spent on those experiments would be justified. One settler had offered to contribute £1,000 to the Government if the experiment resulted in finding water on his runs; and anyone who had been to the Zoological Gardens, in Perth, would see there the splendid supply of water simply by natural pressure, and would feel a desire that an endeavour to find artesian water all along the coast, right away from Cape Naturaliste to the DeGrey, should be persevered in.

MR. MORAN said he was a great believer in artesian boring, but he hoped the work would be carried on with intelligence, because everyone knew that certain conditions were necessary. We must not be led away by the idea that because artesian water was obtained round about Perth, it was going to be found all up the coast of Western Australia, and his belief was that the artesian water of Perth was purely local, being supplied from the neighbouring hills.

MR. MITCHELL: If water were found in the districts where these boring experiments were being carried on, reticulation would be very easy, and it was worth while trying, otherwise we could not know whether there was water there or not. It could not be believed there was no artesian water anywhere except Perth and Guildford, and the sum of £1,500 for such a work was a mere trifle.

MR. DARLOT: There was a well-known place called Dépôt Hill, where artesian water raised itself and filled the troughs, supplying sufficient water for mobs of cattle after a long and dry stage, without making any appreciable difference on the quantity supplied by the spring; and in the Irwin district there was a spring where cabbages could be bought; also a well-known little stream in the North-West out of Roe-

bourne, which was wide enough and strong enough to crush all the quartz in the district of the member for North-East Coolgardie, if the quartz and water were got together. Then at Braeside, in the far North, there was a magnificent supply of water; and where there were these supplies; the Government should not refuse to spend the money put down on the Estimates. Artesian water had converted Queensland from a pastoral country into a vegetable-producing country, and there was no reason why the same should not be done in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN, in explanation, said he was not opposed to artesian boring on the North-West coast, as he advocated it years ago; but he was pleading for care in this matter, because money should not be expended in artesian boring without the advice of the Government Geologist. Artesian water had to be tapped, and did not run spontaneously in the form of springs, as some members seemed to think.

MR. MOORHEAD: It must be artesian in a spring, or how did the water get there?

MR. MORAN: Still, the Government Geologist should be consulted.

MR. A. FORREST: What did he know about artesian water? When the present Geologist was consulted about coal at the Collie, he said no coal would be found there.

MR. KINGSMILL: If there was one department of geology from which accurate results could be obtained, it was in reference to artesian water; and having the Dongara bore as a guide, it would enable the Government Geologist to predict with a fair approach to accuracy the probable depth at which artesian water would be struck, and the height to which it would rise, in that piece of country. As to springs, there had been springs in granite and in gold-bearing rock.

MR. DARLOT said he must correct the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) and the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) in regard to artesian water in the North-West District. With reference to the Dépôt Hill spring, to which he had referred, it was on high country backed by high country. The Mill Stream, which he had also referred to, was on high

tableland running back from Roebourne, and it was backed by high country. What was known as the "Running Water," at Braeside, was on tableland country backed by high country. These instances showed the probability of obtaining artesian water by boring in the North-West.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Works Department did seek the advice of the Government Geologist on this subject, and a report had been presented, though he (the Minister) did not know the effect of it. If the Government Geologist did recommend in his report that an artesian bore should be put down in the country referred to, hon. members might be sure that Mr. Maitland had good reason for making that recommendation. Mr. Maitland had spent many years of his life in Queensland, in a country where artesian bores were numerous; and if he advised in this case that there was a probability of artesian water being struck by boring, the advice might be relied on as being well founded.

MR. SOLOMON, referring to items under "Fremantle Water Supply, £3,470," asked whether a comprehensive scheme of water supply for the Perth and Fremantle districts was likely to be considered in the coming year.

THE PREMIER: In reply to the hon. member, it had been his intention to submit a scheme to this House having for its object the providing of a sufficient supply of water for Perth and the districts near it, and also for Fremantle. But although the Engineer-in-Chief's Department set to work on the scheme, and gave him a good deal of information in reference to it, yet the information was based on data that was not as accurate as could be desired. He (the Premier) thought it was advisable that if a scheme was to be laid before Parliament, it should be based on accurate information. Of course the construction of the work itself was not a matter in which there was any difficulty; but the difficulty was as to whether the scheme could be made self-supporting. The information he had received was to the effect that the scheme would not be self-supporting at the beginning, at any rate, and that there would be a loss. He hoped, however, that on getting more accurate information, he would be in a position to

show that a water supply could be provided for these districts, in a manner that would be self-supporting. Therefore he did not like to submit to the House a scheme which appeared to show that there would be a loss of as much as £10,000 a year, at any rate for the first; and it would be better to wait till next session, when the Government would have accurate information, and be in a position to deal with the question. He would have liked to deal with it in the present session, because he regarded the work as important and necessary, and as a beneficial one.

MR. MORAN: Where was the money to be got from?

THE PREMIER: The work would be self-supporting, and in this large area of population he believed the work could be carried out without loss to the colony. Although there had been a difficulty with the Perth Waterworks by the fact of their having cost more than they ought to have done, still all the money spent on these works and on the Fremantle Water Supply would not be lost, but these works would be utilised in the scheme he was contemplating. He anticipated that next year the Government would be able to come to this House with full reports as to this work, and he believed the scheme would meet with the approval of the House. It was better to wait a few months rather than hurry on with a scheme based on imperfect data. During the recess he intended to get full information as to the whole matter, so as to have it quite ready for members when the House met next year.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, referring to item "Land Resumption, York-Greenhills Railway, £250," asked if the end of the cost of this railway had actually been reached.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The explanation of this item was that the £250 was held in reserve to meet claims which might arise, but had not yet been made, for land resumed for the construction of the railway.

THE PREMIER: The same reserve was made last year.

MR. SOLOMON, referring to item 265, "Owen's Anchorage Magazine-Siding for Railway, £100," asked if any arrangement was being made for the removal of the explosives magazines from Owen's

Anchorage. The town of Fremantle was growing in that direction, and in a short time it was hoped there would be a considerable population settled at Owen's Anchorage.

THE PREMIER: This matter was discussed the other evening when the hon. member was not present. The Government were anxious to move these magazines, and instructions had been given that the existing magazines were not to be increased. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) had stated that the Fremantle merchants did not want the magazines removed to an island, as that would be inconvenient for storage purposes. There would have to be a magazine ship, or magazines might be constructed at Garden Island or some other island. Of course the magazines were very convenient for the merchants in the present situation.

MR. A. FORREST: The owners might shift the magazines themselves.

MR. VOSPER: The magazines might shift the owners.

THE PREMIER: The owners might get shifted themselves. This was a pressing matter, and would be dealt with. Vote put and passed.

Public Buildings, Architectural Division, £182,610 13s. 4d.:

MR. GREGORY, referring to item 57, "First-Class Supervisor (Goldfields), £225," said these supervisors had to act as architects, and to pass large contracts; yet they were paid at a rate little exceeding a miner's wage. Their travelling expenses, which were not less than 12s. a day, were also insufficient.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This year there had been a £15 increase of salary, and the travelling allowance had been raised. Next year the matter could be further considered.

MR. VOSPER: Referring to items "Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, fire protection, drainage, ventilation, etc., £100," and "Fremantle Asylum, refractory cells, £200," the Government should avoid any further liability in respect of these items till the report of the select committee now sitting had been received.

THE PREMIER: Passing the items would not necessitate expenditure this year.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: According to the Medical

Department, this expenditure was indispensable.

MR. SOLOMON: Though new buildings would have to be erected, the patients must remain where they were till further provision had been made.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: True.

MR. DARLOT: Speaking of hospitals and asylums generally, all these should be placed under one board of management, consisting of skilled medical men. The results of acting on the advice of amateurs, as at present, were highly unsatisfactory.

MR. WALLACE, referring to item "Woodman's Point, Bubonic Plague Buildings, £4,000," asked for explanation.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: At the time of the outbreak of the plague, the necessary offices, crematorium, etcetera, had to be provided; and this £4,000 represented a balance which would have to be paid the contractor.

MR. VOSPER: All medical authorities agreed that the bubonic plague, after being suppressed, frequently broke out within three years' time. For this contingency provision must be made; but it was extraordinary that all such institutions were centralised at Fremantle, and if the process continued, the name of the town should be changed to "Stinkingopolis."

MR. MORAN, referring to item "Boulder Lockup, additional cells, £300," said there was required at Boulder greatly increased accommodation, and the residents complained that Kalgoorlie was favoured to their detriment.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: Boulder requirements were being met as far as possible.

MR. GREGORY, referring to item "Weeloona (Lake Way) Lockup, quarters and stabling, £1,000," asked where was Weeloona. Though there was great necessity for lockups on the fields, this amount seemed large.

THE PREMIER: In such places it was costly to build.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: At Weeloona, the lockup was represented by a police camp, a chain, and a tree; therefore proper accommodation must be provided.

MR. KINGSMILL: At Nullagine, which was an important mining centre, there had been nothing but a tree and a chain for the last ten years, and yet it was proposed to spend £500 for police quarters at Lake View, in addition to £500 for a post office, besides pretty well absorbing half of the loan vote for building a telegraph line at the latter place.

MR. RASON: It was surprising that goldfields members should object to this item, or that anyone should plead ignorance as to the whereabouts of this place, which was a most important mining district and rapidly developing day by day. There was a considerable population here, and 30 head of stampers were at work; and he knew a contract had been let for carting 1,000 tons of machinery to the spot.

MR. DARLOT: This was one of the outside goldfields where the police had considerable trouble with the natives, and as white prisoners objected to occupy the same cell as aborigines, separate quarters had to be provided, in addition to officers' quarters and stabling. Carriage from Cue alone had never been less than £12, and in reality the item was not sufficient.

MR. MITCHELL called attention to the item "Phillips River Post Office, £500," and also the further item, "Phillips River Warden's Court, £600." This seemed a large amount to expend in a place which had not been proved.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: In view of the development in this locality, the expenditure was considered necessary. Every day roads and other conveniences were being asked for in the district.

MR. KINGSMILL: This district was known very well to him, and after an inspection by one of the most capable officers of the department, this expenditure was considered necessary in order to serve the population of 350 or 400 people who were there doing good work. In reference to the item "Additions and repairs to existing buildings, £1,800," there appeared to be an omission, because there was no provision for the erection of buildings for the Mines Department at Nullagine, where the officials were put to great inconvenience and trouble when storms arose. Had an item to meet this want been struck off the Estimates?

THE PREMIER said he did not think that was so.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS suggested that the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) had better apply to the Minister of Mines, in whose department this work lay.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No doubt accommodation was badly wanted at Nullagine, and he hoped the time was not far distant when that accommodation would be provided.

MR. ILLINGWORTH called attention to the item "Training College, Claremont, £7,000," and asked for some information.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: This work was intended as a training college for teachers in State schools. The total cost would be about £14,000, and next year there would be a further vote to complete the work.

MR. DARLOT referred to the item "Barracks Reserve Fencing, £200." He had observed a luxuriant growth in the grass in the reserve, and he would like to know how the Government were going to prevent the fence being burnt down in case of fire. If the reserve were let, as previously, for grazing purposes at a nominal fee, there would be no danger from fire.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: The department would see the fencing was properly protected.

MR. DARLOT: Simply because there had been some paltry writing in newspapers, people were not now allowed to graze a few animals in this reserve, and thus really benefit the State. The Director of Public Works had intimated that men would be employed to burn off the grass.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS: That had not been said.

MR. DARLOT: If the Ministry were not so subject to the dictation of the newspapers, they would receive more support from members on the Government side of the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH drew attention to the item "York Mechanics' Institute, £500," and asked whether York had to absorb all the votes.

THE PREMIER: York had never had any money until now.

MR. MITCHELL: What was the meaning of the item, "Disinfectors, erection, £1,000"?

Vote put and passed. This completed the votes of the Railways and Works Departments.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

LANDS DEPARTMENT (Commissioner, Hon. G. Throssell).

Vote—*Lands and Surveys*, £50,341 9s. 8d. :

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

LOAN ESTIMATES.

Message from the Administrator, with Estimates of Expenditure from Loan Funds for the financial year, now considered.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the first item, said : I have much pleasure in submitting the Loan Estimates for the current year; and I need hardly explain to hon. members that Loan Estimates are merely a programme of what the Government propose to do during the current financial year from moneys to credit of loan funds. There is no vote on these Estimates for which this House and the Parliament of the colony have not provided an authorisation. The various Loan Acts of the colony from time to time authorised the Government to raise money by loan, for specific purposes; and annually the Government submit to the Legislative Assembly the manner in which they propose to expend those loan moneys during the current year. The objects of the Loan Estimates, as far as I can see, are twofold. One of the objects is to allow this House to decide whether the salaries apportioned to the various officers to be employed are such as hon. members approve, and to give this House an opportunity of saying whether the staff employed is too large; and the second and really the more important object is to allow this House to say what works shall be carried out during the year, and at what speed—to say, in fact, whether works that have been authorised (because all these works

have been authorised by this House) shall be carried out during the current year, and whether they shall be carried out quickly or slowly. That is the general object of placing these Loan Estimates before hon. members, if I except another object; that is, to show hon. members, in what I may call the appendix to these Estimates, the unexpended balances upon every item of the loan funds that were available on the 30th June last; to show them the estimated outstanding liabilities on that date; to show the estimated expenditure for the twelve months that are current, and also to show the estimated unexpended balance that there will be on the 30th June, 1901, if we expend the amount we propose to expend. This statement or appendix shows the progress made with the expenditure for the twelve months up to the 30th June last, and the progress anticipated to be made during the twelve months now current. This information, which is to be found on pages 14 to 23 of the Estimates, is very interesting and valuable, as it gives to hon. members much knowledge that they may not have obtained from other sources. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] Last year we expended from loan funds £1,012,672. Hon. members will notice from the summary, on page 3, that last year the vote was £1,355,588, and, as I have just said, we spent £1,012,672. This year, I regret to say the estimated expenditure for the twelve months is greater, owing principally to the large expenditure now going on in connection with the Coolgardie water scheme and other works. The amount seems large; but still, I think if we raise during the year about a million of money, we shall be able to carry out all the works provided for upon these Loan Estimates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is with the cash in hand, is it not?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: That is with the balance in hand from 30th June last. Hon. members will notice under the first heading "Departmental" that we had on the 30th June, 1900, £47,075 legally available, that is authorised by the votes of this House; and of that amount we spent nearly the whole, a very small balance being available at the end of the year. The expenditure on that head last year was £42,409, and this year it is expected to

be £47,754. The reason for the increased expenditure is that the Coolgardie Water Works have been proceeded with at a more rapid rate than during the previous year, and the work of laying the pipes will be practically an addition to the works previously carried out. I shall pick out only a few of the more important items of the works enumerated in these Estimates, and if any question be asked in regard to them, I shall be glad to give any information I possess with reference thereto. One of the first works on the Schedule is the Geraldton to Murchison Goldfields Railway, for which there is £42,606 remaining of the authorisation of 1896. That we propose to expend to the extent, at any rate, of £25,000, which we think is about as much as we shall expend during the coming year upon the extension of the railway from Cue to Nannine. That railway was authorised to be constructed so long ago as 1896; but when we got to Cue, we stopped short. There were various reasons for that, which I think were all justified at the time; in fact, the necessity for expedition was never pressed very hardly upon us, even by those who represented the districts concerned, because they felt that until further developments took place it was well for the Government to be careful. Now, however, owing to the improved output at Nannine and Yalgowra, the Star of the East, Megarthella, and Peak Hill, the Government have come to the conclusion that this railway should be continued to Nannine; and with that object we propose to utilise the whole of the money available, that is £42,606. Of that sum, £25,000 will be required between this date and the 1st July next, and we propose next session to ask Parliament to vote the balance in order to carry on the line to Nannine. We do not anticipate that we shall spend more than £25,000 this year; and therefore this is a work which Parliament has in its own hands. It may be said that we intend to carry the railway to Nannine, though we have not an authorisation sufficient to carry it there; but of course we can stop whenever we like, unless we let a contract. That will be a matter the Government will have to consider—whether we shall build this railway by contract or by day labour.

We shall decide that point when the time arrives. I hope hon. members will vote for this amount. I think it is altogether desirable that they should do so. Since 1896 this district has had to wait for a railway which was then passed and approved by this House; and I think the people of the district must consider, and no doubt they do, that they have not had all they were entitled to. It is very easy to refuse to give anything to anyone; it is easier, anyway, to refuse than, having promised it, to break the promise; and that is the case with regard to the Nannine railway. The money was at one time available—much more money than is available now. The original sum voted, from various causes, dwindled down, a portion having been spent on improvements to the railway between Cue and Geraldton, rendered necessary by the floods, and £15,000 reappropriated for urgent works in the district; and the people of Nannine have looked on, and have seen this vote, which they might reasonably have expected was for the purpose of constructing their railway, gradually getting smaller. I am very glad indeed, before the amount in hand gets too small, to be able to do something really tangible, and that the Government are able to suggest to hon. members that this work be put in hand; and I therefore hope that, when the details of the Estimates are being passed, hon. members will find it consistent with what they think is just to themselves and this district to cheerfully agree to the item.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Have you any idea how far this amount will carry the line?

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER: Certainly half-way. The next items to which I wish to refer are the Boulder railway duplication and the Boulder-Brown Hill Loop Line. For these two works, one of which is a duplication and the other a new work, which has for its object to give a double line of railway from Kalgoorlie to Boulder and back by Brown Hill into Kalgoorlie, there is £50,000 available; and it is anticipated this sum will suffice. This amount will commence and complete the lines; and everyone knows the great necessity there is for these works being put in hand and completed. There is in that district a very large population, a travelling population too, continually on the move; and

they have had great disabilities during the last year or two in the matter of travelling facilities, which disabilities this £50,000 will remove. It will place this short railway, which is so much used, upon a satisfactory footing. Then we come to the Menzies to Leonora railway, for which there is £52,268 available, of which we propose to spend during this year £35,000. This will complete the survey, and the first 30 miles of the construction will be in progress. I have no doubt by the time we meet next year we shall have this line completed, at any rate as far as Niagara, which will be a great convenience to the Mount Margaret goldfield, and will also tap the Niagara reservoir, which we hope will be filled at that time; and, if so, the reservoir will give a supply of water, not only to the railway itself, but also to Menzies and other places, for railway if not for other purposes. The construction of this railway was approved last year, the survey has been made, the special Act passed, the rails ordered, the tender for the sleepers let, and the sleepers are now being stacked at Menzies; so that there is nothing required but the passing of this vote to permit of the railway being put in hand. Honourable members have heard a great deal about the importance of the Mount Margaret goldfield, now our second gold-producer; and I need not say much more, except to commend most strongly the vote to favourable consideration. For the Northam-Goomalling railway £35,473 is authorised, and it is proposed to spend the whole amount this year, with the result that the construction work will be completed. This line will give railway facilities to a largely producing community, this being an agricultural railway pure and simple. As I have often said in the House, if this railway will not pay, then it is of no use our thinking any agricultural railway will pay, seeing that the line has some of the very best land on both sides.

MR. MORAN : Surely you do not expect this line to pay ?

THE PREMIER : Yes ; I do. In fact I would draw the line in regard to railways at present, and say that if railways will not pay, I do not think we ought to construct them. My idea is that a railway should pay, and if this line will not pay, that will be a good argument against

the construction of only agricultural lines. Of course, it may be said that this area is not perhaps so capable of supporting a large population as are other parts of the colony ; and this no doubt is a wheat and hay growing country, and not a country where there are streams of water and where gardens can be cultivated to the same extent as elsewhere. Still, this is excellent land, and if this line will not pay, that, as I say, will be a very good argument in the hands of those who oppose agricultural railways. The next item is that of additions and improvements to open lines. For this work £98,112 is authorised, and we propose to spend the whole. The works to be completed are those in hand, and are works which are properly chargeable against loan funds, and ought not to be confounded or confused with works carried out as maintenance and chargeable against current revenue. A good deal has been said about this vote, but I think the more we scrutinise it the more we will find there are a great many works to be done on the railways after lines are out of the hands of the contractors. There are always new stations, new crossings, and a thousand and one things required on the railway system of the colony ; and of course if these were charged against current revenue, it would be just as unfair to do that as it would be to charge the railways themselves against current revenue. The next item is that of the Railway Workshops, for which £37,903 is available, of which sum the Government propose to spend £35,000. We intend to procure additional machinery, and to commence buildings in which to accommodate that machinery.

A MEMBER : Where do the Government intend to build the workshops ?

THE PREMIER : At Midland Junction. I do not know why the hon. member asks that question, seeing the House has decided the workshops shall be built at that place.

A MEMBER : That was very foolish of the House.

THE PREMIER : The next item is that of rails and fastenings, for which work there is available £164,242, of which it is proposed to expend £150,000 during the coming year. For rolling-stock there is authorised £165,269, and

it is thought that no more than £60,000 will actually be paid during the current year in obtaining additional stock. That may seem a small amount, but I have looked into the matter, and I am assured by the Railway Department that for rolling-stock under order, no more will come in for payment before the 30th June. However, we must see what is necessary, and I hope we will be able to overdraw that, and that our balance at the end will not be so great as shown. The next item is that of the Fremantle Harbour Works, for which £168,803 has been authorised, and we propose to spend £150,000 during the current year, leaving £18,803 as a balance on the 30th June. We propose to spend that £150,000 in the completion of the entrance channel into Gage Roads.

MR. MORAN: As to that rolling-stock vote?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member can speak on that when he addresses the Committee.

MR. MORAN: I wish to ask for information.

THE PREMIER: I cannot go back very well. It is proposed to expend this money in the completion of the dredging of the inner harbour 1,400 feet wide and 30 feet deep for a length of 2,080 feet, thence eastward 800 feet wide and 25 feet deep for a length of 810 feet. We intend to complete the entrance channel into Gage Roads, and to widen it, cutting off what is called "the corner," and making it wider than 450ft., which is the usual width at this spot, and also to widen the approach to the inner harbour from the entrance channel, and to extend the North Mole 1,100 feet. The harbour works, I am glad to say, are nearing completion; and a good deal more money will have to be spent if we desire to improve the harbour, and make it better than the original design by widening it in some parts. If the widening were in the sand it might be an easy matter; but widening the rock entrance is not so easy; but from what we are doing, I think there will be great change by the end of the present financial year, when a great many more facilities for shipping will be available than there are now. Of course, there are also the sheds which were provided for last year, and on this work £25,000 is to be spent; thus giving great

facilities along the wharves, especially for intercolonial shipping.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is there any provision for cranes?

THE PREMIER: I do not think there is any provision except for the travelling cranes which are available now. We do not propose to have the large hydraulic cranes which were recommended at one time, because shipping people seem to prefer their own tackle to a large extent, using the travelling cranes available now, for very heavy work.

MR. WILSON: Are all the sheds included in this amount?

THE PREMIER: The sheds are included in the amount of £150,000, but I do not know that is all the work that will be possible during the present financial year. Then we come to the Bunbury Harbour Works, for which there is £35,360 available, and of this amount it is intended to expend £20,202 in the extension of the jetty by 400ft. and the removal of intruding rocks, and in dredging sand accumulations. I regret to say there is a sand-travel at Bunbury, which seems to be somewhat dangerous, and is accumulating at a good rate. Our Engineer-in-Chief, however, does not despair, but seems to think that although this sand-travel may prove expensive and troublesome, it will not take the dredge very long to remove it. He intends to take the opportunity, when a dredge is available, to experiment and see how long it will take to remove this sand; but I do not think that if this be dealt with annually, it will be found to be a very serious obstacle, though it is a very troublesome matter we did not bargain for.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will it not be a continuous trouble?

THE PREMIER: I believe it will probably be a continuous trouble, but we have spent scarcely any money during the year, because the Engineer-in-Chief wished to find out exactly the extent of the sand accumulation. During the year the stone causeway and new viaduct have been completed, and the widening and renewing of the old head jetty has also been completed, so that the present jetty and appliances are now quite satisfactory. All we want to do now is to extend the jetty some 400 feet, and when some small rocks have been removed, and the sand has been

got rid of, the harbour at Bunbury will carry out the object for which it was intended. There are some small works at Carnarvon which we propose to carry out; indeed, these works are nearly finished. There has been completed a tramway from the jetty to the town at a cost of something like £6,000, out of £6,179 available; and it is proposed to erect a stock jetty and approaches at Point Sampson, near Cossack, for which £12,000 has been authorised; and it is expected we will spend £5,000 during the year in prospecting for water supply and in commencing the construction of the jetty. This is a want which has been felt for a long time, and the work ought to have been undertaken many years ago, the reason why it was not undertaken being that the people could not make up their minds what they required. However, necessity has made them come together, and now there is one general opinion that the best means of shipment for sheep and cattle, for which the district is one of the very best in the colony, will be found at this jetty at Point Sampson. I am very glad the House has approved of the expenditure, and the work will be put in hand at once. We propose to spend £18,264 on light-houses, out of £28,264 authorised. We propose to erect a new lighthouse at Breaksea, which will not be very expensive because the tower is not high; and we propose to put a better light at Bunbury, and build a good leading light at Woodman's Point, near Fremantle; and we have already ordered the light for light-houses at Cape Naturaliste and at the ends of the two moles at Fremantle. When the light is erected at Woodman's Point, and two lights are provided at the moles, Fremantle can be approached at any time in the night quite as well if not better than in the day time. There will be no chance of getting out of the right course, and if a ship does get off the course, the light on Woodman's Point will show danger on either side. It is very necessary this light should be erected, because we now have the ocean mail boats calling regularly. We are not as we used to be: we have the P. and O., Orient, and German mail steamers, together with very many large steamers of the intercolonial trade, now using the port; and it is necessary to have our coast lighted, and especially do we require a light at Cape Naturaliste.

MR. D. FORREST: Give us a light at Ashburton Island.

THE PREMIER: There is not much shipping there yet. The great item in expenditure of loan funds this year is in connection with the Coolgardie Water Supply. Last year we spent £454,091, and this year we intend to spend £850,000. This is a very large amount, certainly, but seeing the very rapid progress made in the construction of the pipes, we will, I think, require nearly all the money. The amount we had available on the 30th June was £1,327,012, and £461,000 of that was reappropriated.

MR. MORAN: Are the pipes laid right through?

THE PREMIER: Not right through, but I will refer to that in a moment. We have expended £686,252, and we propose to expend £850,000 this year, so that on the 30th June we will have a balance of authorised expenditure of £477,012. If we spend £2,500,000 on the work, we will, of course, have to appropriate the £461,000 we took from the vote. It is proposed during the year to about complete the Helena reservoir, and proceed with constructing minor reservoirs and tanks at pumping stations in progress, and to excavate about three-fourths of the pipe-trench, also construct bridges, culverts, over-shoots, under-shoots and so on. One quarter of the mains will be laid and jointed, and the trench refilled. That will show the position we will be in: that one-fourth of the length, about 100 miles roughly, will be ready, and if the pumps are then ready we will be able to pump water through the pipes 100 miles. The contract for the pipes will be nearly completed by that time, and if the present output in pipe-making is maintained by the contractors, nearly the whole of the pipes required between the weir site and Coolgardie will be constructed and delivered along the railway line. The pumping stations and engineers' quarters will be in progress: the first consignment of pipes will be here by the end of the year; the telephone line will be erected between the weir and the pumping stations; and the surveying of the pipe-line will be made between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. This great work is nearing completion, and the whole of the difficulties, or nearly all, have been overcome. I hope we will be able to take

a view of the works a few days hence and see the progress that has been made, and hon. members will then be better able to realise the prospect of this work being nearly completed by the end of the current financial year. The pipes are not all made, but all are in a fair way of being made; the system of jointing has been arranged satisfactorily by the Engineer-in-Chief; the contract for the pumping machinery has been let to one of the best firms in the world engaged in that kind of work; and all the difficulties have been overcome. The whole of the project has been financed, so that we can find the money. All those members and others who have had any doubt as to the colony being able to carry out this great work to completion may be assured there is nothing now in the way that cannot be overcome, and overcome easily, in order to deliver the 5,000,000 gallons of water into Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie; and those members of this House who are here another year or so will have the satisfaction of seeing this great work accomplished, and a water supply provided for those great inland towns. There is a sum of £5,000 provided in the Loan Estimates for the development of goldfields in the Murchison and Peak Hill districts, by the construction of wells and boring; a sum of £2,091 is provided for the Pilbarra goldfields, and £1,643 for works in other goldfields, including boring for coal and miscellaneous purposes. A sum of £20,000 is provided for development work generally on goldfields; and £20,000 is provided for the erection of additional public batteries, which include the erection of batteries at Meekatharra, Donnybrook, Greenbushes (for tin), and an additional 10-head for Mulline, making 20-head there in all; also completion of batteries at Niagara, Payneville, and Widgemooltha; a cyanide plant is provided for Mulline; also 10-head heavy stamps for Norseman; a Fouché condenser, new boiler, and cyanide plant for Lennonville; and the erection of batteries in four other districts is under consideration. There was a sum of £31,910, unexpended balance of authorisation on 30th June, and we expect to spend at least £30,000 during the current year. It is also proposed to spend £8,000 for the development of agriculture, for which £29,000 is

available altogether. My friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Throssell) proposes, I see, to drain and clear some agricultural land. I am glad to see this experiment is to be made, for although we have done nothing of this kind during the last ten years, I have frequently expressed my opinion that there is nothing on which we can spend money more advantageously to the country than in clearing the land ready for cultivation. Of course there are difficulties in a work of this kind, but the difficulties are less or they appear less than they used to be, because we know that some kinds of land which were thought not to be good for cultivation are now found to be very good. Some persons were always wishing to get 40 acres or 100 acres of land in one block that was all good; but we now know from recent experience that there is plenty of land which we all despised some years ago, such as salmon-gum forest, that is now found not only good enough for cultivation, but it really gives better returns, owing to the clay subsoil, than the richer lands do. Therefore it is not so difficult for us now to be satisfied with an area of land which contains some portion of the kind of land formerly regarded as worthless. Most of us must have been surprised at the crops obtained from land we formerly thought to be somewhat inferior, if not useless, for cultivation. This large piece of land which my friend the Commissioner proposes to clear is Crown land; and what better can we do with it than to clear it cheaply, as we shall be able to do by letting it for clearing in large quantities, and allowing persons to bring modern appliances to deal with the timber, not only by felling, but also by using it up and making it marketable. If we would only make an experiment on a small scale in regard to clearing the land—make it anywhere you like, either through persons who occupy Crown lands, or by persons who will clear it under contract for occupation—if you will make an experiment in clearing this land by any method that does not give the money away—

MR. VOSPER: Are you going to do it on private lands?

THE PREMIER: No; my idea is to clear public land and then let it on the deferred payment system, with an amount added that will be sufficient not only to

pay interest, but sinking fund for repaying the capital. The system we have in force in regard to the Agricultural Bank is exactly the system I would bring into operation in regard to clearing land. The same principle will be found in the Drainage Bill which I hope to introduce in this House to-morrow, by which we propose to obtain a return sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund for repaying the principal. We do not want to give away anything except the land—we do not want to give away public money, and especially loan money; but we want to expend the money in such a way as will produce a return sufficient to pay interest on the outlay, and provide sinking fund for repaying the capital. I am certain there is nothing we can do that will be more beneficial to the country, and this plan can be worked in a simple manner. Supposing you had 20,000 acres around the town of York, for instance, and it was cleared and under cultivation: it would transform the whole place, and there would then be little talk about our not being able to produce sufficient for supplying the wants of the population of the colony. We have all the appliances now for being self-supporting; we have the Agricultural Bank, we have the Land Purchase Act, we will soon, I hope, have the Drainage Bill passed, we have this vote in the Loan Estimates now, and all on the one principle that those who are benefited by the expenditure must pay the cost.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They had an irrigation scheme in Victoria, on the same plan.

THE PREMIER: Because they failed in Victoria, that is no reason why we should fail here, but rather is a reason why the experience of Victoria should be a lesson to us. We have been experimenting a little, but not sufficiently. We have not lent money to anyone for the purpose of paying off a mortgage to a bank, and then mortgaging the property to the State instead of mortgaging it to individuals. We have said: "We will lend you money for making improvements that will increase the value of the land to the country."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are talking of rating the land. They could not get the irrigation rate in Victoria.

THE PREMIER: I do not know what my friend the Commissioner has in view;

but if he carries out this system of draining and clearing on the principles I have laid down, I believe the experiment will be a great good to this country. These are all the items that are included in this year's Estimates of Loan Expenditure, I propose to refer to at present; but I shall be glad to give any other information I can, when dealing with the items. There is not much in this matter, because hon. members know all about it already. Members know that all these moneys have been authorised by this House already; that the money has been provided, and, as I said, the only object of placing these items before hon. members is in order that they may approve of the salaries which are to be paid under these Estimates, and may approve of the number of persons to be employed and the rate of speed at which the works are to be carried out. The Estimates give information in detail as to every item in regard to what has been expended and what is proposed to be expended. I beg to move the first item in the Estimates.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I move that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

GOLDFIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 4—Area of land that may be leased:

MR. ILLINGWORTH: On the second reading he had called attention to the area which was proposed to be granted under this homestead system on the goldfields, and he need not now repeat what he had then said. The area proposed in the Bill was altogether a mistake. He therefore moved that in line 6 the word "five" be struck out, and "one" inserted in lieu thereof, to read "one hundred acres" instead of five hundred. Considering that a number of persons might take up these areas, he thought that one hundred acres to each applicant was a sufficient maximum.

MR. WALLACE: While holding the same opinion as the hon. member with regard to granting land on goldfields for homestead purposes, he was aware that a great portion of this Bill was taken

from the Queensland Mining Act, with a considerable extension of the maximum area to be allowed to each applicant. Even with this extension, he thought this Bill was sufficiently safeguarded. The Bill had been brought in to meet the wish of many persons on the goldfields in places which had to a great extent "given out" as mining fields, and where there were patches which some persons thought would be good for cultivating hay and other produce to be sold on the adjacent goldfields. A person taking up this land would be surrounded by so many restrictions in favour of the miner, that he would be a bold man who took up an area under these conditions. This Bill had been asked for, and it provided for such close inspection in order to ascertain whether the land was auriferous, that he thought there was no great danger in it; for if the land was auriferous or likely to prove payable, the warden would not be likely to grant the application for using it under the homestead conditions.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It would not be granted by the warden, but might be recommended by him.

MR. WALLACE: Yes; that was what he understood. Any person might object to the granting of such lease; and the warden, if he upheld such objection, would not make a recommendation to the Minister; therefore the areas in the clause should not be altered.

MR. KINGSMILL: Evidently the amendment sought to protect land from being locked up against mining. Although free entry to homestead leases was supposed to be given, yet by Clause 23 compensation for damages about to be done on the land must be deposited with the warden before the miner could prospect or work.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That proviso was enough to deter spoilers.

MR. KINGSMILL: Five hundred-acre leases practically held as private property would entail great difficulties to prospectors. Let this clause stand, and amend Clause 23 so as make compensation payable in respect of leases of only 100 acres or thereabout.

MR. MORAN: Then the 500-acre lessee would get no compensation?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Such lessee had grazing rights only.

MR. KINGSMILL: And he took up the lease knowing the conditions, and therefore was not likely to make many improvements; for it was only on the smaller blocks that intense culture would be attempted.

MR. MITCHELL: Better retain the 500-acre lease, and, as in the old country, let the Crown grant only the surface of the land, and retain all rights to minerals. It was a farce to say that anyone would use a 100-acre block as a farm.

MR. VOSPER: The principle of granting such leases was questionable. On the goldfields, the country was mostly arid and unfertile. To what use other than for stock could such areas be put?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They could be used for "dummying."

MR. VOSPER: True, or for poultry farms; but other uses were not obvious. By Clause 23, the miner before entering on such a lease might be compelled by deposit to cover possible damage. To the ordinary prospector such deposit was prohibitive. For fertile land such leases were reasonable, but on the goldfields, why penalise prospectors? The clause could do no good, and might do much harm, for it would reintroduce the pernicious dual title. A man would take a homestead lease, and a miner could enter on paying compensation. If so, why not allow the alluvial digger to enter on a gold-mining lease on similar terms, as the principle was the same? Not more than 10 per cent. of prospectors would be willing to deposit from £5 to £20 prior to sinking a trial shaft. As a further amendment, he moved that the clause be struck out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That amendment would end the Bill, as the clause involved the whole question. On the fields, people desired some security of tenure for garden areas.

MR. VOSPER: There were garden areas.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But no secure tenure, such allotments being held for one year only.

MR. KINGSMILL: At 5s. per acre.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was a vital difference between granting 20 acres for a market garden, and 100 or 500 acres for pastoral purposes. By the clause, a man could pick out a 500-acre lease of country which he knew to contain a reef. True, the warden could

refuse such application, but the warden was not always alive to the facts, which might escape his attention. To surround a goldfield with 500-acre homestead leases would drive out of the district the ordinary prospector and alluvial miner.

MR. VOSPER: And also the residence-area man.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Was it desirable that such tracts of country should be locked up for the purpose, say, of herding cattle? Twenty-acre market gardens were different. On the Murchison, Townsend took up a run on which were subsequently pegged out three of the principal gold centres. History might repeat itself.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That was long before gold was found.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Granted; but another goldfield had just been found on Townsend's run, 19 miles from Cue. For 500-acre leases there was no necessity, 20-acre homestead blocks being sufficient. Try the 20-acre homestead lease principle as an experiment.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If the amendment to strike out the clause were carried, the whole Bill might as well be struck out. Why did not the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) move on the second reading that it be read this day six months? The hon. member was never happy unless exaggerating. He compared the position of the homestead lessee and the prospector with that of a gold-mining lessee and an alluvial miner. These cases were not at all analogous. A gold-mining lease gave the lessee the title to all the gold, and another party had had at one time a right to come in and take the alluvial gold. But this Bill gave a title to occupy land for pastoral or grazing purposes only, without any mineral rights; and miners were privileged to take up claims on these leases under the Goldfields Act. It was the same with all freehold grants throughout the colony: the gold was reserved by the Crown; and the hon. member's argument might be used with equal cogency against the Mining or Private Property Act. The Government desired to satisfy the demands of the goldfields people for grazing and pastoral areas.

MR. VOSPER: What people?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: As there was little land on the goldfields

suitable for such purposes, few would be likely to take up such leases; therefore there was little probability of their clashing with mining; and if persons desired 100 or 500-acre blocks for pastoral purposes, why not let people have them? There was a general wish on the fields that the Commissioner of Lands should not deal with goldfields land for pastoral purposes. At present, the Commissioner had power to grant blocks of not less than 2,000 acres for such purposes, but the public considered such lands should be administered through the Mines Department. The hon. member (Mr. Vosper) might think he was conversant with public opinion on the fields, but he (the Minister) had received many complaints as to difficulties in obtaining land for such purposes. Considering the immense extent of the goldfields areas, there was little likelihood of these leases interfering with mining, especially in view of the many safeguards by which the proviso was surrounded. It had been said by one hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) that someone might lease under this clause an area known to contain a reef, and "dummy" the same. Even if he did do such a thing, someone could enter on the land the next day and take up the reef, and there would be no compensation unless the lessee had put up buildings, sunk wells, or erected fences. The land must be left open to the miner. Some members seemed to say that if there were fences, no one would like to enter on the land; but his experience of human nature was that if there were a fence, people were more likely to go. There was an enormous extent of country which did not carry gold, and it was that land which it was proposed to bring under the Bill, and the application was safeguarded in every possible way. It was said the intention was to grant a lot of auriferous country. During the last two years he had not known one instance of alluvial ground being granted within a gold-mining lease. That had been prevented by careful administration. It was much more easy to distinguish land which was not auriferous at all from land which was auriferous, than it was to distinguish ground which was auriferous as regards alluvial, from reefing ground. The department might well be trusted to look after a matter of this kind, and the Bill should be given a

fair trial, because, if the measure did not work well, it could very soon be altered: and if there were only a few people who desired to take up land for this purpose, the Bill ought to be passed into law. The number of such people was small, and therefore not much harm could be done; but 500 acres were not too much to grant in parts of the country where it took a large area to feed one animal. The Southern Cross people were delighted at the Bill being introduced; indeed, some people there thought that under the Bill, the Southern Cross district would cut out the eastern districts in growing corn. That ideal might not be realised, but still, with such seasons as we had just experienced, there was no doubt the people there could grow corn.

MR. MORAN: This session was started with the unanimous idea that Parliament had come together for certain limited and specific purposes; and he was not in favour of introducing this new principle on such a large scale on the eve of a general election, after which the goldfields would be able to speak with double the voice they now possessed. It would be wiser for the Minister to hold his hand until there was a stronger appeal from the goldfields, and that appeal would come through new gold-mining members in six months' time. This question had been before the House, and had been brought prominently before the country, and must be a topic of discussion at the general election. There was a good deal to be said on behalf of those who were opposed to the granting of these leases. In the earlier stages of his political life he had been an advocate of these pastoral leases, but the idea of a dual title did not commend itself to him. There was no dual title proposed in the Bill, yet all the evils of a dual title would be present. The Committee were dealing with a Bill which was intended to apply to goldfields of an absolutely dissimilar character; because the Northern goldfields were in the midst of pastoral country of the best, whilst Kalgoorlie was in pastoral country of the worst kind, if indeed it could be called pastoral country at all. If a lease were granted of 100 acres or 500 acres, proprietary rights were conferred, so that the holder resented anyone entering on the land, and it was repugnant to the ideas of the

prospector to have a fence to go through. What could a man do with 100 or 500 acres round about Kalgoorlie, although it was to be admitted there had been a good season? It was from Kalgoorlie that the principal agitation came in favour of the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No.

MR. MORAN: The agitation came from a small, pertinacious section. There seemed a desire to take up frontages along the railway line, and he did not know whether that desire arose purely from enthusiasm for pastoral pursuits. If these leases were granted, there would in time be requests for the fee simple of portions of the land, possibly on which to erect hotels. There had been only one real case of dispute as between the alluvial miners and the reefers, and that was in the case of the Ivanhoe Venture Gold Mine, which only went to show that that which might be expected to happen was the impossible, on goldfields of this description. No doubt if the Government had known they were bringing this trouble on themselves, they would not have granted that lease; and it was better, in regard to the present Bill, to wait until there came some decisive voice from the goldfields. The people on the goldfields should be content with their 20-acres garden allotments for the present; and even those areas should be granted very sparingly. The popular voice—if the newspapers were the popular voice—and the representatives of the big workers' associations, were against this legislation; and for all these reasons hon. members ought to hesitate before passing the Bill.

MR. VOSPER indorsed every word said by the hon. member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran). There had been practically no popular demand for the Bill, though some of the provisions had been sought for by a few persons anxious to take up land in centres of population, in districts like North Coolgardie, where land was somewhat better than in Coolgardie, and where it was possible to get fresh water. That only illustrated the objection that in dealing with matters of the kind, different legislation and rules were required for different districts. He would be glad to move that all the words after "boundary" in Clause 4 be struck out; but to strike out the whole of the clause would be the

better plan. There was great anxiety on behalf of certain persons at Kalgoorlie to take up land on the railway lines, and these persons had keen commercial instincts, and would not take up land without some prospect of profit.

MR. KINGSMILL: They were waiting for the Coolgardie Water Scheme.

MR. VOSPER: For irrigation purposes?

MR. KINGSMILL: Yes.

MR. VOSPER: If that were so, then these people had not the commercial instincts he gave them credit for. In all great goldfields towns there was a continual and increasing demand for residential areas, which were spreading in all directions in Kalgoorlie, even as far as two miles from the Post Office. Supposing some individual about two miles from a town pegged out 20 acres and obtained it as a homestead lease, he might be a block to the spreading of the town. There was no power in the Bill to interfere with the transfer or subletting of the land, and such a person, becoming a land owner, could make his own conditions, free from all restraints at present imposed by the Government. If a leaseholder were to sublet one of these homestead leases, and if he also held a business license, he might become a landlord on a large scale. Therefore we should exercise great caution, for in regard to what were called "garden areas" it was well known that when the town of Esperance was expected to become the centre of a large population, there was a great demand for "garden areas" wherever people could take up land for miles around. The Government sold one townsite; Mr. Dempster, the owner of a great area of country, sold another townsite; then came the Esperance Bay Company, who sold a third townsite. After them came a number of Perth speculators, who took up every available piece of land within some miles of Esperance for what were called "garden areas"; and there those areas remained to this day, without having a spade put into them. Hundreds of acres were taken up in that way near to Esperance. Even on a place known as Dempster Hill, a great mass of granite, there were pegs visible at one time, showing that this stony area had been pegged out as "garden areas."

THE PREMIER: They ought not to have been passed.

MR. VOSPER: The only object of taking up land in that way was to blackmail the people who were expected to come there and use the land for settlement; and if that town had grown to a great size, as was at one time expected, there would have been a most serious disturbance arising from the evils which must result from this blackmailing system. Yet here was a Bill whereby a man might take up 20 acres within two miles of any townsite, say in the suburbs of Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, or other mining centres, and might carry on the same kind of operation as was attempted at Esperance. A holder of one of these areas might cut up the land and lay out his townsite, and the result would be that there would be landlordism upon the goldfields on a colossal scale. The Minister had made out a good defence for the Bill, but the defence was specious. The hon. gentleman said it would be safe to pass the Bill because those who took up the land would have no right or title to the gold which might be found in it. But though reefs might not be visible on the surface, yet on one of these leasehold areas an alluvial patch might be struck at any time, and then there would be a great rush of alluvial diggers. What then? The leaseholder could blackmail those alluvial diggers, for Clause 23 enabled him to claim not only for damage which had resulted, but for damage which was likely to be done to the land; and if the lessee demanded compensation from a number of alluvial diggers, he might summon them before the warden, who might put off the case for two or three weeks, and when it was heard and a penalty was imposed on those men, whether the amount was large or small, it would have a deterrent effect, because men who went to search for alluvial did so because they were hard up, and such men could not afford to pay any penalty.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The whole of the goldfields were not going to be let as homestead leases.

MR. VOSPER: The large areas that were available would be taken near Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and other populous places with a view to blackmailing people who might want to use the land.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We could hedge round these leases with any restrictions or conditions that might be deemed desirable.

MR. VOSPER: Not even the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Throssell), with all his experience in dealing with "dummying," had yet succeeded in preventing dummying from being carried out; and the Minister of Mines, who had not had the same experience in that kind of thing, would find himself completely beaten by astute men on the goldfields who would take up land under this Bill. Any conditions which the Minister might lay down, short of actual prohibition, would prove failures, and of course prohibition would be useless. Therefore he (Mr. Vosper) appealed to the Minister and appealed to the House not to hand over these large areas of land to speculators on the goldfields. If they did so, there would soon be a loud voice heard calling for the rescision of this Bill. It would be best to excise the clause under discussion, and let the Minister bring up this matter for consideration by the next Parliament.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If the constituents represented by the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) were so anxious that land on the goldfields should not be proclaimed as areas under the homestead leasing system, they had only to place the matter before the Government, and the leases would not be granted on any of those goldfields or on any of those areas to which these persons objected. No homestead leases could be granted in any area until proclaimed an area in which homestead leases might be granted. If the people at Kalgoorlie, at Coolgardie, at Kanowna, or elsewhere did not wish this Bill to apply to their particular district, they had only to represent the matter to the Government. He did not want to thrust this Bill upon them. If people on the goldfields were so anxious they should not have these homestead leases, they had only to place the matter before the Government, and no leases would be granted there. It was said 20 acres could be taken up and used for business purposes near a town. But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that no land could be taken for this purpose nearer than two miles from a townsite, and two miles from the

boundary was the nearest point at which a commencement could be made in taking up land for this purpose. No person would be likely to take up land for business purposes at so great a distance from a town. Certainly no person would take up land for any ordinary business, and probably no one would take up land at such a distance even for erecting a public-house on it.

MR. MORAN: Would they not? He would like to have a chance.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: A leaseholder could not take up one of these areas and hold it without making use of it, because it was a condition that he must fence and improve the land; therefore some use would have to be made of the land. Some members had said the time had not arrived when this system should be adopted; but he (the Minister) knew that in many parts of the goldfields the people hailed this measure with great satisfaction. People at Kalgoorlie might not hail it with delight, because it did not affect Kalgoorlie; but people outside the towns were desirous of having the privilege which this Bill offered. The difficulties suggested by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) did not really exist.

MR. KINGSMILL: The remarks of the member for North-East Coolgardie had shown at least that some constituents he represented should not have this Bill placed in their hands as a weapon to be used in the manner indicated by the hon. member. But there were other people, and there were other goldfields in this colony where this Bill would be enthusiastically welcomed; and by Clause 28 no doubt the Minister would be prepared to exclude any constituencies from the operation of this Bill. Why spoil the whole Bill? The main difficulty was not in Clause 4, but in Clause 23. Once destroy the principle of deposit in respect of compensation, and all objection was removed.

MR. MONGER asked whether he would be in order in moving a new clause.

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. MONGER: Though he had not read the Bill through, he noticed in it certain weaknesses requiring attention. As the measure would repeal Sections 7,

13, and 46 of the principal Act, and would substitute for Section 20 absolutely new clauses, some clear explanation of the intentions of the Government should be given. The Bill as drafted could not readily be apprehended, the references being insufficient. At the close of a session this intricate Bill, the bringing in of which was not contemplated at the commencement, should not be rushed through.

MR. DARLOT: Was the hon. member in order in wasting time over a Bill which he admitted he had not read?

MR. MONGER: The hon. member's constituents were to be congratulated on returning such an intelligent representative. Better withdraw or greatly modify the Bill, seeing we were on the eve of a general election.

MR. GREGORY: The amendment to strike out the clause should be withdrawn, so as to consider at once the proper areas of homestead leases. Apart from this clause, there were many good points in the Bill; therefore pass the clause, and make the requisite amendments in Clause 23. Care must be exercised in granting homestead leases of well-timbered country; and before leases were granted there should be reports from the Water Supply Department. It should be remembered the Government could, after six months, resume these areas, unless certain improvements had been effected. From Leonora up to the Diorite King much land had been taken up on pastoral lease, and many cattle sent down south; wells had been sunk, with fairly good results. There should, therefore, be little objection to the clause.

MR. WALLACE: A compromise could be arrived at by exempting the constituencies of the members for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) and East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) from the operation of the clause. Those hon. members seemed to think there would be, on the passage of the Bill, a rush for all land available on lease. The same fallacious argument had been used regarding the Sluicing and Dredging Bill. At Yalgoo there were large tracts of land not auriferous, which could be utilised for grazing, and which, owing to the average rainfall having improved, might supply the local demand for hay and chaff.

MR. MITCHELL: If these lands were worth having, they would be taken up to be used, and their use would be to the advantage of the whole community.

MR. VOSPER withdrew his amendment, and substituted the following "That all the words after 'say,' in line of paragraph 1, be struck out and the following inserted: 'Beyond two miles from the next boundary of any townsite or suburban area, 20 acres; beyond 5 miles from such boundary, 100 acres; and the aggregate area applied for by any one person within the same goldfield shall not exceed 100 acres.'"

MR. MORAN: Even if the amendments of the member for North-East Coolgardie were adopted, the objection would remain. Two miles from Boulder was Lakeside, right on the line of reef and at Mount Robinson, just two miles away, there was supposed to be another payable line of reef. Wire fences were just as objectionable to the prospectors within five miles of the town, as within two miles; and one would like to see the remainder of the Bill passed, because the measure was a valuable one. There was the question of business areas which was also a crying evil, and there was also the point as to gold-buying licenses. All the latter clauses might be passed with a view to recommitting the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Modify Clause 4, and let the Bill go.

MR. MORAN: The only modification he felt like supporting was that the Eastern goldfields should be excluded from the operation of the Bill; but the best alternative would be to postpone the measure until the goldfields people had had an opportunity of expressing their opinion at the general election.

MR. DARLOT: This clause opened the door to a dual title, and he hoped it would not be passed; but such a Bill as this was required, and he would like to see it go through.

Amendment (Mr. Vosper's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	7
Noes	13
Majority against ...			
			6

AYES.

Mr. Darlot
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Locke
Mr. Moran
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Monger (Teller).

NOES.

Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. D. Forrest
Mr. Hubble
Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Pennsfather
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Wood
Mr. Rason (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

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

MR. MONGER moved that progress be reported.

Put and negatived.

MR. MORAN desired to reiterate that the goldfield he represented should be exempt from the Bill until after the general election, and he thought that was the wish of his constituents.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Bill would not be applied to the district the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) represented, unless a wish was expressed by the district to that effect.

MR. VOSPER: Who would express the wish?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So far as five hundred acres was concerned, the provision ought not to apply to his district, where they wanted 20 acres.

MR. VOSPER moved that the following be added to the clause.

Nothing in this section shall apply to the goldfields of East Coolgardie or North-East Coolgardie for at least 12 months after the passing of the Act.

MR. MORAN: The amendment was desirable, and it would be better this provision should be put in the Bill rather than have to depend on the word of a Minister, though he was willing to take the word of the Minister of Mines.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It would be better to leave this matter open, so that any constituency desiring the privilege provided in the Bill might have the measure applied to that district. Neither this nor any other Government would be likely to thrust this provision on a district against the wish of the people there. The amendment was not desirable.

THE PREMIER: A serious question arose. It had been the desire of Parliament to protect the pastoral lessee in outlying places, and no alienation was allowed during the term of the lease

except for proclaiming townsites and for mining purposes. If this Bill would operate to the extent of interfering with a pastoral lease, that point should be carefully considered; and although he did not think it could be done without special legislation, still it would be better for the Minister of Mines to consider the point carefully.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: A pastoral lease would not be alienated under this Bill.

THE PREMIER: "Alienation" was a term of wide meaning.

MR. WALLACE: With regard to the Premier's argument about not interfering with the pastoral industry, there was an area of 1,700,000 acres of land in the Yalgoo district on which some 20,000 sheep were grazed; and seeing there was power to resume a pastoral lease or part of it by giving twelve months' notice, would it not be well to resume land in the Yalgoo district, so that persons who were anxious to put money into land for growing hay and other crops to sell to the gold-mining community, might have an opportunity of doing so. The land was locked up at present, and the people who wished to make use of it could not do so without such a power as was provided in this Bill.

MR. DARLOT: Members who argued like the member for Yalgoo (Mr. Wallace) and the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) should recollect that it was the pastoralist who pioneered this country, and the goldfields people came after and followed along the tracks made by the pastoralist pioneers. There were pastoralists in this country who had men out searching for gold years before any of the mining members in this House had come to this colony; and it was hard that, now when markets became available to pastoralists, they should not be allowed a fair opportunity to make use of the land they held by grazing sufficient stock on it. As soon as anybody developed a good piece of country, there was a hue and cry to cut him down and divide his profits. If a man found a reef and tried to develop it, there was an alluvial rush by persons who wanted a slice of what the first man had found. In regard to the Bill now before the Committee, the goldfields members in a divided manner were trying to cut up the poor pastoralist. It should be remembered that a pastoralist, while

getting the benefit of the market created by the mining community, was harassed by a local breed of dogs kept about these mining settlements, which interfered in such a way that neither cattle nor horses nor sheep would graze near the mining settlements.

MR. VOSPER said the hon. member should read the last paragraph of the clause, which provided that one person could take up several leases, provided they were more than 20 miles distant from each other. That might affect the squatter; and the Bill would have the effect of confiscating lands of pastoral lessees, for the purpose, not of benefiting working miners, but of playing into the hands of the speculator. True, people could make objections; but the value of objections from the goldfields was observable with regard to the Boulder Tramways Bill, the dual title, and so forth. Such objections were disregarded. The Minister had said the clause would not apply to North-East Coolgardie and East Coolgardie unless there were a demand from the people; but such demand would probably consist of isolated applications to the Minister.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Manner of disposing of applications:

MR. GREGORY: Before an application was granted, would it not be well to have a report from the Water Supply Department? On the goldfields were many good soaks and waterholes, which should be protected.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Lands the subject of applications had to be inspected by the Warden or by a mining surveyor or inspector of mines; and the existence of such water would doubtless be reported.

THE PREMIER: There might not be in the district any officer of the Water Supply Department.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Care would be taken not to recommend to the Minister land required for public purposes, and in that description land containing wells or soaks would be included by the department.

MR. GREGORY: The Water Supply Department had a record of all these soaks in the back country.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: And such soaks were probably reserved by the Crown; or if not, they ought to be.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Power to Warden to alter or reject applications:

MR. DARLOT: The clause did not specify the shape of the blocks. By taking a long strip, an applicant might select the whole of the watershed above low-lying ground, and thus obtain an unfair advantage. This was prevented by the pastoral lease regulations and the Goldfields Act. There should be some restriction as to the shape of the area.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9, 10, and 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Lessee to fence and improve:

MR. DARLOT moved that the word "great," in line 4, be struck out. In all the closely-settled districts these "great stock" fences, as they were called, which were three-wire fences, led to much trouble. This would lead to a lot of trouble, and dairy cattle took very little notice of such a fence. Three-wire fences were out of date. It would be very advantageous if all people who were desirous of enclosing their areas, did so in a proper manner, because they would get allowances for it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: This clause was a repetition of a provision dealing with similar classes of areas under the Land Act. Lessees would not be bound to put up such a fence as would only resist great stock, but could put up a seven-wire barbed fence if they liked. It would, however, be in the interest of the miner, that there should be only three-wire fences in order that he might get through more easily.

MR. DARLOT: Three-wire fences were not fences at all, but were simply used to comply with the Act, and only helped people to bogusly acquire land. Such fencing only taught cattle to walk through wire fences.

Amendment put and negatived, and the clause passed.

Clauses 13 and 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Rent payable:

MR. GREGORY: Supposing a man took up 20 acres outside the two mile radius, what rent had he to pay? A man who occupied land just beyond the three mile radius, would only pay six-

pence, whereas the man within would pay 2s.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: He would only have to pay 10s. 6d. if he went outside.

MR. KINGSMILL: That would have a good effect in keeping people outside the two mile radius.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That was the object.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—Transfer to miner's home-
stead lease:

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked members to take serious note of what was involved in Clauses 16 to 21. These clauses meant that a man who took up one of these areas might be sold up by the sheriff, and all the land become the property of one man. The principle that should be adopted was that observed under the old Victorian Act, namely that the land was absolutely untransferable. A man no doubt could sell improvements on the land, but it must be to another man who had a miner's right. In this case it would be possible, on sale by the sheriff, for the areas to fall into the hands of one person.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No transfer could be made to a man who already held an area. No man could hold more than 500 acres.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But under a judgment the land might be sold.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: But not to a man who already held 500 acres.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If these concessions were going to be made, they ought to be confined absolutely to men who desired to take up land for genuine purposes. The element of speculation would have its full development unless some precaution were taken, or these lands were made absolutely untransferable.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: A lease could not be transferred to any person who held the maximum area.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But it was possible to mortgage, and if it was possible to mortgage, it was possible to foreclose, and the sheriff might sell.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The transferee could not have a better right or title than the transferor.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But there might be a sale for a judgment debt. The whole of the clause appeared to open

the door to all sorts of collusion. The intention of the Bill was that one man should have one allotment for specific purposes. In Victoria, a man who erected a house on a miner's allotment could sell the house, but could not sell the land, and the man who bought the house must comply with the conditions under which the land was held from the Crown. He moved that the clause be struck out.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The danger feared by the hon. member was that one person might be able to acquire, by transfer or mortgage, a greater area of land than a single holder would be entitled to. So long as the holder did not hold more than he was entitled to, it would not matter who was the actual holder. If Jones could not work the land and Robinson held it by transfer, either party must not hold more than the maximum area allowed under the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That limit would not apply to the mortgagee or the sheriff.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It would not be lawful to transfer any land to a person who held more than the maximum area allowed under the Bill; consequently the transfer clauses in the Bill did not allow any loophole by which land could be accumulated by one person.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A coach-and-six could be driven through these clauses.

MR. KINGSMILL: By making the transfer too easy, the Bill would allow land to be accumulated for speculative purposes; whereas by doing away with the right to transfer, we would be doing away with this speculative element. If the holder was to make a living by keeping stock on the land or by cultivation, the transfer clauses were not needed, and to leave them in the Bill would do away with its real object. He moved that progress be reported, to enable the Minister to consider the point.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.55 o'clock, until the next day.