

# Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 2nd March, 1892.

Petition against the introduction of Chinese—Customs Laws Consolidation Bill: third reading—Augmentation of Ministerial Salaries Bill: second reading—Estimates, 1892: recommitted—Harbor improvements, Geraldton—Harbor improvements, Cossack—Geraldton-Mullewa Railway: additional funds required—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

### PETITION AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION OF CHINESE.

MR. MOLLOY presented a petition, signed by 2,010 persons, residents of Fremantle, praying for the abolition of the Imported Labor Registry Act and the adoption of more restrictive legislation against the introduction of Chinese into the Colony.

Petition received, read, and ordered to be printed.

### AUGMENTATION OF MINISTERIAL SALARIES BILL.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I beg to move the second reading of a bill to apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the annual sum of £1,000, in augmentation of Ministerial salaries. It is unnecessary for me to say anything more about this bill beyond what I have already said, that the intention is to increase the present salaries of Ministers by £200 a year.

MR. CANNING: I do not intend to offer any opposition to the principle of this bill—that is, the augmentation of Ministerial salaries; but I think it ought to be clearly understood in what way, or in what character, this measure is brought before the House. I wish it to be understood clearly whether it is an amendment of the Constitution Act; and I do not know how that understanding is to be arrived at except by an appeal to your ruling, sir.

THE SPEAKER: I can tell the hon. member at once that it is an alteration of the Constitution Act; it is an amendment of the Constitution Act.

MR. CANNING: Then I think it should be clearly stated to this House by the Government that it is so, and that the

course prescribed by the Constitution Act has been strictly followed in bringing this measure before the House. I do not know that I shall be in order in quoting from a debate that has taken place in this House during the present session, but I dare say that it will be in the recollection of members that it was stated repeatedly by the Premier, in the course of a debate in this House that any amendment or alteration, practically, of the Constitution Act must be followed by a dissolution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, no. I deny that *in toto*.

MR. CANNING: I read it in *Hansard* to-day; the hon. gentleman interrupted me repeatedly by saying that a dissolution must follow any amendment of the Constitution.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, no!

MR. CANNING: It is in *Hansard*; it is open to any member to refer to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If I said so, I made a very great mistake; that is all.

MR. CANNING: I cannot very well delay members whilst I refer to *Hansard*, but it was only this very day that I read it distinctly. It was repeated several times by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, that any amendment of the Constitution Act must be followed by a dissolution.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member, I understood just now, asked me whether we had followed the proper form prescribed by the Constitution Act with reference to this bill. The only thing required is that the second and third readings of the bill shall be passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of this House, and that a notification be made on the Minutes to that effect.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Whatever the hon. member understood me to say, what I intended to say—if I did not say it—was this: that any alteration of the Constitution Act with reference to the qualification of members or the extension of the franchise was such a change of the Constitution that I considered must be followed by a dissolution. That is what I believe I said; at any rate, that is the intention I had in my mind. It would be ridiculous for me to say that every change in the Constitu-

tion Act must be followed by a dissolution. Suppose we wanted to change the salary of the Governor, or of a Judge, does he mean to say that a dissolution would be necessary?

MR. CANNING: I did not say so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It seems to me that such a thing would be absurd. What I said was that any material alteration affecting the qualification of members or the franchise would necessitate a dissolution.

MR. RICHARDSON: I have rather a distinct recollection of the debate referred to, and that is what I distinctly understood the Premier to say—that any alteration of the Constitution in the way of abolishing the qualification of members or extending the franchise would entail a dissolution, and that it would be only fair to those who were newly admitted to the franchise and to membership that there should be a dissolution.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The hon. member has asked whether this bill is an amendment of the Constitution, and I understand that the Speaker has ruled that it would be. We are all always ready—and no one more readily than myself—to submit to the ruling of the Speaker; at the same time, I should like to say—and I have given the subject very great consideration—that I do not think myself that this is any alteration of the Constitution, and for this reason: the Constitution Act secures to Her Majesty what is called a Civil List, that is to say, a certain sum, for the payment of certain officers, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Imperial Parliament when they were legislating on the subject of conferring a Constitution on the colony—for our Constitution Act is merely a schedule of the Imperial Act; we had no inherent power of our own to bring that Constitution into force—the Imperial Parliament provided that there shall be payable and secured to Her Majesty what is called a Civil List—that is, a certain sum for the payment of the salaries of the Governor, of the Judges, and of certain officers administering the Government, and by this Act they made it incumbent upon us to provide this sum annually, and they provided that we should not interfere with that sum, without reserving for the consideration of Her Majesty any bill that

attempted to touch those salaries. But I think it is altogether beyond the question to say that we cannot increase those salaries, and make further provision for Her Majesty than is made in the Act. The object was to fix these salaries at a certain sum, and to secure to Her Majesty that sum (and not less) for that purpose, so that the Legislature here could not touch it, by lessening it, when it was annually submitted to Parliament. This bill proposes to give to Her Majesty a sum larger than is secured to her under the Imperial Act, which confers on the colony its Constitution; and how it can be said that such a bill is a measure that repeals any portion of the Constitution, or interferes with it in the sense contemplated by the Imperial Act, is more than I can understand. It leaves it absolutely untouched. This sum is still secured to Her Majesty, only we want to give Her Majesty more money for one of the purposes specified—that is, Ministerial salaries—in the same way as we would do if we wanted to increase the salary of the Governor, or of the Judges. Surely it would not be an amendment of the Constitution if we were to give the Governor another £100 a year, or a Judge an extra £50 a year. Nor, in my opinion, does it touch the Constitution to increase the Ministerial salaries in the way this bill proposes to do. Being the legal adviser of the Government, and to that extent responsible for the bill, I thought it right—as possibly the question may crop up again—to make this statement, so that it may be understood that the Government do not agree that this bill is a bill that alters the Constitution in any way. I have thought very much over this point, and that is my firm opinion.

Motion—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES, 1892.

The House went into committee for the consideration of the additional Estimates. (*Vide "Minutes of Proceedings," p. 186.*)

#### Medical:

"Resident Medical Officer, Bridgetown, £100."

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked if there was really any necessity for this vote? In view of the large expenditure which the

colony was likely to make itself responsible for, he thought it was very unwise to incur any additional charges that could possibly be avoided.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was considered necessary to appoint a resident medical officer at Bridgetown in view of the growing importance of the place, owing to the tinfields discovered in the district. The present arrangement was this: the stipendiary magistrate was the resident medical officer at Bunbury, who visited the district monthly in his magisterial capacity, and the Government proposed to make a fresh arrangement, and appoint a magistrate for the Blackwood district, who should also act as Registrar of Mines. It was also proposed to appoint a resident medical officer, as there were now a considerable number of people at Greenbushes and about Bridgetown.

Item agreed to.

*Postal and Telegraph:*

**MR. A. FORREST** asked if provision had been made for a mail service up the Fitzroy and down the Lennard Rivers?

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was informed that this year's vote would be sufficient,—at any rate they hoped it would, for they intended to provide a mail service in that locality. From his knowledge of the district he was surprised they had not a mail service there long ago. The Postmaster General thought he would be able to find the money out of this year's vote. If not, they would have to fall back on the Supplementary Estimates.

**MR. PARKER** asked if the Government had made any arrangements for carrying the telegraph from Southern Cross to Parker's Range?

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government had authorised the work, and it would be proceeded with as soon as possible.

Vote agreed to.

*Attorney General's Department:*

**MR. R. F. SHOLL** asked why it was proposed to increase the salary of the Registrar and Master of the Supreme Court by £100 a year?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt) said this officer now received £420 a year, in addition to which he took the fees accruing from the office

of Curator of Intestate Estates, which were increasing yearly. Last year this officer drew £236 from this source in addition to his salary; so that his emoluments came to £656. The Government proposed to increase his salary from £420 to £520, and take away the fees, and to make the official receiver under the new Bankruptcy Act do the work of Curator of Intestate Estates, the fees of which office going to the Government. It was proposed to give the Official Receiver an extra £50 for acting as Curator, which would make that officer's salary £400, instead of £350 as originally proposed. The Government would save considerably by this new arrangement.

Vote agreed to.

*Crown Lands Department:*

**MR. PARKER** said as the Roads Boards were under the control of this department, he desired to avail himself of this opportunity to call attention to the state of the main roads leading to Perth from York and Newcastle. The York Roads Board had the control of this road as far as its junction with the Newcastle road at Guildford, but it was now in a very bad state of repair. Before there was a railway to York, when all the traffic was along this road, the Board took much interest in the road and kept it in repair, but since the railway had been opened the road had been neglected altogether by the York people, especially this end of it. His object in referring to the matter was to have the road at this end placed under the jurisdiction of the Swan Board, within whose district it really was. Probably it would have more attention paid to it then than it did now.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it was no portion of his duties to distribute the roads grants to the various Boards. It was rather a curious fact that although the arrangement of the road districts and all the correspondence with the Boards was entrusted to him, he had nothing to do with the allocation of the vote. The moment there was any money to be spent his friend the Director of Public Works stepped in, and it was he who had to do with the distribution of the vote. As to removing the jurisdiction of this particular road from the York Board to the

Swan Board, he thought the suggestion should emanate from the Boards concerned. Any recommendation on the subject would receive his attention.

MR. PARKER said if the Director of Public Works had any control over the way in which the Government grants were expended, he hoped he would insist upon the money being more judiciously expended than it appeared to be now. They had only to travel about the Perth roads to see how grossly the money was wasted. The Perth causeway at the present moment was in an absolutely dangerous condition, and had been so for some time; and if the Roads Boards could not manage their affairs better than this bridge was attended to, it was really time they were abolished, and the spending of the money placed under some more judicious control.

MR. A. FORREST was glad the hon. member had called attention to the state of the York-Perth road. He was travelling over a portion of it, at York Green Mount, the other day, and was surprised to find the road in such a bad state. This road had cost the colony, he should say, some £50,000, and it was a shame to see it falling into such a disgraceful state. He hoped the suggestion of the hon. member for York would be acted upon, and this end of the road handed over to the Swan District Board, and a corresponding deduction made from the annual grant to the York Board.

MR. RICHARDSON said it was all very well to complain about the state of the roads and to blame the Boards; but, before they could expect to see the roads of this extensive colony kept in anything like a decent state of repair, they would have to increase the present grants very considerably. It was entirely beyond the question to talk about this particular road having cost the colony £50,000. That was before they had railway communication, and when all the traffic of the Eastern Districts went over this road. Now they had a railway which had cost the country, not £50,000, but hundreds of thousands, and there was not the same necessity for maintaining this road in the same condition as it used to be in years ago, when all the traffic passed over it. He did not think the country was called upon to provide railway communication and also to spend

large sums in keeping this road in good repair, just for the use of a few settlers in the vicinity.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) thought with the hon. member for York that the boundaries of some of the Road Board districts required altering. Formerly, before they had a railway, this York road received every attention from the local board of the district, but now they had a railway, the York Board was apparently in no way concerned as to the state of the road at the Guildford end, and no doubt it would be better if it was placed within the jurisdiction of the Swan Board. He thought this could be easily arranged, and no doubt his hon. friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands would make a note of it.

MR. PATERSON said that this was not the only alteration that was required, if it was proposed to alter the boundaries. In his district, the Murray, they had ten miles of road belonging to the Fremantle district. The people living on either side of this road paid their rates or license fees to the Fremantle Board, and yet the Murray Board had to keep the road in order, simply because the Fremantle people did not trouble their heads about it, except to collect the rates.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said it was very strange that no representations had ever been made to him before with reference to these matters. Until these things were brought to the notice of the Government by those more immediately concerned, he did not see how the Government could be expected to move in the matter.

MR. CANNING said that he also had noticed that the roads generally about Perth were in a most dilapidated state. With regard to the particular road referred to by the hon. member for York, it seemed to him that a very small sum would suffice to keep it in repair. All the materials were to be found on the spot, there being ironstone gravel on either side of the road; and he should say that there was no road in the colony that could be more easily kept in repair. It had been said that only a very small sum was available for the Road Boards to keep the roads in repair; but, whether the sum was large or small, some supervision should be exercised to see that the

money was expended to the best advantage.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) pointed out that the Boards in whom the management of the roads was vested by law were elective bodies, and it was the people's own fault if they did not put good men in them. He only wished the arguments which hon. members addressed to that House on this subject were brought to bear upon those who elected these Boards, so as to stir them up a bit. At present little or no interest was taken in these elections. As a matter of fact, in Perth, he believed the members of the Board elected and re-elected themselves, year after year, without a word being said about it. It appeared to him that if these Boards neglected to do their duty, the proper thing to do was to drive them out of office. The remedy was in the hands of the people themselves, and it was no use talking to the Government or to that House about these things. If the Boards neglected the duties cast upon them, turn them out. That was the only way to deal with them.

Srs J. G. LEE STEERE said he quite agreed with the Attorney General. He thought it would be a good plan if the Government did disband some of these Boards. The Government could do so if they liked, and resume possession of the roads. He had been surprised the other day to learn that £1,000 out of loan money had been granted to the Perth Roads Board, and he should very much like to know where the money had been spent. Looking at the disgraceful state of the roads about the city, no one would credit that £1,000 had been spent on them. With reference to an alteration of the boundaries of the Roads Districts, he quite agreed that it was necessary to alter some of the present boundaries. In the district which he represented there was a piece of road six miles in length, within the jurisdiction of the Wellington Road Board, and that particular piece of road was always in a bad state of repair, because the Wellington Board would not do anything to it. These six miles would be far better looked after if given over to the Blackwood Board, who would keep this piece of road in the same excellent condition that the whole of their other roads were in. He hoped the Commissioner of Crown Lands would see that the

boundaries of the Roads Boards districts were altered where they were required to be altered.

MR. CANNING thought it was a question whether it would not be desirable to have a skilled officer to supervise the roads, and to see that the money was properly and judiciously expended. A good and efficient Inspector of Roads would probably do much to remedy the present unsatisfactory state of things.

MR. A. FORREST said the colony once had a Superintendent of roads, but he died; and it was stated afterwards that the poor man had been worried to death by the Roads Boards and the people of the colony.

MR. COOKWORTHY thought the Attorney General was rather mistaken in his idea that there was no competition in the country districts at the Roads Boards elections. If the hon. gentleman were to read the country papers he would see that people abused each other to their hearts' content over these affairs, and they generally excited a great deal of interest. The fact of the matter was, the great mileage to be kept in order and the small amount available for the purpose—this was the cause of the roads not being in a better state of repair; and, until the grant was increased, they could not expect much improvement. The Boards did what they could, with the limited means at their command.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) said that for years past he had pointed out that the settlers had the remedy in their own hands. The local Boards had the power to levy a local rate for keeping the roads in order, and, if they were to supplement the State grant in this way, they would be in a position to do more for their roads than they did now. If more money was wanted, it should come from the pockets of those more immediately concerned, who should tax themselves, as the Act contemplated they should do. But, up to the present, the Act had in this respect remained a dead letter.

MR. COOKWORTHY said it was all very well to talk about the duty of the settlers to tax themselves for their roads. They did so already, in an indirect way. Though they did not levy a rate, they gave their teams and their labor, and to

a great extent it was through this assistance from the settlers themselves that all the minor roads of the colony had been made.

Vote agreed to.

MR. PARKER asked for some explanation as to the item "Drainage Works, Albany, £300."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that for the last twenty years the people of Albany had been advocating the draining of the swampy ground at the back of the town. The Government had hitherto resisted their appeal for assistance, but it had been pointed out that this work was very necessary from a sanitary point of view, and that the health of the town would be much improved if this swampy ground were drained; and the Government had at last consented to give the Municipality this assistance. A considerable quantity of this land (some of it being Government land), when drained, would be well adapted for building and garden purposes. The Town Council had been very persistent in their appeal for this assistance, and the hon. member who represented the district had also advocated it; and viewing the whole circumstances, the Government felt justified in asking the House to give them this vote. He believed it would do a great deal of good; it would improve the health of the town, and reclaim some very good land, some of which was Government property. Besides that, we were spending considerable sums of money in other parts of the colony; in Perth, for instance, they had just voted £2,000 for reclaiming the river foreshore, and, if the House had approved of it, the Government proposed to make other improvements about the city. They were also spending money on improvements in other parts of the colony, and he thought it was only just and fair that Albany should have its share. He did not think they would be giving Albany its due, if they were to refuse the town this little assistance for carrying out what had been acknowledged for years to be a very necessary work. These were the reasons which had actuated the Government in placing this vote on the Estimates.

MR. MOLLOY did not wish to oppose the vote. He simply desired to point out the inconsistency of the hon. member for

Albany (Mr. De Hamel), who, it was said, had strongly advocated this expenditure in his own town, but who was one of the bitterest opponents of the proposed expenditure in improving another piece of ground at Perth, for the purposes of a public park.

MR. A. FORREST intended to support this vote, for the reason that a considerable amount of good garden land would become available for cultivation, which perhaps would enable the people of Albany to grow sufficient vegetables for their own local wants. The Government land that would be sold, when this swampy ground was reclaimed, would go a great way to recoup this expenditure.

MR. DE HAMEL said that to his point the one unanswerable argument in favor of this expenditure was that it would enable people to live in this part of the town without endangering their health, which could not be done now. Typhoid had already made its appearance in Albany. You could not prevent people being foolish, nor could you prevent them from living where they liked; and, unless this piece of ground was drained, we should have more and more people endangering their own health and the public health by going to live in this swampy, fever-breeding and pestilential neighborhood, with the possible result of typhoid and other fevers gradually extending to the metropolis itself. As for his having opposed the proposal to have a public park in Perth, the hon. member was wrong; he did not object to Perth being improved; what he did object to was the expenditure of money upon an inaccessible wilderness of a place upon the top of Mount Eliza. He did not oppose the vote for the reclamation of the river foreshore, which was practically the same thing as was proposed to be done with this swampy ground in the town of Albany.

MR. RICHARDSON said that what he should like to be assured about was whether this £300 would be sufficient to carry out these drainage works. If so, he should have much pleasure in supporting the vote. He had seen the place, and the land when drained would be very rich land, capable of growing anything; and, it had struck him that it showed a great want of energy on the part of the

Albany people to allow such land to remain a waste and a menace to the health of the town for so many years.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was a question, to his mind, whether this sum would be anything like sufficient. He hoped the Government, before committing themselves to any expenditure on this work, would have a report on it from their own engineer. He agreed with the Premier that Albany had received very little assistance in the shape of public expenditure from that House, and, if this amount was sufficient for the purpose in view, no one, he thought, would begrudge it. But he doubted whether it would be sufficient, and the Government should take some steps to ascertain whether it would or not.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Municipal Council estimated it would cost £500, but the Government put down £300 towards it, and they hoped to be able to do the work for that amount.

Vote agreed to.

*Works and Buildings:*

MR. R. F. SHOLL—referring to the item, "Jetties, Repairs, &c., £1,500"—asked why it was proposed to increase this vote from £1,000 to £1,500?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was feared that the smaller amount would be insufficient for the purpose. This amount had to cover the repair of jetties all over the colony.

MR. R. F. SHOLL asked whether the £500 put down for the telegraph line between Fremantle and Rockingham was likely to prove sufficient for this work?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said it was estimated that it would prove sufficient.

Vote agreed to.

Additional Estimates reported to the House.

**HARBOR WORKS, GERALDTON.**

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn), in accordance with notice, moved, "That this House approves of the scheme of Harbor Improvements at the Port of Geraldton as proposed by the Government, which includes a jetty at Durlacher Street as recommended by Sir John

Coode in his report dated December 3rd, 1886; also approaches connected therewith, with formation works, permanent way, and buildings, as indicated on Plan P.W.D., 1496." He said that to those who had not made a minute study of the Audit Act it might appear strange that it was necessary for the Government to move this resolution, the House having already agreed to this work, which appeared on the schedule of the Loan Act passed last session. But if members would refer to the Audit Act they would see that there was a clause inserted in that Act, at the express wish of the other House, providing that whenever it was proposed to undertake any new harbor works out of loan money, plans and sections of such works should be laid before both Houses of Parliament for their approval. It was in pursuance of that clause that this resolution had been brought forward. This item had already been agreed to on the loan schedule, and £25,000 was put down for it. He doubted whether that amount would be sufficient to complete the work in the manner the Government proposed, but this was the sum set apart for it in the Loan Bill. The question had already been discussed, and this resolution was simply a formal resolution, required by the Audit Act.

MR. MOLLOY objected to any item of harbor works taking precedence of the works required at Fremantle, and he should like to hear from the Government what their intentions were with regard to that more important question.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said that more important questions required more serious consideration, and it was now occupying the attention of the Government. He did not think the House would have to wait much longer before a resolution would be brought down by the Government dealing with it. But that had nothing to do with the present resolution.

MR. TRAYLEN said he had only one word to say, and that was a word of advice to the Government to secure a sufficiently large area of ground at Geraldton for all the necessary buildings, approaches, stations, etc., required, or likely to be required, in connection with these harbor works, while the price of

land was comparatively cheap. We were apt to forget how rapidly some of our seaport towns grew, and he hoped the Government would take care and lay hold of an ample area of land for such works as might be necessary in connection with this harbor scheme at Geraldton.

Motion—put and passed.

#### HARBOR WORKS, COSSACK.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn), in accordance with notice, moved, "That this House approves of the Scheme of Harbor Improvements for the port of Cossack, as proposed by the Government, which includes wharfage accommodation, consisting of a quay wall, with approaches thereto; and also formation works; deviation to tramway, permanent way, and buildings, as indicated on plan and drawings P.W.D. 1501." He said this also was a formal motion, brought forward for the same reason as the previous one, in compliance with the provisions of the Audit Act. The intention of the Government, as regards these works at Cossack, was to have a quay wall of 260ft. in length, for the accommodation of vessels lying alongside it, and certain other improvements to the anchorage. The proposed accommodation would enable the ordinary coastal steamers to go alongside at high spring tide only; at other times the bar was too shallow for these steamers. But these works would give the port of Cossack considerably increased facilities, which had been required for a number of years, and he believed the proposals of the Government met with the approval and concurrence generally of the residents of the district. He might add that Mr. Martin had visited the locality and reported on the proposed works, which, he might also add, met with the entire approval of the Engineer-in-Chief.

Motion—put and passed.

#### GERALDTON - MULLEWA RAILWAY: PROVISION FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I rise to move the motion standing in my name,—“That in the event of the £100,000 provided in ‘The Loan Act, 1891,’ for a Railway from Geraldton to

Mullewa, proving insufficient for the completion of the work, this House is of opinion that the Government should proceed with the work; and that provision be afterwards made for any additional funds that may be necessary and required.” Members will notice that it is not a very agreeable motion to have to make, and I am very sorry indeed in having to place it before the House. But when the loan schedule was being considered last year and the scheme of proposed railways was before us, it may be remembered, we had to act to some extent in the dark as to the probable cost of those railways. I know it was said by many members that the sums we placed against the works contemplated were altogether too small, and that we would not be able to carry them out for the amounts asked for. The Government did not think so; and I still believe that, as a rule, it will be found that the estimates of the Government were pretty near the mark. Certainly, so far as we know of one of these railways, the line to Bunbury, the estimate will not be exceeded; and I think I may say the same, with the information now before us, with regard to all the other railways we are about to build, with the exception of this one, from Geraldton to Mullewa. In this case, I regret to say the line will cost considerably more than was at first anticipated. I was pretty familiar with the country through which this railway was likely to pass, and I thought we would probably be able to have the line built for the sum set apart for it. But I am sorry to say that in this case we under-estimated the probable cost of the work. I thought the line could be built as cheaply as the other lines, but the survey of the country has shown that there are a great many difficulties to be contended with—greater than was anticipated. We now find that the first 27 miles of the line—which, I may say, is the most difficult part—will cost over £80,000. That is the estimate after a survey has been made. I may say there have been several surveys—four, I think—of as many different routes, in order to see if an easier grade or easier country could be found; but, after all these efforts, we find that the route we have decided on as the best will cost over £80,000 for the first 27 miles;

so that members will see there will be very little left out of the £100,000 (appropriated for the whole line) to build the remaining 33 miles. Therefore it comes to this: unless this House approves of this motion we shall be in a rather awkward position when we finish the survey and are ready to call for tenders, because, without the approval of this House as to incurring a further expenditure, all we could properly do—unless we took on ourselves all the responsibility, which I do not think the House would ask us to do—would be to call for tenders for as many miles as this £100,000 would be likely to take us, which I am afraid would not be more than about 32 or 33 miles. That distance, as members know who are acquainted with the country, would not take us much farther than the Greenough river; and, between the Greenough river and Mullewa there is a very heavy sand-plain, the very piece of country which has always been the greatest drawback and hindrance in the way of establishing transport communication between the Murchison and the port of Geraldton. That sand-plain has done more than anything to retard the settlement of that part of the country, and one of the main objects of this railway was to bridge over this waterless, sand-plain country. Therefore, to build a railway through the good country for a distance of 30 miles from Geraldton as far as the Greenough river, and then stop, without bridging this sand-plain, would not do much good in assisting in the development of the country eastward. In fact the very portion of the country we were particularly anxious to bridge over with a railway will still remain. We are therefore in this position: it seems to me it would not be advisable at the present time to come to this House and ask for a further loan for this purpose, because it would be time enough to talk about a loan when we actually want the money, which will not be until we have raised and spent this £100,000 already voted for this work. Before we do that the surveys will have to be completed, and tenders called for, and a considerable time must elapse from now before this £100,000 is all expended. Therefore we thought it would be inadvisable to come to the House now to ask for a

further loan, and we thought this resolution which I have submitted would meet the case; that is, if it meets with the approval of the House. It will authorise the Government to call for tenders for the whole of the work, which, as I have said, will cost considerably more than £100,000, and it will leave the Government free to make provision afterwards for providing the additional funds required. In the meantime, if we require the money before we have an opportunity of getting the further authority of this House we could advance it out of current revenue, or from other funds in the hands of the Government, and then get a Loan Bill through this House for the amount required, as soon as it was absolutely necessary to do so. If the House agrees to our proposition, we will take it that the approval of this motion will be a sufficient authority for us to call for tenders for the whole distance from Geraldton to Mullewa, and we will take the responsibility afterwards of coming to the House to pass the necessary Loan Bill. That, as I say, will necessarily be a considerable time hence. I think it will be agreed that this will be more politic than to seek another loan at the present moment, when we look at all the circumstances, and also the condition of the London money market, and the fact that we have a large amount of our present loan yet to raise. There is really no necessity for it. The money will not be required, as I have said, until the £100,000 already authorised has been expended; and so long as we have the assurance of the House that it approves of our action, it will be all that is necessary at present. With these few words of explanation, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. CANNING: I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion, which I think is a very proper one, indeed, placed before the House in a perfectly reasonable and proper way. The work contemplated is one of the most important and necessary works for this colony, opening up communication as it will across that almost impassable piece of road between Geraldton and Mullewa, which has always been a great drawback and a great hindrance to the establishment of satisfactory communication be-

tween a port and the extensive Murchison district. I think there are many works which might certainly be very well postponed in favor of this. I think it is one of the first in importance, and, I have no doubt, it will be satisfactory to members of this House and to the people generally, and more especially those of the Northern districts, to learn that the Government seriously intend to prosecute the works.

MR. RICHARDSON: I have some serious misgivings about this motion. I cannot say I like it. It is very much of a leap in the dark, in the first place; it appears to me that in approving of this resolution we do not know what we are committing ourselves to. It seems to me there is no limit to the expenditure we are committing ourselves to. I think it was the very cheapness of the estimate of the cost of constructing this line that led many of us to support it in the Loan Bill, and to sanction it at all. We were all aware that the traffic would be very small indeed for many years, and that the country to be opened up did not admit perhaps of very great expansion and development except as a pastoral country. But we thought that this part of the colony was entitled to consideration, and seeing—as we were led to believe at the time—that the line could be constructed very cheaply, many of us, I think, sanctioned it on that account. But now it appears that the line is going to cost us a very much larger sum, if it is to be taken as now proposed. What that sum may be we do not exactly know; and what I would like to throw out—and I do so in all good faith—is this: as we are likely to meet again in three or four months' time, would it not be well if the Government in the meantime were to have proper surveys made and sections prepared, and come down to the House next session with a proper estimate of what the cost is really going to be, and then ask us to sanction this extra expenditure. I think that would be safer than asking the House to commit itself to this resolution at the present time. Three or four months cannot make much difference in a work of this kind; and I would suggest to the Government the advisability of withdrawing this resolution for the present, and adopt the course I have indicated. There are other considerations in favor of a little

delay. It is well known that when this line was before the House on a former occasion the question was raised whether it would not be better to adopt another route, and for this line to connect with the Midland line. If this line is going to cost what we are now led to believe it will—and it won't be far short of £200,000—I think it becomes a serious question for our consideration whether we should not reconsider the whole position, and whether it would not be better in the interests of the district and of the whole colony that some other route should be adopted.

MR. DE HAMEL: I quite agree with the hon. member for the DeGrey with reference to the advisability of postponing this motion until next session, about August or September. We know there are two other routes, one from Northampton to Mullewa and the other from Minginoo to Mullewa. I understand the great objection to the latter is that in adopting that route we would be providing traffic for another line, a private line, the Midland, instead of for our own line. That was the objection last year. But we know that the position is not the same now as regards the Midland line. We cannot yet say whether we may not in a short time have to work that line ourselves, and, in view of the present unsettled state of affairs, I think it would be advisable for this House to hesitate before we embark upon a separate and independent line of railway when we may hereafter find that we may have a line that may be worked in connection with another line which may in a year or two's time become our own property, and have to be worked by us. The Premier has used one strong argument against the adoption of this resolution. He stated it would be necessary eventually to obtain this additional sum out of another loan, but that in the mean time it might be advanced out of current revenue, and that the Government should then get a Loan Bill through this House during some subsequent session. Well, sir, to talk about getting further Loan Bills through this House, when we know that out of our last Loan Bill of £1,336,000 we have only been able to raise £500,000, in two instalments, and that the last instalment of £250,000 was not fully subscribed but made up by the London and West-

minster Bank,—to talk of further loans in the face of that, and in the face of the condition of the money market as regards Australian loans generally, and when we have three quarters of a million of our last loan yet unfloated and with no immediate prospect of floating it; I say that to talk now of a further Loan Bill or of incurring any liabilities that would necessitate a further loan, is simply recklessness personified. Then, again, what ground had the Premier for estimating the cost of this railway at £100,000 in the Loan Bill? When this Mullewa line first cropped up I was under the impression that it was a new idea altogether, but, I have since found, on reference to back volumes of *Hansard*, that it was not a new thing at all. The same project had been before the House on former occasions, and I find that the late Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Wright) told this House plainly and boldly that this railway could not be constructed under £200,000; and the words of the late Commissioner are now being verified by the action of the Government themselves, who now give us to understand that the line will cost very nearly what the Commissioner said it would cost.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** No; £160,000.

**MR. DE HAMEL:** The Premier says £160,000. But we in this House have nothing to guide us as to what it may cost. We have nothing in the world to go upon but the word of the Premier. We have no estimates to guide us. Last year we were told it would cost £100,000; now we are told it will cost £160,000, and, on the other hand we have the late Commissioner's statement that it will cost £200,000. Then, as to the traffic, I find that when this project was before the House in 1887, the estimated traffic was stated to be 2,000 bales of wool annually, and, as one hon. member said, they were to make a railway sixty miles in length, to cost £200,000, to meet a traffic equal to about one train per month. Is it wise, is it prudent, for this House, having regard to the present circumstances of the colony, and having regard to the position of our present loan, having regard also to the Midland difficulty—is it wise, for the sake of three or four months, when this House will meet again, to give the Government *carte*

*blanche* now to start with this line, before placing before us all the surveys and the estimates of cost, or something to go upon? I am not opposed to this Mullewa Railway. On the last occasion, when it was before us in the Loan Bill, I knew nothing about it, and I then was more or less opposed to it, but not now. But I am opposed to our involving the colony in a further expenditure of £60,000 or £80,000, or probably £100,000, when the House knows we are not in a position to incur such a liability. The resolution, moreover, is far too vague, far too wide. It gives the Government power to spend this money no matter what may happen, or whether the route may commend itself to this House or not. I do hope that members will hesitate before they consent to this vague and indefinite resolution to-night. I hope, indeed, the Premier will accept the olive branch held out to him by the hon. member for the DeGrey, and agree to withdraw the motion, and put it before us, with the fullest information, when we next meet, in a few months' time.

**MR. R. F. SHOLL:** There is no doubt that when this line was agreed to in the Loan Bill it was never anticipated it would cost what we are now led to believe it will cost, though I think that everyone is agreed that the line is necessary, and will have to be built. Still, at the same time, it is a question now whether it would not be better to try and get an alternative route from Minginoo, which might be constructed for the sum placed against the work on the loan schedule. I have been told by people who know the country—and there was a strong opinion in this House in favor of this route last session—that Minginoo ought to be the starting point for this line. It would run through good country, and serve every purpose which this other line would answer, except that the starting point would be at Minginoo instead of at Geraldton. Though, under ordinary circumstances, it would be well to start direct from Geraldton, still if it is going to cost about double what it would cost from the other starting point, and double what we were led to believe it would cost, I think it is worthy of consideration whether it would not be wiser to ascertain whether some cheaper and better route cannot be obtained.

We know that the country between Minginoo and Mullewa is good country; and, in any case, it will only be the wool and stores and supplies for the different stations that will go over this railway. Fat stock for the Southern markets will not in any case—whether this line goes from Geraldton or not—be sent by this railway; the settlers will still drive their sheep to Minginoo, and then send them by the Midland to market. It is not likely they would send them to Geraldton.

MR. A. FORREST: What about the Geraldton market? How is that to be supplied?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: There are plenty of sheep in the Geraldton district to supply the Geraldton market for years to come. The sheep from the Murchison will be driven, and then go by the Midland. I agree entirely with the hon. member for the DeGrey that it would be well to reconsider this question of route, and ascertain whether a cheaper line could not be discovered. The resolution now before us is a very vague one for this House to commit itself to. We are asked to give the Government *carte blanche* to spend as much as they like on this line; it may be another £100,000 or it may be another £200,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No, no, no!

MR. R. F. SHOLL: We do not know what it may be, and it is hardly fair to ask us to commit ourselves to such a resolution as this.

MR. A. FORREST: Last year I was in favor of this Geraldton line, for the reason that I thought it was the best, and that the cost (£100,000) would be small, and that it would suit the people of the district who had a right to the railway; but now I am inclined to alter my opinion to a certain extent, owing to the increased cost of the line. We are now told it will cost, not £100,000, but £160,000 or £170,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The distance is more than we thought it was.

MR. A. FORREST: You can only get to Mullewa, and Mullewa hasn't shifted, at any rate; nor yet Geraldton. There is a great difference between £100,000 and £170,000, and it becomes a very serious matter to commit the country to this large expenditure just now. We

do not know yet what may crop up with regard to this Midland Railway business, and I think it would be as well for the Government to defer the consideration of this question for a few days, until we have some further information before us. If the Midland is going to stop, I think it is a question whether this House should build this line from Geraldton to Mullewa at all, because it would be useless, so far as the main object in view is concerned—that is, the bringing of fat stock from the Murchison districts. For that reason alone, I ask the Government to postpone the consideration of this question, until it is settled what is going to be done with regard to the Midland, and until they ascertain what the exact cost of this line is going to be.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We can give you that now; £164,546 is our estimate.

MR. A. FORREST: As the surveys are not completed, it will not be possible for the Government to call for tenders for this work before next session, and nothing will be lost by postponing it until then. I do not think anyone wishes to oppose it, and I do not see that a few months will make much difference anyway. There are several reasons why this matter should not be pressed just now. There is the necessity for further information as to the best route; there is the Midland difficulty; and there is the drought. If this drought is going to continue, we shall not want this railway at all. There are other considerations as well, and I think the Government would do well to withdraw this motion for the present, or postpone it until the House meets again a few months hence. They will then have all the surveys completed, and every information ready to call for tenders at once.

MR. HARPER: I am strongly of opinion that, in the interests of the community generally, this matter should remain in abeyance until we have further information on the subject. Looking at the excessive extra amount required for the work, I think it should be approached and looked at in a different light from that in which it was viewed when it was before the House on a previous occasion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I think if members will refer back to the debates

that took place in this House last session when the loan schedule was under consideration, and refresh their memories, they will find that the reasons which then operated in their minds in favor of the construction of this line are still existing. Those reasons have not been affected by the Midland difficulty in any way whatever. This line was not going to be built because of the Midland line, and for no other reason. The same reasons apply now as applied then. The idea was to connect the country Eastward with a port, and the House agreed to an expenditure of £25,000 for improving the harbor at Geraldton, which was to be the terminus of this line. As to starting from Minginoo, that would be a very expensive line to maintain, even although we had running powers over the Midland line. The line which the Government had in view, and which this House had in view, when it agreed to this work, was a line that would establish direct communication between the Murchison and the port of Geraldton, and form the first section of a line that it was hoped would eventually go right up to Roebourne, and tap the whole of our Northern areas. The same reasons that operated in the minds of members then operate now, and with greater force. I think the House should thank the Government for the open manner in which they have brought this matter before them. They found the line could not be built as cheaply as they thought it could, so they come to this House, before doing anything in the matter, and ask the House to sanction a further expenditure. If the Government had been a reckless Government, they might have expended this £100,000 which the House authorised them to spend, and so committed the House and the country to any further expenditure that might be necessary to complete the line. Instead of that, we come down in the most open and straightforward manner, before committing the country to any expenditure, and we inform the House that we find we have under-estimated the cost, and ask the House to sanction a further expenditure before we proceed with the work at all. I think, under these circumstances, the House may safely authorise the Government to proceed with the work.

MR. RICHARDSON: I am quite willing to admit that the Government

are entitled to some credit for the way they have brought this matter before the House, still it must be conceded that it becomes a very serious consideration when we find that a line is going to cost £170,000 or £180,000, instead of £100,000. That puts a different complexion on it. As I said last session, when this work was under discussion, we had very little before us in the shape of facts and figures to justify this expenditure. I also said: "They had been told that 2,000 tons was the traffic between Mullewa and Geraldton, but, unless this were largely multiplied, he hardly thought they were warranted in constructing 60 miles of line, and he did not feel, therefore, that he could give his support to the Government on this item at the present stage. There were many aspects of this question which were involved in obscurity. One was whether Geraldton was the right point to come into. From what he could ascertain there would be a shorter mileage, and the line would go through a better class of country, if it were brought down so as to join the Midland Railway somewhere in the vicinity of Minginoo Springs." Those were the arguments I used last session, and they seem to me to apply with even greater force now than they did then.

MR. SIMPSON: I have read with a considerable amount of interest the debate that took place when this railway was introduced for the consideration of the House last session, and I am sure I express the sentiments of every one of my constituents when I say that they have no desire to tax the country for any line of railway that would not benefit the colony as a whole, but simply benefit their own district. But, if there were strong reasons on the 11th February, 1891, for appropriating £100,000 out of the loan to build a railway from Geraldton to the Murchison, there are fully £100,000 worth more reasons in March, 1892, for building such a line. At that time there had been no gold discovered on the Murchison, or at any rate no goldfields declared; but what is the position now? We have on the Murchison an auriferous area which, under favorable conditions, will prove a mine of wealth to this colony; and, whatever may be said in favor of a railway to Yilgarn may be urged with still greater

force in favor of a railway to the Murchison. I say that the Yilgarn line does not offer the amount of traffic that this railway does. The argument in favor of this line hitherto has been that it would benefit the pastoral industry, and it was to that industry alone that we looked for the traffic. But we have a still stronger argument now in the fact that this line will also benefit the mining industry, and a considerable item, a most important item, of traffic will be found in the conveyance of machinery and stores for the goldfields. Now if this line is to be built from Minginoo instead of from Geraldton, every ounce of machinery, every ounce in the shape of stores and material required for the goldfields, will have to be hauled a distance of 130 miles instead of 60 miles. Surely that is worthy of some consideration. The Minister of Railways, and also many members of this House were very much impressed, when the Yilgarn railway route was under consideration, with the saving to be effected as regards this question of haulage by taking that line by way of Northam instead of York. But the saving of haulage in that instance was not nearly so great as the saving of haulage that would be effected on this line by taking it direct from Geraldton—a saving of 60 or 70 miles on every ounce of stuff conveyed to and from the Murchison goldfields. I am sure, as I have already said, I am consulting the wishes of my constituents, when I say that they have no desire to ask this House for anything that is unfair to the country at large, but there are weighty reasons why this line should have its starting point at Geraldton. If, however, it should be found that there are engineering considerations which should determine that the line ought to start from Minginoo, and that the line could be worked more economically from that point, and that it would be more satisfactory from every point of view, then I am sure the residents of Geraldton will be found loyal enough to submit with a good grace to the inevitable, and will be quite prepared to congratulate the Government and this House on having acted wisely in the matter.

MR. PARKER: When the Commissioner of Railways says we owe a debt of gratitude to the Government for having come down to this House in an open and

straightforward manner and telling us they are unable to undertake this work or to call tenders for it, without an authority from the House to incur further expenditure than they have already been authorised to incur, I must take exception to the hon. gentleman's remarks. I do not think this House owes any debt of gratitude or any thanks whatever to the Government for informing us that this railway cannot be built for £100,000. When we passed the Loan Bill last year, we authorised the Government to spend £100,000, and no more, in building this line from Geraldton to Mullewa, and, if the Government had adopted the course indicated by the hon. gentleman and called for tenders for the work when they found that it would cost £60,000 or £70,000 more than we authorised, all I can say is they would have acted in a most unconstitutional and unwarrantable manner. Therefore, when they come here and tell us plainly and openly, before calling for tenders, that they require £60,000 or £70,000 more than they have been authorised to spend, they are simply doing their plain duty, and what they were bound to do if they want this money. I cannot therefore agree with the hon. gentleman's remark that we owe any debt of gratitude to him or his Government in respect of their action in this matter. They have simply done what any honest Government would do. Having said this, I must say I agree with the hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. Simpson) that there is much more reason for our undertaking this railway at the present time than there was last year. I think this is a line that must be built, even if it costs £100,000 more than we anticipated it would cost. It is very unfortunate no doubt that the Government when they first proposed it had not looked closer into the matter, and become better acquainted with the probable cost, instead of telling us it would only cost £100,000, when it now turns out it will cost nearly double that. Had they told us this at first, probably the House would have struck off some of the other minor works on the loan schedule, and added the amount to the cost of this railway. I think we could have done that when the Loan Bill was under consideration. The only thing that troubles me now is

where we are to get the money from. We know from the home papers and the daily telegrams, and we know from our own past experience, that in the present state of the money market there is an immense difficulty in raising any loans just now. The Government, with all their endeavors—and I believe they have done their very best—have only succeeded in raising half-a-million of our authorised loan of £1,336,000; and the money market now appears even more depressed than when we raised the second instalment of our loan, and we know that our second instalment did not realise as much as the first. In fact, there is very little chance in the present state of the money market and the feeling in financial circles at home in regard to Australian borrowing—there is very little chance of our being able to raise much money for some time to come, even in connection with our authorised loan. The public works we are already pledged to will require something like £800,000 more than we have yet been able to raise, and I cannot but think that there will be very great difficulty in obtaining that amount from British investors in the present state of public feeling. Therefore, the only thing that troubles me is, how are we going to provide this extra amount that is required for this railway. It will undoubtedly require another Loan Bill to raise this additional sum, and the question is, are we likely to be able to do so? If there is no reasonable prospect of our being landed in a financial difficulty over this matter, I shall have great pleasure in supporting the proposition of the Premier.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** It seems to me that if this motion is not carried there must be delay in the prosecution of this important work; and I was under the impression—in fact it has been so stated, if not in this House, in other places—that the feeling was that this work should take precedence of other works on account of its urgency. The Government are prosecuting the necessary surveys as quickly as they can, and unless we get this resolution passed we shall be in this position: we shall only be able to go on with the first 30 miles of the line, which will swallow up the £100,000 already authorised; and I do not think that will meet the wishes of members, and certainly it will not provide the

advantages and facilities which this line is intended to provide. As I have already said, our great difficulty, the great drawback to establishing communication between the Murchison and the seaboard is that heavy sand-plain after you pass the Greenough river; and this 30 miles will only take us to the verge of that sand-plain country. I believe, if we act upon the advice of some hon. members, and postpone this resolution until next session, that several months would be wasted before we could undertake this work at all. I understand from my friend the Commissioner of Railways that the surveys are nearly completed, and I should say that in two or three months time from now we ought to be in a position to call for tenders, and to go on with the work. Of course it is for members to say whether it is desirable or not to postpone this work. In my own opinion it is not. I think that those works which have been authorised should be pushed forward as quickly as possible. I am not in favor of this dilly-dallying business in carrying out our public works policy. I do not believe in doing a little bit now and a little bit by-and-by. I believe that it is not good policy. It is a policy that will tend to do us no real good. If we spend this loan money in dribs and drabs, the result will be that when the whole of it is gone we shall be in no better position than we are now. The policy of the present Government has been to institute a comprehensive system of public works, and to carry it out with vigor and as soon as we can. I admit we have not been able to do much hitherto, but that has not been our fault; and I hope we may be able to do better presently. Our object is to carry out a vigorous public works policy, and to attract population to the colony, and by that means institute a system of voluntary immigration, which in my opinion is likely to produce much better results than by bringing people into the colony to become dissatisfied with their lot when they come here. If they come here of their own accord, and find employment, they are much more likely to remain, and to become good and contented settlers, than if they are brought here at public expense and only meet with disappointment. It seems to me that unless this

resolution is adopted we shall be in the position I have stated: we shall either have to postpone the commencement of this work for several months or else we shall have to build a portion only of the line, so far as the money authorised will take us. I have no objection myself to postpone this item for a few days, if it is the wish of members, and let them have more time to consider it. But it will not alter the position in any way. As, however, there seems a general desire for a short adjournment, I have no objection, and, if it is the wish of the House, I will now move that progress be reported, and that we sit again say this day week.

Agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again on Wednesday, 9th March.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 3rd March, 1892.

Protection of Women and Girls Bill: third reading—Public Health Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Aborigines Protection Act Amendment Bill: recommittal—Wonnerup Roads Bill: first reading—Electric Lighting Bill: first reading—Customs Bill: first reading—Married Women's Property Bill: in committee—Goldfields Act Amendment Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 8 o'clock.

#### PRAYERS.

#### PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS BILL.

This bill was read a third time and passed.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This bill was read a third time and passed.

#### ABORIGINES PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### RECOMMITTAL.

THE HON. R. E. BUSH: After talking over the amendment I proposed at the last sitting (*vide p. 654*) with those who supported me, we have come to the conclusion that it will be unwise to go on with it for the reason that we think the Government has tried to meet us in bringing in this bill, and further because I do not see much good in amending what I think is a false system of legislation in regard to the employment of natives. I therefore beg to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The bill was then reported.

#### WONNERUP ROADS BILL.

This bill was received from the Legislative Assembly, and was read a first time.

#### ELECTRIC LIGHTING BILL.

This bill was received from the Legislative Assembly and was read a first time.

#### CUSTOMS BILL.

This bill was received from the Legislative Assembly and was read a first time.

#### MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

This bill was considered in committee, and agreed to without amendment.

#### GOLDFIELDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2—No miner's right or lease, &c., to be granted to any Asiatic or African alien:

THE HON. J. MORRISON said that he intimated the other evening that although this bill was intended to favor Europeans as opposed to Asiatics and others, it had not that effect. Hon. members were aware that a large area of auriferous land in this colony was situate within the tropics, where colored labor was essential. Under the bill they were precluded from working as servants, and he did not think it was really in-